



BODMIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

— Building a better Bodmin in Business for the Community

Minutes of General Chamber meeting held on Zoom on 15th February 2021 at 6:30 pm

Present: Joy Bassett, Carol Randall, Phil Gale, Phil Taylor, Phil Brown, Rob Wood, Andrew Kirk, Balu Madhvani, Mark Williams from Cornwall Marine Network as guest

Apologies from Paul Miles Rogers, Jane Tily, Daryn Dodge

Minutes

Minutes of the January meeting were accepted as an accurate record. Phil Gale proposed and Phil Taylor seconded.

Matters Arising

Carol mentioned Paul Miles Rogers' response to Phil Brown's comments about ATI in Paul's absence at the January meeting. At Paul's request, Carol sent his comments to Members by way of clarification.

Paul (in his capacity as one of the ATI 2 team) is aware of the views of Phil B and has previously commented to Phil that since his engagement that there has been a change of Business Innovation Advisors. Additionally, Acceleration Through Innovation 2 is a new project which started in April 2020. ATI 2 would be happy to listen to Phil B's concerns and would invite him to re-engage.

On a point of order, Joy said that if someone wishes to make a comment about something that was said in a previous meeting, it should be raised under the Matters Arising section of the next meeting and that is how we will deal with things in future.

Phil Taylor suggested that we do not include the Zoom details as this is a recurring meeting on Zoom and minutes are made public so people could try to join the meeting. Carol confirmed that there is no reason for the Zoom details to be included but should be included on the Agenda.

Carol mentioned on another point of order that if someone wants to share something with the meeting but does not wish it to be minuted, they should tell Joy before the meeting and she will close the meeting before they share the information.

Treasurer's report

Phil Brown reported no change from previous meeting

Membership report and issues

Phil Taylor reported no change from the previous meeting

Carol said that when the Business Plan has been finalised and the Executive Summary incorporated, she will send it to businesses on the Industrial Estates that she has researched and invite them to join. She

asked if Chamber was going to extend the free membership offer to new members. Carol said that now that we are incorporated we have expenses such as accounts and returns which will need to be met, and membership fees are our only income at present. Balu proposed that we offer a half-price first year subscription of £20 to new members, this was seconded by Phil Brown and agreed unanimously by all present.

Phil Taylor reported that 11 of the new members in 2020 joined with the free membership option. He suggested that we should write to former members who failed to renew to find out why and to write to members who are due to renew and pay for the first time to ask if they are planning to renew and if not, why not.

Timing of papers circulated to Members

There were comments about papers for discussion being sent to Members either too early or too late. Joy said we would try to send things in good time in future.

Revenue generating

Joy asked for ideas for ways to raise revenue, other than growing the membership base, such as webinars. Carol said that we need to be really creative as there are so many organisations offering free events.

Balu suggested getting someone to speak about Mental Health Wellbeing in the workplace.

Andrew Kirk felt that it would be better to wait until we can arrange face-to-face, live events, again as people do enjoy coming along, meeting face to face and enjoying refreshments.

Carol reported that she had spoken to Tim Bagshaw from Bude Business Voice, a new organisation set up with funding from the Community Led Local Development Fund. They have been given £13,000 from CLLD plus a £5000 donation from a local business owner to set up an organisation to support and represent the local business community as the Bude Chamber had ceased to function.

Carol said she had researched the CLLD and felt that we should explore whether we could get some funding to get some paid help to do the work necessary to generate additional revenue. Carol is attending one of Bude Business Voice's Focus Groups on 25th Feb and will report back at the next meeting. She is also going to call the CLLD local contact to see if there could be an opportunity.

Balu asked if we should be getting articles in the local press to let people know what we are doing. Joy said that she has done this with Bodmin Voice about the Bodmin Virtual Market but perhaps we should also try with other local press media. Andrew suggested that we could write something about the members and the range of businesses covered now.

Joy said that we have not yet joined the Cornwall Channel, because of the Covid restrictions, but once we are able to do this we will be using that as a way to get our message out.

Kickstart Scheme Update

Joy reported that unfortunately it looks as if we will not be able to be an intermediary gateway for the Kickstart scheme as the rules have now changed and employers with fewer than 30 placements can now apply directly. This would have been a good source of revenue for Chamber and although Joy has contacted Scott Mann to see if he can help, it is looking unlikely that we can participate.

Phil Brown said that he was thinking of applying for 2 Kickstart placements but wouldn't bother if not going through Chamber.

