

DIDCOT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE JANUARY 2010 NEWSLETTER

This month's newsletter is sponsored by FRS Marketing



Introduction

Welcome to you all and a very happy new year from the Committee and Members of Didcot Chamber of Commerce. Our newsletter is bi-monthly and is posted on the website. Please mail your any articles or news to: newsletter@didcotchamberofcommerce.co.uk

2010 issues	Deadline for newsletter copy	Newsletter circulation
March	Friday 12 th March	Wk commencing 29 th March
May	Friday 14 th May	Wk commencing 24 th May
July	Friday 16 th July	Wk commencing 26 th July
September	Friday 17 th September	Wk commencing 27 th Sept
November	Friday 12 th November	Wk commencing 22 nd Nov

Chamber Business Meetings are held bi-monthly and details are listed on the Chamber website: www.didcotchamberofcommerce.co.uk

President's Report for December 2009 and January 2010

Dear All

I'd like to wish you all a very happy new year and I hope 2010 will be a better year for local businesses. The snow has got us off to a rather slow start but with luck we may have the 'barbeque summer' the Met Office has promised us!

The new Chamber Committee was voted in at our December AGM and we welcome new faces to the team, Julia Williams, Manager of the Apple Cart Premier Inn as Event Co-ordinator, Jayne Reddyhoff, The Adword Adviser and Simon Bassett, Withy King as committee supporters. Fiona Smart is now Vice President, supporting me in my renewed role as President. Jeanette Howse of Well Preserved is now Chair and continues to do an excellent job of managing our PR and Mike Foster continues in his valued post as Treasurer. Our sterling webmaster Dave Roberts stays in role this year and we look forward to some new developments to the website during 2010.

I would urge you all to support the Chamber through participation as this helps facilitate business networking and information sharing regarding opportunities and developments in the local area. Networking is also an ideal means of generating local business.

On 14th December I attended the Town Council meeting as an observer. Run to a set format and around an hour long, it covers a range of topics from planning and development to arts, grants, and finance. Letters to the Leader of the Council included a request for a letter to be sent to the Chamber regarding financial support for the Christmas lights. Loss of budget from central Government is becoming a key issue and I welcome comment from Chamber members on this topic, particularly with regard to requests by the Council for Chamber contributions.

I'm delighted to report that the Christmas dinner organised by Anna Gatrell was a great success and the Chamber received her heartfelt thanks for all the donations of goods made by members to help support the event. People who would have spent Christmas alone were able to enjoy good food and the company of others thanks to the many volunteers who made the day possible.

On 17th December I attended the John Eldridge Awards at the Civic Hall where a number of familiar Didcot faces were nominated for the award categories. The awards recognize the many unsung heroes who make things happen in and around Didcot. In future I would love to see even more nominations made by locals for good causes, perhaps including our own Street Fair which was enjoyed by many in November.

A recent meeting was held about the modernization and refurbishment of the Civic Hall. It will be closed for a period during works and I proposed the Chamber as a contact to help users find alternative venues during this period.

During December I also attended the Oxford Business Network meeting and Tourism South East's event at Heythrop Park. Both brought me into contact with some very interesting people and diverse businesses from across the county.

I recommend you all check the Oxfordshire Town Chambers Network website www.OTCN.co.uk to view new OTCN tender opportunities. I know some of you have already seized the opportunity!

Congratulations go to Chamber members A1 Financials, one of only 5 businesses out of 3,700 UK practices to be nominated for the national 'Bookkeeping Practice Of The Year' Lucas 2009 Award sponsored by The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers. Hopefully we will see other businesses achieving such richly deserved recognition for the standard of their work, this year. Owner of A1 Financials Mike Foster also became a first time Dad to Molly so congratulations to Mike and Sally on a more personal front too!

Our key objective this year as a Chamber is to generate more members and we have budgeted to support this drive. We are particularly keen to encourage Didcot retailers to join the Chamber and for members to let us know what they would like from the Chamber. My door is always open

to suggestions and ideas as well as feedback on Chamber and Council related topics so please feel free to get in touch.

Finally, please can I encourage you all to recommend Chamber membership to your fellow business contacts and associates. Organic growth will help support our broader appeal for new members.

Wishing you all a very happy and prosperous new year,

Glyn Hall
President of Didcot Chamber of Commerce

Treasurer's Report

Following the AGM, I am pleased to report that the annual membership fee has remained at £50 for 2010. We have also agreed to introduce a pro rata rate for new members joining throughout the year, with the rate changing after quarters 2 and 3.

The Membership renewal letters for 2010 have all been posted and thanks to early respondees for their payments.

Tourism South East will shortly be contacting Chamber members who opted for the joint membership option regarding the discounted membership fee offered to Didcot Chamber members. It provides access to a [range of benefits](#) and the details are posted on the [Chamber website](#).

If you are not currently a member and would like to join the chamber, then please visit the [web site](#) for an application form. You can either pay direct to our bank account or by sending a cheque payable to 'Didcot Chamber of Commerce' to me at Mike Foster, 88 Roding Way, Didcot, OX11 7RQ.

