

LOSTWITHIEL BUSINESS GROUP

Annual General Meeting 2023



07 MARCH 2023 / 19:30 PM / Church Rooms, Lostwithiel

2022/23 COMMITTEE

Jeff Pearce (Chair), Russell Cosway (Vice-Chair), Guy Molyneux (Treasurer),
Ray Tyers (Membership Secretary)

Absent Committee Members:

Julie Tamblin (Secretary), Michelle Nineham (Events)

MINUTES

Aside from the 2022/23 Committee members, there were 12 others in attendance.

Apologies for absence

Julie Tamblin (Secretary), Richard Bower (Jazz Cafe), David Guiterman (Lostfest), Kat and Mat (Iteracy), Peter and Tricia (Hidden Valley Gardens)

Minutes of the last A.G.M.

Approved

Chairman's Report - Jeff Pearce

Almost 18 months to the day since our last AGM & when I took over as Chair of the business group, at that time we were reeling from a year and a half of Covid lockdowns & restrictions the likes that we could never have envisaged.

Then just as we started to believe we were through Covid & we could start to repair our businesses we were struck again with war in Ukraine, the invasion by Russia has caused not only a terrible humanitarian crisis but also had a massive impact on the world economy which quickly filtered

down to our own businesses, with customers having less money in their pockets to spend & prices for our goods & utility bills rocketing...

Arguably the perfect storm with one crisis following another, leaving us reeling having endured 3 years of uncertainty & instability.

Thankfully, most of us are still here & although heart breaking for those businesses that have had no option but to close their doors & cease trading, we should remain positive, our town & community have proven to be resilient & although our town has seen many changes in the past 18 months I believe we still look good & in far better shape than many towns around us.

More reason perhaps to start thinking outside the box & finding new ways to entice visitors to our town & review how we support each other.

The last 18 months have seen the town & community working hard to return our annual events, unfortunately Dickensian 2021 couldn't proceed with the uncertainty of Covid still lurking & the replacement of simply offering late night shopping didn't excite many, although the Christmas carols around the tree in the parade was a superb coming together & that certainly offered hope & much inspiration.

Events in 2022 were well attended from Jubilee wreath making to our now established Gin festival & into Christmas wreath making and possibly one of our best ever Dickensian nights...

There were many people involved in helping with these events, I'm afraid to try naming all that helped in making these things happen in case I miss someone out, but you know who you are, thank you & please keep up the support & hopefully we can grab a few more to help out this coming year.

So, on the theme of you know who you are... Big thank you to both Jubilee & Christmas wreath making organisers, Jubilee flags, Team Gin festival, Team Dickensian including, Advent windows, Santa's Grotto & lego trail, design & printing, Team Christmas trees, & team Carols around the tree. With your help we made a difference.

Over the past year our website has had a big makeover, it now has a modern feel, is user friendly & more efficient at attracting visitors to our town & to the many types of businesses we represent.

Also, we now have an online leaflet which can be accessed through the website or via a QR code, a bit of work to determine how we market that but otherwise good to go for the season. Thank you to Kat & Mat at Literacy for their work & support, also a big thank you to Keith Southgate who works behind the scenes keeping our website up to date.

Marketing & website figures

We had a good bonus hit for the new Dr campaign with 4x as many views than for a normal day which would be around 200, so that campaign offered extra benefits to the community & showing the benefits of marketing & giving us 5644 hits for February compared to a normal month of just around 3,000, overall, our web visitors are up around 10% on the year to 48,410 for 2022.

Facebook & Instagram followers are also up by around 10%, Twitter has remained steady. Together they give us a 1st level reach of around 10,000 followers, but over the year we have reached over 60,000 people with our best one-day post being the gin festival with 8,000 reach.

Finally I'd like to thank everyone on the committee for their support & hard work over the last 18 months, it's been a pleasure working with you, I say it that way as I will not be standing again for re-election as chair, I certainly want to stay involved but I'm trying to wind down towards retirement but not doing very well at it so far, seem to be doing more every year, so time for someone else to take the helm, I also think it's a healthy option to rotate the chair & keep fresh ideas coming...

