

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



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Minutes of Meeting on 7 October 2003:

CRYSTAL PALACE & NORWOOD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
HELD AT THE PHOENIX COMMUNITY CENTRE

1. PRESENT

Secretary - Lucy Smith
Membership Secretary & Webmaster - James Slattery-Kavanagh - Quotes
Honorary Solicitor - Geoffrey Harding - Bennett, Welch and Co
Sharon Baldwin - Town Centre Manager Upper Norwood and Anerley
Pat Ryan - Croydon Councillor
Geoffrey Gibbs - Gibsons
Kevin Carleton-Reeves - Transport Consultant
Geoffrey Harding - Bennet Welch & Co Solicitors
Bernie Jinks - Royal Albert
Serge Ismail - Numidie Bistro
Frank Lissimore - Amphlett Lissimore
Roger Sorell - Little Yellow Bird

2. MINUTE'S SILENCE FOR DOUG BARNES

JSK welcomed people to the meeting. He said that the Chamber had not met for a number of months and that sadly the Chairman had passed away earlier in the year. JSK said that the Chariman, Doug Barnes, had meant a lot to local community groups and was very active in the local area. A minute's silence was held as a mark of respect for Doug and the work he put into the Chamber of Commerce and the local area.

3. APOLOGIES

Honorary Treasurer - Peter Runacres - Thornton Springer
Press Officer - Caroline Streek - Streek's Publicity And Communications
Ian Payne - Croydon Councillor
Daphne Kellet
Lalit Bandlish - Gipsy Hill Dental Surgery
Lorenzo Nargi - Lorenzo

4. MINUTES OF AGM 2002

There were no minutes from this AGM. Alan Thompson was working further afield and could no longer to commit to performing in a secretariat capacity for the Chamber and Ian Milne of Base Property Locators was responsible for these minutes along with several others. He left his position at Base Property Locators and did not contact anyone, therefore, there are no minutes for any meetings since November 2001. JSK said his friend Lucy Smith would be taking the minutes for the evenings meetings, but that the position is open if anyone would like to put themselves forward. JSK said 3rd September 2002 was the last official meeting and there are no matters arising from this. He wanted to ask local business people what they thought should be on the agenda. He restated that the aims of the Chamber are to meet on the first Tuesday of every month and are concerned with furthering and protecting business interests in the area.

5. MATTERS ARISING

JSK ran through who had recently fulfilled the roles on the Executive Committee

6. CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW

7. PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS

Two financial statements prepared by Peter Runacres were presented:
Year Ended 28th February 2002
Year Ended 28th February 2003

Sharon Baldwin queried the triangle lights fund for 2002. JSK said it was agreed to take funds from a separate bank account to the main account. JSK said he was unable to identify three businesses who have paid their membership. Gibsons have audited the accounts and approved them. Accounts for year ended 28th February 2002 were proposed by Frank Lissimore and seconded by Geoff Harding. Accounts for year ended 28th February 2003 were proposed by Frank Lissimore and seconded by Geoff Harding.

8. ELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

All existing committee members would like to stay in post. JSK would like to stand as Honorary Chairman. The Honorary Secretary post was vacant. Caroline Streek would like to be re-elected as Honorary Press Officer, Peter Runacres would like to be re-elected as Honorary Treasurer and Geoffrey Harding would like to be re-elected as Honorary Solicitor. JSK said he would carry on with the duties of Honorary Membership Secretary but he would like someone to replace him. Geoffrey Harding proposed a block vote and all were in favour of the proposed committee. JSK showed the Chamber some pieces from the Chamber of Commerce's history; a hammer and a Chairman's medal. He invited everyone to look at the medal after the meeting closed.

9. ELECTION OF TWO HONORARY AUDITORS

JSK asked why there were two auditors. Geoffrey Harding said the Honorary Auditors are not usually chartered accountants, therefore two people have to perform the role. He said it was probably in the constitution somewhere. JSK asked Geoffrey if he could track down a copy of the constitution and give him a copy.

10. TO CONSIDER ANY RESOLUTIONS

It was proposed that matters relating to the Chamber's finances were deferred until a future meeting. The Chamber's expenses are very different to its income. The Phoenix Community Centre has increased its charges. JSK has spoken to Lorenzo of Lorenzo's restaurant and future meetings will be held there, and there will be a bar. The Phoenix Community Centre does not have a bar and recently closed for a refurbishment despite the Chamber having booked a meeting there. Sharon Baldwin suggested the Chamber could meet at the Town Centre office. JSK thanked Sharon for this suggestion.

JSK said we should look at getting new members and raising the cost of the subscription. It was proposed to look at these issues at the next meeting. From memory he noted that the subscription fee had not gone up at all. Geoff Harding pointed out that raising the subscription fee might result in many people cancelling their membership if the Chamber does not have a high profile at the time.

