

**DRAFT**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF BODMIN CHAMBER  
OF COMMERCE HELD ON MONDAY 21<sup>st</sup> JANUARY 2019**

**The following People were in attendance:**

Ann Kerridge  
Fiona Winter  
Philip Ugalde (M)  
Paula Hutchens (M)  
Karen Phillips  
Balu Madhvani (M)  
Sarah Horne (M)  
Alison Perrin (M)  
Tim Williams (M)  
Philip Taylor (M)  
Julie Rowan (M)  
Julia Barnett  
Dave Barnett  
Tony Goslin (M)  
Kim Roscoe (M)  
Gill Roscoe (M)  
Joy Bassett (Deputy Chair)

**1. Welcome from Deputy Chairman and introduction of visitors**

The Deputy Chairman opened the Meeting and welcomed All. JB reported that the Chairman was unable to attend due to work commitments.

**2. A Vision for Bodmin**

Some time was given to discuss how people saw the future of Bodmin and what could be done to improve the social and economic wellbeing of the town. The discussion was centred around three questions:

1. How do you want to see the town centre develop and improve over the coming years and what actions would they most support to help achieve a better town centre?
2. Apart from improving the town centre what sectors of the local economy have the greatest potential for growth and again what actions would support that growth?
3. Do you have any other thoughts on how to support business and jobs in Bodmin?

Neil Pendleton has been asking the same questions to Town Council and Cornwall Councillors and other organisations with the aim of producing a draft document containing a shared vision for the town and 10 achievable priorities for the next 10-15 that will help Bodmin to achieve economic growth and prosperity.

JB informed the group that Neil was currently on holiday but all the points and comments made this evening will be fed back to him. There will be another meeting called in March where all the groups/stakeholders involved would come together.

JB reported that Neil McInroy from CLES in Manchester visited Bodmin on the 10<sup>th</sup> January and meet with several people from Cornwall Council's Planning and Economic departments, Bodmin College, Into Bodmin and Business leaders to talk about the success of the Preston Model – how local investment, local procurement, local recruitment had a positive and powerful effect on the local economy.

PU advised that Neil McInroy had been asked by Westminster to form a group to consider how town centres could re-invent themselves and this was precisely what Chamber had been talking about i.e. creating a town with resilience. He believed the economics were changing and felt it important to create a place where people wished to 'linger longer'. He also believed that businesses should be really good in order to compete and therefore needed training. He said that a "brilliant business school" had been suggested and felt that this could encourage entrepreneurship. He said too it was more about people and a feeling of community.

A discussion ensued looking at the three questions:

**A. How do you want to see the town centre develop and improve over the coming years and what actions would they most support to help achieve a better town centre?**

An indoor space out of the rain would be of great help in encouraging visitors and residents alike.

The town suffered from the 'doughnut' effect; people were parking for free around the Town and we needed to try and get them into the Town Centre. The Town needed to take back control of parking with reasonable rates charged to locals to encourage them in.

The night-time economy needed to grow e.g. restaurants, bars and cafes extending their opening hours. With the imminent opening of the Cinema, he hoped that would stimulate the opening of restaurants too.

A Farmers' Market could bring people in.

Food Festivals to promote local food and drink.

Weekend promotion of some of the well-known local food and drink businesses such as Camel Valley, showcasing their wares.

A local Business School that could help grow skills and showcase the talent.

Increasing the use of Shire Hall.

A local Trust controlled by local people for local investment.

Good public transport was needed and possibly a 'park and ride' in order to keep traffic out of, thus creating a better town. A local 'uber' scheme could be considered.

Taxi Ranks at supermarkets in order to bring people into the town.

The closure of banks was a major problem.

### **B. What Sectors of the Local Economy have the greatest potential for growth?**

Food processing was particularly relevant along with all related support sectors, as well as hospitality.

Building trades i.e. not large multi-national building firms but small local builders who carry out ongoing maintenance and repairs etc.

Tech businesses

The 'grey pound' i.e. the baby boomers and we should be looking to see what they spend their money on.

Service-related businesses in the form of pop-up shops etc.

Tourism it was agreed, is a major benefit and would be more so if the various Tourist Attractions could be consolidated in a way that would make accessing them simple such as by Rover Bus.