The budget for 2010 was agreed at the recent AGM, where copies were distributed. If you would like a copy, then please contact me mike@a1-group.co.uk

Didcot Chamber of Commerce Events

Our post Christmas Social will be held at 7pm at the Sun Koshi restaurant in Didcot and I'm looking forward to seeing many of you there. Many thanks to Jeanette for organizing this event. Please keep your eye on the website where I will be posting up and coming networking events and please think about other local businesses that may benefit from coming along.

Our next business meeting will be held at Proskills on 24th February 2010. There will be a talk by Andy Bradburn, Head of the UK Operations Team at Proskills entitled 'A guide to navigating the skills system to help up-skill your workforce'. Please book to attend by contacting my e-mail below.

If anyone would like to hear speakers on any particular topic of interest, please let me know.

Julia Williams,

Event Co-ordinator

e-mail: events@didcotchamberofcommerce.co.uk

Didcot Christmas Street Fair

Didcot's Dickens St Fair on 27 November was another huge success. We were blessed with a lovely day to set up, no wind or rain and it stayed that way all evening. There were a record 75 local schools, clubs, charities and crafts stalls who all did good business and an array of games, rides and a funfair to appeal to the whole family. Special guest Gerald Dickens thoroughly enjoyed the evening, visiting the stands and shops as well as riding on the carousel and taking part in the parade.

The new team of electricians led by Cav Cavron of Cav Electrical Services did an amazing job of keeping everyone lit and powered and when the generator for the Big wheel failed they were able to help until a new generator was delivered. Thanks go to the Youth Group at TRAIN who gave over their entire area for Santa's Grotto who had to move due to the refurbishment at the Methodist Hall and to our sponsors, Didcot Town Council, Didcot Chamber of Commerce Simply Facilities, Blueberry Business Support, N power, Newbury Building Society, K Design, Kingdom Signs, BT, Round and About Magazine and Niki Gillham.

The Street Fair Committee did an excellent job in raising nearly £13,000. After all the bills have been paid there should be a small amount to start planning the next Christmas Street Fair on Thursday 25th November 2010. Gifts or other items for our bric a brac and tombola stalls at local events are welcome this year, to help fundraise. Details of these events will be posted on the Chamber Web site.

The Street Fair Committee are holding a review meeting on the 12th February and this will kick off the 2010 Fair. The theme is yet to be decided

For more information on the Street Fair or to get involved or become a sponsor please contact Jeanette Howse, Chairman Didcot Christmas St Fair at:

publicity@didcotchambercommerce.co.uk

Newsletter Sponsor Profile – FRS Marketing

“I know that half my advertising is wasted... I just don't know which half.” John Wanamaker. Know the feeling and want to do something about it in 2010?

FRS Marketing offer a range of marketing services including marketing plans, PR, copywriting, website design and promotional materials. Our expertise can help:

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We work with clients ranging from The Open University and Against Breast Cancer to The Pendon Museum and 4 Business Interiors. We have also carried out work for a number of Chamber members and can provide business references on request.

Make a positive start to 2010 by contacting Fiona Smart to book your free marketing consultation.

Tel: 01235 815375 **E-mail:** enquiries@frsmarketing.co.uk **Website:** www.frsmarketing.co.uk

Free Business Link Event

Opportunities for small businesses are opening up in the London 2012 and Public Sector supply chains. However, buyers are sometimes concerned about the resources and capability of small businesses to deliver.

Business Link are running a FREE workshop on 'How to form and bid as a partnership/ consortia' workshop to learn how best to make a successful bid through working with other companies. Places are limited to one delegate per company so book soon! Details are listed under the events section of the Business Link website at <http://online.businesslink.gov.uk/>

Call For Chamber Volunteers

The Chamber is actively seeking a volunteer for the role of membership coordinator. Please contact Fiona Smart newsletter@didcotchamberofcommerce.co.uk if you would like a copy of the role description.

Sponsorship of the bi-monthly Chamber Newsletter

If your business would like to sponsor the newsletter for £25, please contact newsletter@didcotchamberofcommerce.co.uk to register your interest. Future sponsors are being held on a first come, first serve basis.

What's on in Didcot

For current event listings please go to the Didcot First website: www.didcotfirst.org.uk

Employment Advice on Dealing with the adverse effects of weather conditions on the workforce

Withy King's Employment Team has issued some useful advice for businesses on dealing with the recent weather conditions in relation to employees. To download the document please go to:

www.withyking.co.uk/cms/document/Dealing_with_effects_of_adverse_weather.pdf

Closure of the Civic Hall

It is anticipated that the Civic Hall will close in June 2010. We encourage other local venues to contact the Chamber with details of meeting and conference rooms available for hire.

To get the ball rolling Karen Smith, Manager of the Loyd Lindsay Rooms in Ardington is offering the venue out for meetings, conferences and events at highly competitive rates. The main hall is undergoing refurbishment during February and Karen's contact details are located at:

www.loydlindsayrooms.co.uk

The Applecart at Milton Interchange can also accommodate meetings, meals and light refreshments and can reserve a meeting 'booth' on request. Contact details are on the website:

www.tabletable.co.uk/ourRestaurants/The_Applecart/