It was asked whether there would be any substantial savings on meetings in future. JSK said it would be cheaper to hold meetings at Lorenzos. It was noted that Doug Barnes was very generous re: Chamber Christmas party, lights etc which everyone appreciated. We need more special guests that businesses can look up to and make meetings worth coming to. Frank Lissimore suggested he could present on making a will incorporating your business. JSK said he would be looking to foster better involvement with every member with the aim of getting more out. The main points to decide are:

- cost of subscriptions
- location of future meetings
- local issues

11. GUEST SPEAKER: SHARON BALDWIN

Sharon introduced herself as the new Town Centre Manager. She said she is local to the area and comes from a background in the retail industry. She has also set up her own small childcare business attached to a local school. Croydon, Bromley and Lambeth town centre manager post has been extended until March 2004. Jonathan McNamara has responsibility for Penge. The role of the Town Centre Manager is not defined and can be whatever local people want it to be. At the moment Sharon is working a 20 hour week split between the three boroughs. She is also linked with the Economic Strategy

Development Unit (ESDU) which is responsible for all the neighbourhood community renewal projects. She wants to open the lines of communication for networking with people in the towns. The two main issues that arise are the one way system and Crystal Palace Park. She reports to a steering group made up of local councillors, local people and business people.

Sharon is in discussion with Inspector Sutherland at Gipsy Hill about establishing a police unit solely for the triangle. It is hoped there will be two officers representing each of the three boroughs. Policing is primarily targeted at drugs and motoring offences. JSK highlighted that vagrancy, gangs of youths, traveller's children, window scratching and graffiti were all current problems. Geoff Harding said he was pleased that the Town Centre Manager was communicating with someone from the police. Sharon said the Radio Scheme in the triangle would be of great value. Radios can be borrowed free of charge for a trial period. She went round the triangle with Pat Ryan with a flyer for a green business challenge. It's about going green and reducing costs and there will be an award ceremony in March 2004, hopefully this will help to pull people together. Sharon also presented a flyer for a recent arts festival.

Sharon updated the Chamber on the latest regarding Crystal Palace Park and stadium. The lease for the stadium expires in March 2004 and Sports England are not taking it on. The stadium is owned by Bromley and Bromley do not think it is being maintained to a high enough standard. It has been decided that the Park is too big for one borough to maintain and that it must be a London wide joint initiative. Pat Ryan said he felt it was vital that London wins the Olympic bid and that Crystal Palace Park plays some part. He said that the Chamber should pledge their support to the bid. JSK said that he would add this to the agenda for the next meeting. He also said that he wanted to make sure we had the evidence in hand about what the Chamber wants and does not want to end up in a situation where the Chamber is at odds with the local community as has happened with the one way system. Many businesses in the triangle are not Chamber members and the Olympic bid could attract new members. It was pointed out that the two main issues for the triangle are cleanliness and policing.

Sharon made the Chamber aware of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). Croydon and Bromley are looking at how to give control to local communities. BIDs will come up in the next few months and Sharon hoped that the Chamber would familiarise themselves with this initiative.

Feedback had been received on the one way system mainly regarding light sequences, parking bays and yellow lines not being in the right place. Sharon hoped that amendments would be made. JSK said that the Chamber should gather all the information about parking issues together and present it collectively. The Council also need to make the Chamber aware of other people's views. Sharon also said that it was hoped the Queen's hotel would be re-established as a good quality hotel and a venue for people to stay at and meet. There had been issues about licencing and noise control with local residents. At present it houses some asylum seekers and the hotel is using income generated from this to renovate the hotel. It cannot advertise at present as it doesn't have an entertainment licence. Sharon asked the Chamber to support the hotel.

Sharon was disappointed to note that 80% of businesses thought Christmas did not affect their trade. She was hoping to encourage businesses to use the Christmas season to attract trade. Croydon council will put up the Christmas lights and there will be a special switch on on 27/28th November 2003. In the past (before the construction works in the triangle) the lights switching on has been a success.

Sharon also handed out some graffiti cards to be filled in and register people's businesses as the council will then remove graffiti free of charge. She also distributed invitations for Business First (a networking event).

It was agreed to add the following to the agenda for the next meeting:

- Alcohol exclusion zones
- Olympic bid
- One way system
- Queen's hotel
- Finances
- Raising the profile of the area e.g. Christmas lights

Pat Ryan also wanted to add that since Croydon council had changed its refuse collectors to "Clearaway" the service had improved dramatically. Sharon Baldwin said feedback from this would be welcome from local businesses.

Geoff Harding added that the next UNIT meeting would take place at the Queen's Hotel on 22nd October 2003, 6.45pm for a 7pm start.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no further business. The Chairman declared the meeting closed.

Next meeting – 7pm, 4 November 2003