Joy said that we still want to encourage employers to help young people locally. Carol said she is updating her previous Kickstart briefing paper with information about the new rules and will circulate to Members when completed.

Mark Williams' presentation

Mark Williams from Cornwall Marine Network came along as our guest to talk about what options there are out there to help employers train, recruit and improve their work force. He was suggested by Darren Buckley.

Cornwall Marine Network (CMN) is a private not-for-profit company owned by more than 300 local marine businesses in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. The CMN Team provide expert specialist support which helps member companies to grow, by improving marketing skills, bringing innovation to market, and improving productivity in the workplace. Cornwall Marine Networks work with many different partners, including Cornwall Chamber, to deliver different training and work experience schemes.

CMN is a Kickstart gateway organisation and has made 270 referrals to the scheme. Five of these have been placed and started and they have 119 live vacancies with many more coming through the system.

CMN work with the Real Ideas Organisation (RIO) with their scheme called Game Changer; this is similar to Kickstart in that it helps prepare people for work but doesn't give the benefit of a paid salary which Kickstart offers. Game Changer is funded by the Lottery and European Social Fund (ESF).

Another scheme with which CMN is involved is one called Skills Your Way, which aims to support 1,400+ young people disengaged (or at risk of disengaging) from education, employment and training, to access support appropriate to their individual needs. This is run by the Learning Partnership and funded by the ESF and Cornwall Council.

CMN has an Apprenticeship scheme which provides a supportive environment to improve the chances of success as there are currently a lot of failures within the system.

CMN works with Truro and Penwith College on two training schemes, Employer Led Skills and Business Clusters. The Employer Led Skills programme is funded by ESF and provides industry master-classes and bespoke training packages. A 50% discount is available off accredited training, up to a maximum of £500 per learner.

Business Clusters is a voucher-funded scheme which looks to review and revise training in line with industry sector requirement, e.g. schemes for the Hospitality and Health & Social Care sectors.

Mark also mentioned the Apprenticeship Development Fund, an independent training provider delivering professional and apprenticeship training in several industry sectors including passenger transport, warehouse and distribution, business administration, team leading and customer services.

Mark said that employers can go the Cornwall Skills Hub to get a Training Needs Analysis to see which schemes would best suit their needs.

Balu mentioned that he is currently working with Peninsula DPN to learn digital skills to enable him to expand his business online. He also mentioned that he is looking for £18,000 for the Walker Lines project and Mark suggested that he contact him for information about possible grant funding.

Joy mentioned that there are IT skills shortages, particularly among women. Mark mentioned Software Cornwall who are trying to encourage young women into the IT sector, and also mentioned Network Cornwall which is a network of over 1000 women. Mark also mentioned the Digital Skills Partnership which runs IT boot camps. CMN is also working with Bluescreen IT to run boot camps on coding.

Phil Gale said that it is very hard to find training for clockmaking, but that he has someone from Berkshire who wants to come to get some training from him.

Mark Williams mentioned the Colliford Lake project, which is offering training in stone hedging. There was a brief discussion about artisan skills dying out. Mark mentioned Creative Kernow at Redruth, which offers some training in craft skills. Mark said that Careers Services and Schools have a dilemma in that they have such a strong focus on the core academic subjects that they tend to forget the skills options for young people.

Carol said that with upcycling trends and the popularity of TV shows such as The Repair Shop and Money for Nothing, it is surprising that someone doesn't see this is a business opportunity.

Bodmin Virtual Market (BVM) Update

Carol reported that the Virtual Market has been a real success but is slowing now and she is speaking with Paul Miles Rogers about making the traders on the market aware of all of the free skills training and advice that is available.

Carol mentioned that there has been some concern voiced on social media that some of these new traders working from home may not have the relevant certification they need. For example, are people baking at home meeting the required food standards? This is one thing we are looking to bring to the attention of the BVM traders.

Any Other Business

Joy reported that Bodmin Town Council (BTC) has now become a Market Authority, and so we will be looking at working with them to get physical markets in the town centre.

Balu asked about the Bodmin Jail, as we haven't seen Rajesh for some time, and asked what was happening about the car park. Joy said that the Jail is not open at the moment because of Covid restrictions and there are some unresolved issues with BTC that are not in the public domain.

Balu mentioned the passing of Peter Jewell, who was an active community supporter in Bodmin, and said that his funeral is on Thursday, 17th February.

Next Meetings

Next Chamber Meeting will be on Monday, 15th March at 6.30 pm

Next Breakfast Meetings are on 16th February and 2nd March at 8 am. Scott Mann should be with us on the 2nd March.