

Wilton and District Business Chamber Report to SWWAB. 1st September 2013

Dear Board Members

I should like, once again, to thank the Board for their support. In addition to the obvious benefits which funding imports, the public declaration of support enhances the credibility of the Chamber and the importance of the tasks which it undertakes.

At the end of the first six months of this initiative, it is clear that the success we have achieved, results from the combined impact of those specific WDBC projects which are part-funded by SWWAB and also those which are not.

Clearly, getting the “Wilton means business” message across and branding Wilton as a “destination” do not respond to a quick fix!

Amongst our successes in the first 6 months are:-

1. **Raising the profile of WDBC amongst the business community.**
 - . we now have 43 paid up members, including some of the most significant employers – M J Abbott, Wilton Carpets, Reeve the Baker, Wilton Estate, Wilton Shopping Village – as well as smaller enterprises
 - . an awareness amongst the business community of the existence of the Chamber (and a very positive feedback that “something is being done”): my letter and questionnaire sent to 500 local business in April seems to have had some effect, despite a poor return of completed questionnaires.
 - . getting our website live
 - . a recognition that getting more potential customers in to see the individual providers of goods and services locally is best achieved by getting more people into the area
 - . a Membership Officer (since June) on the committee, who can focus on continuing to build and retain membership

2. **Raising the profile amongst the wider community**
 - . taking a stall at the Community Carnival at Wilton Shopping Village and distributing WDBC pens, together with promotional materials on behalf of our members gave the Chamber a very visible presence (reassuringly, most people said that they had heard of /read something about WDBC)
 - . a monthly full-page ad. in The Valley News (at a much-appreciated discounted rate), for 6 months, each month sponsored by one of our members and listing all of our members and their contact details, keeps WDBC in the public eye
 - . the opportunity to be trained for benchmarking, the results of which will be of significance and interest to the wider community, as well as to businesses and to the developers of the former Erskine Barracks site.

3. Raising the profile amongst other groups in Wilton

- . the enhanced status of WDBC has had some influence in persuading other local organisations to respond positively to my invitation to join a Wilton Town / Community Team, the membership of which now includes AONB, Pembroke Arms Hotel, Wilton Community Carnival, Wilton Community Centre, Wilton Community Land Trust, Wilton House and Estate, Wilton Rotary, Wilton Parish and Baptist churches, Wilton Shopping Village and Wilton Town Council, as well as WDBC, Wiltshire Councillor for Wilton and the Wylie Valley and a representative of SWWAB.
- . The Town / Community Team sponsored Wilton's first "Big Lunch" (an Eden Project-inspired community picnic) in June, is engaged in debating Neighbourhood Planning, supports (via WDBC and otherwise) the re-opening of Wilton Station and the Expo planned for November.

4. Raising the profile outside of Wilton

- . John Glen MP and Julie Girling MEP are our speakers at the WDBC's networking lunch on 6th September
- . a second "Meet the Neighbours" event, with members of the chambers/associations from Gillingham, Mere, Shaftesbury and Tisbury, as well as WDBC, is being held in Wilton on 16th September
- . Jane Scott, together with Isobel Brown (LEP) are our speakers at the WDBC's networking lunch on 30th October
- . members of the business community – WDBC members or otherwise – have met directly with the developers of the former Erskine Barracks site (Redrow Homes and OurEnterprise) and been invited to maintain dialogue/contact with them.
- . attendance at the Market Towns Networking meetings (by reason of my role of WDBC President) further enhances the status of Wilton - the smallest of the market towns – and of its Business Chamber.

As to the specific SWWAB part-funded activities proposed for Q2 and Q3 2013 (and update on those planned for Q4): -

A: Identify and mailshot all Wilton and district businesses with a business survey/questionnaire, with a longer term target of compiling a business directory on-line (of interest to potential customers locally and more distant and to the 1000's of prospective buyers of the new homes in Wilton).

Letters and questionnaires were sent out in April (copies attached) to 500 businesses:

Budget: £1,500	£
Actual costs to date:	
Business Manager's time: (engaged as a consultant, not as an employee):	650
Stationery and printing :	186
Postage (+ sae's):	510.94
TOTAL:	1,346.94

B: Presentation folders, membership packs, promotional materials

Budget: £500 (for the year)

Actual costs to date:	£
WDBC pens:	309.60
Folders:	Quote obtained for September.

NB: Business cards were gifted to WDBC

C: Website development

Budget: £1,500 for the year

Actual costs to date:	£
Website construction: No charge for 2013	
Business Manager's time: (discussing design, collating and updating info.):	380
Other:	

D: Production of visitor information:

- . The route for a "heritage trail" has been agreed with the Town Council and in consultation with Wilton Shopping Village, who are constructing, at their cost, a new footpath to the A30.
- . A local artist has agreed to provide the drawings at no/minimal cost
- . The author of various books on the town has agreed to allow text to be lifted from those publications, at no cost
- . I have taken advice from Visit Wiltshire, Ros Liddington at Wilton House and have a meeting scheduled with David Richards and Margaret Smith, blue badge guides for Wilton.
- . Once the preferred format is agreed, our Business Manager will obtain quotes for printing

Budget: £1,500 for the year.

Cost to date:	£
Business Manager's time:	40

E: Expo

- . We have been in discussion with Michelle Way at pa-4aday, who will be organising the event and with
- . Wilton Shopping Village who have kindly offered to host the event, at no hire charge

Budget: £2,000

Cost to date:	£
Business Manager's time:	80

F: Business and Community Awards Ceremony, together with Wilton Rotary.

As the amount awarded was £7,000 for 2013-14, rather than the £7,500 requested, we elected not to pursue this project in 2013.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

David von Zeffman
President, WDBC

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