

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



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Minutes of Meeting on 4 November 2003:

CRYSTAL PALACE & NORWOOD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
HELD AT 1ST FLOOR, LORENZO'S RESTAURANT, WESTOW HILL

1. Present

Secretary - Lucy Smith
Honorary Chairman - James Slattery-Kavanagh - Quotes
Honorary Solicitor - Geoffrey Harding - Bennett, Welch and Co
Honorary Secretary - Peter Runacres - Thornton Springer
Press Officer - Caroline Streek - Streek's Publicity and Communications
Sharon Baldwin - Town Centre Manager Upper Norwood and Anerley
Frank Lissimore - Amphlett Lissimore
Emma Jayne Sheeha - Amphlett Lissimore
Lorenzo Nargi - Lorenzo
Lalit Bandlish - Gipsy Hill Dental Surgery

2. Apologies

Pat Ryan - Croydon Councillor

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Chair ran through last month's minutes. Geoffrey Harding proposed to adopt the minutes and this was seconded by Frank Lissimore.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising as a result of last month's minutes.

5. Chairman's Review

The Chair said that the Chamber will focus on business as well as networking.

5.1. Membership and Finances

The Chair said the bank balance was looking good but that it relates to membership. At present, we have £600-700 per annum. The Chamber needs to be more pro-active in attracting members in order to have events such as Christmas parties. The Chair proposed a review of the membership structure and to increase the membership fee from £25 to £50 which would be renewable annually on 1st March. A vote will be taken on this at the February meeting. Peter Runacres commented that the membership fee for Lewisham Chamber of Commerce is £80 per year. The Chair said his reason for wanting to increase the fees is so that they could have a better style of meeting and therefore make it attractive to be a member.

Peter Runacres suggested that membership fees should not be increased until the next AGM because there is £4500 in the bank account at present and the Chamber could use this up first.

The Chair said that in the past the Chamber had been hijacked by local campaigners but that now it was about business and delivering on what people are paying for.

5.2. Remembrance Sunday

The Chair will be there to present a wreath on behalf of the Chamber (perhaps jointly with the Rotary Club).

5.3. Memorial for Doug Barnes

The Chair said the Chamber should work towards producing something of lasting recognition as Doug did so much work in the area. The options were a park bench, a plaque on a building or a plaque set in the pavement. Frank Lissimore said the green space outside Safeways could be a place for a memorial. The Chair said the space on top of Anerley Hill by the park entrance (technically Bromley's space) was also a possibility for a plaque in the pavement. Lorenzo Nargi said that if the Chamber joined forces with the Rotary Club this might achieve more.

The Chair said he would be reluctant to steer towards a larger project because it might run into difficulties and he wants the Chamber to deliver. He has recently made contacts with English Heritage, but it might also take some fundraising and lobbying of council. Geoffrey Harding suggested collaboration between other organisations that Doug was part of.

5.4. Christmas Lights

Sharon Baldwin said the switch on ceremony would be Friday, 28th November from 2-7pm and she has arranged for some of Crystal Palace's football players to turn the lights on (approx 5pm). Fusion Radio will be at the event and the green space outside Safeways will be used. Fusion Radio will have a two week advertising campaign to promote the event. Sharon said the Chamber could help by getting involved in some way e.g. offering discounts on meals etc. The Salvation Army will be playing Christmas Carols round the triangle.

Croydon has given commitment to fund the lights this year but not next year. The Chamber will have to think about who funds it next year. The lights cost £5000 per annum to put up, take down and for reconditioning. Lorenzo Nargi suggested that Westow Hill should have lights up all year round which should be paid partially by the Council and partially by the traders.

5.5. Christmas Party

The party will be on Tuesday, 2nd December at 7pm and will cost £10 for food. Invitations will be posted out so people can respond. The Chamber of Commerce will provide for the drink. Lorenzo said the numbers would be limited to 28 people maximum.

Sharon Baldwin backtracked to Remembrance Sunday and added that the memorial will be floodlit after the wreaths are laid and the police are aware of the ceremony.