Lostwithiel has so much to offer & yet still we need to keep on plugging have you found us yet, good luck to everyone for 2023.

Treasurer's Report

Finances remain in good shape but reserves have not grown mainly because of the higher cost of Dickensian event. The Group currently has approximately £10,000 on hand.

Election of Officers

The Chair, Jeff Pearce, resigned and indicated that he did not wish to stand for election for Chair again but would be happy to stand for the Communications role and remain the Gin Festival Coordinator. Russell

Cosway took over the Chair to undertake the election of the new LBG Committee.

Chairman

Russell Cosway was proposed by Rebecca Molyneux, seconded by Hayley Dorrington - Elected unanimously

Vice Chairman

No proposals or volunteers - selection of a role holder delegated to the Committee

Treasurer

Guy Molyneux was proposed by Claire Alexander and seconded by Jeff Pearce - Elected unanimously but with the comment that it would be good if someone else would step up to the role in future years.

Secretary

Rebecca Molyneux was proposed by Claire Alexander and seconded by Jamie Alexander - Elected unanimously but accepted on the basis that the roles scope did not creep beyond that defined in the constitution.

Communications

Jeff Pearce was proposed by Hayley Dorrington and seconded by Vicki Carver - Elected unanimously.

Membership

Ray Tyers was proposed by Jeff Pearce and seconded by Vicki Carver - Unanimously elected

NB: Ray has subsequently resigned from the LBG Committee and the Membership Secretary role now stands as vacant.

Events

The Chair suggested a hold be put on electing to the Events Coordinator role in the Committee and took a vote that the roles be reviewed in the constitution and present findings at a future General Meeting - Accepted unanimously

Gin Festival date

The Gin Festival has always previously occurred on the 4th Saturday of June. This would make the date Saturday 24 June 2023 - Agreed

Dickensian date

Although the Dickensian has always been held on the 2nd Thursday in December, the success of the earlier date of the 2022 event (8 December) meant that there was a split view between breaking tradition and going for the 7 December 2023 or stick with the 2nd Thursday of the 14 December 2023.

An open discussion of both points of view were presented by various members and the final vote fell on the 7 December 2023.

Future Ideas & AOB

A request to encourage more volunteering for events though the group communications was made by Claire Alexander. The Chair noted the issue and suggestion.

Vicki Carver expressed a desire to build our relationship with Duchy Nursery and volunteered to act as our liaison.

John Scott from the Town Team reminded the attendees that there was a meeting on the 14/3/23 between 15:00-19:00 discussing the transport, parking and road issues.

Hayley Dorrington requested an update on progress with town centre signages suggested to be positioned on the Steven Foy building wall. Kirsty Mitchell was discussing the property owner and we will progress this and update in communications.

Guy Molyneux raised the issue of the Business Group remaining neutral on contentious planning applications. The Gillyflower Farm planning application and the related community discord taught us that the group can easily be seen as taking sides.

The request was made that the Committee must remain neutral and not engage in communications which might not represent the interests and feelings of the whole LBG membership. This was agreed by a unanimous vote. It was noted by the Chair that this must not affect our role of promoting all businesses in the membership.

Ray Tyers explained that we regularly have applications to join the Lostwithiel Business Group from outside the catchment area defined in our constitution. It was suggested that we create an 'associate membership' with no voting right at the meetings and with due consideration being given to any significant conflict with full members. The proposal was agreed in principle and the Committee left to discuss.

Claire Alexander raised a comment on the cost of group membership still remaining at £25, feeling that it was too cheap. No proposal was made to increase the membership fee for 2023/4 but accept that the benefits and value of the membership needs better definition and circulation before we consider an increase.

Heritage Building Consultation - Jon Nicholls

The AGM formally ended and the meeting was handed over to Jon Nicholls who was requesting feedback from the local businesses on ideas for the

the future of some of our heritage buildings, such as Taprell and Edgecombe Houses.