

FCOC Executive Committee EGM
Tuesday 25th July 2017

Meeting start 5.35pm

Welcome & Apologies

Present: James Edgar (JE), Tony Brown (TB), Stuart Fleetham (SF), Phil Fletcher (PF), Andy Bryant (AB), Ben Pulford (BP), Tom Clarke (TC)

Welcome: Terry Cordery (TCO) from FTC, John (J) from Barrington, Suzanne Lovell (SL) from Meridian Air Con and Colin Mitchell (CM) from Kiteleys Solicitors

Apologies: George Phillips (Rotary)

Quorum

The chairman, having noted that a quorum was present in accordance with the Ferndown Chamber of Commerce constitution, declared the meeting open.

Future of the Ferndown Chamber of Commerce

TB read out minutes from previous EMG on 20 June 2017.

JE as acting president open it up to the group to discuss. He went round the room and ask each committee member to give their view.

PF will stay until November. He still thinks Chamber should be disbanded and start again. He feels a clean slate with a new board is needed. He will always be around to help out but due to health issues hasn't been able to dedicate as much time recently. He wishes to spend more time on his charity work and is struggling to meet commitments of the chamber. He wishes all the best to whoever takes it forward.

TB thinks it would be great if it were to continue. He feels the chamber has become a bit of an embarrassment and this has affected business. If it is to continue chamber must step up and make positive impact. He feels problems can be easily rectified. He cited that the minutes from the past year or so are very repetitive which shows that no real progress has been made. New committee members are desperately needed. A new membership secretary is vital and they must have the time to engage with members on a weekly basis. He feels it's important that FCOC committee members need to lobby councils and sit on committees. Membership is at its lowest ever and he doesn't feel all committee members are pulling their weight.

SF is a big advocate of chamber. His business Xerocad has been involved now for 14 years. He admits he has had time issues recently but with new staff members feels he will be able to do more for chamber. He thinks the chamber does a lot more good than bad; it is just it has stagnated due to lost members and no real change in who sits on the committee. Now he his staff situation has improved he has been able to dedicate time to chamber, he has spent 4 hours talking to people about chamber and has identified new members who would like to join the committee. With fresh blood the chamber can evolve. He thinks the events put on by the chamber brings footfall to the town. Doesn't think chamber is over.

AB would like new blood to come in with new ideas. A business mandate is needed. With the new development in Ferndown he feels the businesses need a voice now more than ever. He thinks chamber should be kept going and will do whatever is right for the town. If changes to the constitution

are needed then make sure this is address at the AGM. Maybe an events committee is needed to handle the events side. Is happy to take on treasurer's position.

BP with the new development in the town the chamber needs to be active and pushing this through. Without chamber the businesses will be ignored / forgotten by the councils and developers. The businesses need a voice so that their views can be expressed. Chamber should continue and with fresh faces can move forward.

TC took on the president role in December with a lot of optimism and looking to push things forward. This was quickly dashed as for 4 months he felt unsupported and was not able to get things done.

J has spoken to businesses and it is very depressing. All ask what chamber does for them. The general feel is the chamber is more like a charity events organisers rather than a business organisation.

JE feels chamber should continue. Echoed the views from committee members and doesn't want to close it.

JE open up to invited guests SL, TCo and CM for their comments

SL asked how the jobs were allocated and could role sharing be a possibility. She said that people's busy times fall at different times of the year and it could work to share responsibilities around. For example she will have a lot of time between December to March to work on chamber. Could set up teams and have meetings that do not involve full committee all the time. Possibly look at different membership options. A lot can be done and chamber can be made to work. Recently opened a business in town and needs Ferndown to work. Maybe those who have worked hard but feel tired with chamber should step back, have a break and come back refreshed at a later date.

TCo feels there is a lot of negative around the town. The town is dying due to negative talk. Chamber needs to be more positive and active in the town.

CM has never been on a chamber committee before and is not sure of how time he could allocate to it. From an outside perspective he feels the tasks need to be broken down and allocated in bite-sized chunks. A mission statement is needed and he will try to do as much as possible to help. He wants to support Ferndown and feels chamber should focus on what can be achieved. Chamber could possible be less formal.

JE opened up to committee members again

SF thinks it is a good idea to split responsibilities; moving forward with new blood will help.

Modernise the constitution and cut out the red tape.

AB what chamber does wrong is charge people to join. Why is chamber charging people to be part of the town they are in? Chamber should be free and apply for grants from town council to operate.

TB wants FCOC committee members to commit to being on other committees in the town. There must be complete commitment; a very active membership secretary is needed. Breakfast meetings worked really well for Dorchester chamber, could something similar work for Ferndown.

PF is finding it difficult as he has been on chamber for a long time now. He has been abused in a pub about chamber and found it embarrassing. He thinks something new should be setup, if it stays as chamber nothing will change. A full time person is needed to work on membership, without this chamber will not work.

After all comments JE asked all committee members to vote.

Close chamber: 0

Continue chamber: 7



Final comments: SL would like to join the committee and can attend regular meetings. From November she can dedicate a lot more time to making the positive changes required.

CM is not worried about having voting rights but happy to join the committee and give ideas. Happy to visit shops and promote chamber.

Meeting closed 6.37pm