Tourism 'experiences' could be marketed more including cycling clubs and outdoor experiences on Bodmin Moor.

Start-ups.

### **C. Any other thoughts on how to support business and jobs in Bodmin?**

Suggestions included:

- Free parking
- A commitment from a major Bank to remain open.
- Challenge ourselves to set the example to shop locally for goods and services.
- Balu said that his business rewarded people who spent money in his shop.
- PU was keen to see Bodmin as a "must visit" place for people outside of the town to visit. Another member felt it important to encourage our children to return after completing their education. The Chair

reiterated how important it was for businesses to talk to the College and for them to remain in touch. This was endorsed by the Member from Bodmin College Allison Perrin.

- The importance of the food industry in Bodmin was generally acknowledged and agreed it was key that the food industry and education/Colleges work together. Phil Ugalde advised that there were highly paid jobs in the food industry as well as many support trades.
- It was also important to ensure that the right mix of houses were built – social and affordable housing as well as accessible housing for the aging population but also executive type houses to attract high earners/professionals.
- PU suggested it might be possible to convert some shops back into houses. One member was totally opposed that idea and did not feel that houses were appropriate in town centres. PU felt there were some shops that were simply not suitable to be shops and wondered whether town centre offices could be an option?
- Suggesting new businesses, Phil Taylor suggested that an antiquarian bookshop and a Gelateria might be an attractive option. A member felt that high business rates would always prove a deterrent.

### 3 Chamber Business

#### a. Apologies for Absence:

Paul Miles Rogers (Chairman), Geoff Kestell and Lee Keat both of Martin & Budge Menswear

#### b. Minutes of Last Meeting

There were none as the November Meeting had been inquorate and the October minutes appeared to be still in draft form and for which JB apologised. C/F

#### c. Matters Arising: C/F

d. Correspondence/Meetings Attended Nothing to report

#### e. Bodmin Town Council Update C/F

#### f. Free Membership

Phil Taylor formally **PROPOSED** offering free membership to any business who would like to see what Chamber is all about. He proposed inviting every business to become a free member for one year. The benefits of being a paid-up member include:

- Voting rights
- Access to Chamber training events
- Promotion/marketing support
- Access to help and advice.

The proposal was Seconded and **AGREED**.

A member proposed communicating this to every member that attended the re-launch of Bodmin Chamber of Commerce. **AGREED**.

**g. Discussion of idea of one or more paid posts**

The Chairman reported that conversations between the Chamber and Better Bodmin have led to a proposal that the two organisations begin to look at funding for a paid post – someone to help with admin, recruitment of members and marketing the town. PU reported that St Agnes had succeeded in gaining funding for a part-time post. He felt that once funding was available, Chamber could really begin to move forward. There was general support in the room for the proposal, but due to time restraints JB suggested this matter be carried forward to the next meeting so members can vote.

In the meantime ***JB and PU will gather information on what funding is available.***

**h. All I want for Christmas – Promotion**

JB talked about the Christmas Visa advert showing local High Street shops - The baker, florist, butcher, fruit & veg singing ‘All I want for Christmas is you’ as a reminder for people to support their local shops and businesses. JB saw that Liskeard did a similar Christmas advert for their local shops. JB suggested maybe this is something we could do for next year working with the film/media students from the college. ***JB to take this forward.***

**i. Date and time of next meeting**

**18<sup>th</sup> February** – Catherine Parnell from Acceleration for Innovation (a Plymouth of University initiative) is coming to talk about the free support they offer small businesses who show innovative ways of growing their business.

**18<sup>th</sup> March** – a representative from Unlocking Potential would address the meeting.

**15<sup>th</sup> April** – AGM with Kim Conchie the Chair of Cornwall Council

**j. Any other Business**

Balu reported problems with cars parking where the bollards have been removed at the top end of Honey Street right outside his shop. Confirmed that this was Cllr Pat Rogerson’s Ward.

A member suggested a signpost for Honey Street businesses so as to be able to get rid of all the A-frames. ***JB said she would draft a letter of support to Cornwall Council.***

Balu thanked Chamber for supporting his Gymnasium for Boxing on the Walker Lines Estate and advised of a Boxing Show on 16<sup>th</sup> February – with pasties!

**The Meeting closed at 19.49 p.m.**