

NEWSLETTER



February 2010

Chairman's Message...

A belated Happy New Year to all readers of this Newsletter. If you are already a member, I appreciate your support, if not, it is time you seriously considered being a part of the only voice which truly represents the business and commercial interests of the town. Whether you are a retailer, a tradesman or represent a profession, we all have an equal interest in helping each other and seeing the town prosper and it is only through our influence that this can be achieved. Given the past performance of the District Council and the sounds coming from County Hall, it seems now more than ever we are dependant on our own efforts and the support which we have enjoyed and hopefully will continue to receive from the Town Council.

Elsewhere in this Newsletter is notice of an Open Evening to be held at SeaBreeze, by kind invitation of Rhonda Mills, when instead of the usual formality of a General Meeting, there will be the opportunity to mingle with other members and non-members and we hope to hear what you want from the Chamber and get feedback which will help us to plan future events. For those of you who may not have visited this eclectic collection of local Art and unusual gifts, this will be in itself a worthwhile visit. I look forward to meeting and talking with you on Wednesday 24th February between 5.30 and 7.00 p.m. There will be some wine and nibbles, so don't miss out!

It is likely 2010 will prove at least as challenging, if not more so, than 2009. The economic signs are not good and are unlikely to improve after the inevitable General Election, regardless of the result. We need to make sure the offering we give to our customers is better than ever. Our levels of service must be second to none. Above all, we must emphasise value for money, which should never be confused with cheapness. Although we have seen several names depart from our shopping streets recently, there are a number of new ones who are getting ready to launch. We wish them well and hope to welcome you to our meetings. The establishment of new businesses demonstrates most clearly the interdependence between professions, tradesmen and retailers. We each have a part to play and we must play it to the full.

One of the objectives of the Chamber should be to provide services either not previously available or on better terms than could be obtained individually. I have been approached regarding the disposal of confidential waste. Many of us run businesses where we have customers' details, e.g. credit card numbers, addresses or other documents where it is expected these will be disposed of securely. However, we do not have sufficient individually to make the destruction of such material by a commercial undertaking viable. If there are sufficient interested parties, a once a month round by such a company could be worthwhile and work out cost effective. If you are interested, talk to me on the 24th February or contact me at geoff@footwear4you.co.uk. I would be pleased to hear of any other joint ventures which members would like to bring forward so that these can be circulated through the medium of this Newsletter.

It would be negligent to finish without mentioning and thanking all those who worked so tirelessly in organising the Christmas 2009 lights. The switch on itself was a great success, by all accounts, the 'best ever'. Attendance at the evening reception was disappointing but nevertheless all in all it was a great day. This year, due to there being no grant money available from Sedgemoor and escalating costs, we are advising the Town Council we shall probably be unable to undertake the kind of show we have in the past. We will, of course, offer every assistance within our limited resources so that the town does not go without the spectacle it has come to expect and deserves. It just remains for me to wish you a Prosperous 2010 and I look forward to seeing you at one of our meetings.

Geoffrey Shickle

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INFORMAL OPEN MEETING WITH DRINKS AND NIBBLES

Wednesday 24th February 2010

5.30 p.m. until 7.00 p.m.

(arrive at your leisure)

**at Seabreeze, 37 Victoria Street,
(Opposite the Ritz Cinema, Burnham-on-Sea)**

This is a sociable time to chat with the committee, plus other members and potential members. Possible subjects might include giving your opinion on the future functions of the Chamber, and concerns about the town and the effect on local business. Are you interested in publishing another Shoppers Guide? Come and talk to us in a cosy environment.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS REVIEW

Co-operation was the name of the game at the 'Christmas Lights Switch On' proving what a vibrant, friendly town Burnham-on-Sea can be. Mike Ham was the main organiser on behalf of the chamber, a mammoth task, backed up by the rest of the committee. Buncombes managed to work around the bad weather to get the lights up on time, the Lions did a wonderful job of stewarding and the Queen Victoria provided refreshments and organised the road barriers and cones. The trailer that was used as a stage was provided by Clive and Ruth of C & R Trucking, the sound system by GC Music and the musical entertainment by the Ginger Hitlas. BARB were there with a hovercraft and the pantomime society did face painting. Father Christmas, who was delivered by Fergus the Tractor and his creator Steve Burnside, joyfully distributed sweets to the children. The lights were switched on by the Mayor, the Carnival Queen, her Princesses and the Mayor's cadet. The event was covered by Burnham-on-Sea.com, the Weekly News

and the Times so our town and the stunning lights were shown off to great effect. The area for the audience to mingle was larger this year but was full to capacity at times despite the biting cold. This was truly a community event born out of community spirit.

Committee:

Chairman: *Geoff Shickle...786446*

Vice-Chairman: *Tom Ashton...786726*

Secretary: *Jonathon Walter...07808 988182*

Treasurer: *Nigel Kemp...787307*

President: *Gerry Germain...785031*

Publicity: *Mark Newman...07834 635797*

Christmas Lights: *Mike Ham...782568*

Newsletter: *Rhonda Mills...783276*