6. Parking and Pavement Survey

The Chair said plenty of money had been spent on expensive pavements in the triangle but there are loads of loose ends e.g. wires sticking out, kerbs not in right place, plants in upturned sewage pipes, bins not secured to the pavement. To this end, he wants to conduct a survey with the aim to encapsulate specific localised knowledge.

The survey (which will include a map of the triangle) will go out to all the traders with a personalised Chamber of Commerce pen (cost 30-40p per pen) with the aim of raising the profile of the Chamber and letting people know we have a website. Other information that could be obtained from this survey could be feedback of cleaning away of trade waste and to find out how much people are paying in business rates. This survey will mean that the Chamber is consulting with local businesses rather than issuing press statements on behalf of the local businesses, which the Chamber might wish to retract later when the local businesses do not agree with them.

Sharon Baldwin added that she spent three hours with the project manager of the triangle system and now has lists of things that need doing to be done by 28th November. She said that no dates had ever been given to the contractors who undertook this work. She said she explained to the project manager that the Chamber survey and the lists she had put together were an offer of help.

The Chair said that the triangle is awash with double yellow lines and it was intended to find out how many of these double yellow lines are actually needed. Sharon said the council were holding a consultation about the triangle and there will be a review at the end of February giving an opportunity for everyone to make their views known.

Peter Runacres said he had some documents which did include a timetable for work carried out in the triangle. He would pass these on to Sharon.

Sharon has asked for a letter to be sent to each trader re: compensation on leaky basements which might have been caused by the contractors. She said that if you have problems then the letter would explain the procedure for claiming compensation.

7. Public Drinking Ban

Pat Ryan has raised this issue at full council meeting. Sharon said that you need evidence that there is a problem associated with drinking and also how it links in with other crime issues. She also warned that by making the area a no drinking zone this might imply that the area has a big problem and look very negative. PC Kevin Holland tackled these issues before he moved away from the area. Many members said they didn't feel public drinking was an issue they heard their customers complaining about.

Penge and Croydon both have a drinking ban. Mike Pilgrim is the officer in charge of putting together an anti-drinking policy.

8. Gipsy Hill/Central Hill Junction

The Chair said the junction needed to be modified to include a pedestrian crossing. At present there is no phasing in the traffic sequence to allow people to cross. Drivers turn left illegally when pedestrians are crossing. The Chamber will put feelers out to other local community groups to join together in a campaign to change this. The road on Central Hill estate is a rat run because of the no left turn onto Gipsy Hill. Sharon said this no left turn was a mistake and they can't ignore this.

9. AOB

Lorenzo said we need parking spaces and he was also worried about resident's parking eventually being introduced into the area and local business people having nowhere to park. He said he would like to see subsidised parking for traders. The only large car park is Safeways which has CCTV but is still fairly dark. It would benefit from being made pay and display with lighting and a warden. The recycling bins could be repositioned as they are taking up spaces and also make the car park look shabby.

Croydon Council has sent the Chair Consultation documents on Shopfronts and Planning Guidance. The question is, is it a valuable document? There has been an issue with security grids with people being asked to take out what the last local policeman asked shopkeepers to put in.

Peter Runacres asked what was happening with the burnt down Evergreen trust shop. Sharon Baldwin said that a planning application had gone in for shop units with flats above and that the original owner wants to come back. She added that the old Mercedes Benz garage on Church Rd will be shops with flats above.

The Chair also added that he was investigating the costs associated with getting a FREEPOST address for the Chamber for people to send their survey returns to. The first meeting in the New Year will be postponed until Tuesday, 3rd February, 2004 at 7pm at Lorenzo's Restaurant.

Sharon added that there had been proposals for a police unit from Lambeth, Bromley and Croydon to police the triangle. Now officers have been seconded to the triangle and before Christmas there will be a unit. There will be an open meeting to meet the officers and there are four free radios to give away.

Date of next meeting - CHRISTMAS PARTY Tuesday, 2nd December at 7pm, Lorenzo's Restaurant