



Abingdon-on-Thames Chamber of Commerce

## 2007 Membership Booklet for the Abingdon-on-Thames Chamber of Commerce

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## Abingdon-on-Thames Chamber of Commerce

Abingdon-on-Thames Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 361, ABINGDON, OX14 2XX

[www.abingdonchamber.co.uk](http://www.abingdonchamber.co.uk)

### MISSION

To be the voice of the local business community in the promotion of the businesses, the town and economy of Abingdon-on-Thames.

### OBJECTIVES

To do all such lawful things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the following objectives:-

1. **Representation & communication** – to be the main representative of businesses within Abingdon and surrounding area in the overall development of Abingdon
2. **Services to business** – to support businesses in both getting established and continuing their activities in the Abingdon area; to become an instinctive reference point for all matters relating to commerce and industry in the town and surrounding areas
3. **Raising the profile of Abingdon-on-Thames** – marketing and promoting Abingdon as a quality place in which to live, work and shop
4. **Local Economy** – to promote and safeguard local businesses including the Retail Trade, Professions, Manufacturing, Service Industries and other Businesses in Abingdon by official recommendations to all local and other bodies, and by any means at its disposal
5. **Education** – to advance and promote commercial and technical education
6. **Fair principles of trading** – to promote and disseminate information on fair principles, and to discourage forms of unfair competition as being opposed to individual interests and the general well-being of traders and their customers
7. **Goodwill, Friendship and Unity** – to create and foster a spirit of goodwill, friendship and unity among Abingdon traders by means of meetings, discussions, lectures, debates, conferences and other events which provide facilities for social intercourse on a friendly basis between all Chamber Members
8. **Financial Support** – to subscribe to, and support from the Chamber's funds, such institutions and objects as may be deemed worthy by the Chamber and at the elected Officers' discretion

### STRATEGY

- Establish contact with all businesses in the Abingdon area to promote the Chamber and its future activities
- Manage the funding of the Chamber – predictable, dependable income to come from increased membership – and pursue large company sponsorship

- Achieve more marketing, publicity & promotion of the Chamber, so that the general public as well as businesses are aware of our presence and the benefits of having an active Chamber in their community
- Work with the Vale and Town Councils and their working parties wherever this is seen to be beneficial to the aims of the Chamber
- Work to achieve the funding and establishment of a Town Centre Manager
- Link our web-site with Chamber Members' own business sites and Abingdon Town's site, along with other sites thought to be suitable
- Have Welcome Packs available for distribution to all new businesses in the area (who are therefore potential Chamber Members) and organise a regular forum for networking local businesses
- Promote a successful *Extravaganza* event each year
- Work with trade bodies wherever this could be beneficial to the aims of the Chamber
- Improve the accessibility/contactability of the Chamber by local businesses and/or members of the public, and work with the Town and Vale Councils to encourage signposts and links to other 'help' bodies such as CAB
- Be the link between organisations such as Traidcraft and local businesses and be able to advise on where to go for various types of business advice such as the development of overseas links
- Consider affiliations with other Chambers and groups who may help achieve the Chamber's aims
- Work with the relevant bodies to promote Abingdon as a tourist attraction
- Consider holding or participating in events that promote Abingdon as a place to work, shop and live
- Consider holding or participating in charitable events which will help achieve the Chamber's aims

### RULES OF MEMBERSHIP

1. The Association shall be known as **Abingdon-on-Thames Chamber of Commerce** referred to in this booklet as "*the Chamber*".
2. The operation of the Chamber shall be directed by **elected Officers** comprising the President(s), Vice-President(s), Honorary Treasurer, Honorary Secretary, Membership Secretary and other Officers as may from time to time be deemed necessary, each of whom shall maintain relevant records in a secure and confidential manner, and shall pass them on without delay to their successor in Office.
3. The Officers shall be **elected** every year at the Annual General Meeting. No Officer shall hold office for more than five consecutive years, but may offer themselves for re-election after one year out of office. All **nominations** for Officers shall be made in writing, signed by two Members and by the nominee consenting to serve, and sent to the Hon. Secretary before the commencement of the AGM.
4. In the event of an Office falling vacant during the year, a substitute nominated by the elected Officers may be **co-opted** to complete the elected term.
5. Four elected Officers shall form a **quorum**. The President (*or Vice-President, or an Officer nominated by the President*) shall chair each meeting. A majority vote shall decide all questions, with the **Chairman** holding both an Ordinary and a Casting Vote.

6. **Annual General Meetings** of the Chamber shall be held each February (or, exceptionally, in March), the arrangements being the responsibility of the elected Officers. Fourteen days' notice of an AGM, distributed either by e-mail or post to all Members' last-notified contact points, shall be deemed sufficient; failure to receive a Notice by any Member shall not invalidate the Chamber's proceedings. Ten members of the Chamber shall form a quorum for an AGM, each paid-up Member having one vote. A majority vote shall decide all matters, with the Chairman exercising a Casting Vote where necessary.
7. The **Hon.Secretary** (or a nominated deputy) shall attend all meetings of the Chamber and the elected Officers, recording the names of those present and Minuting the proceedings. The Minutes shall be e-mailed (*or, on request and provision of a stamped-addressed-envelope, posted*) to all Members and shall be read (*or Taken as Read*) at the subsequent meeting, confirmed and signed by the Chairman. The Hon.Secretary shall carry out the Chamber's administration and the business of the elected Officers, convene regular meetings and notify Members in good time, and record the Minutes of meetings, distributing them to Members by e-mail or post, for which purpose the Membership Secretary shall keep him/her updated at all times.
8. The **Hon.Treasurer** shall be responsible for such sums of money as shall from time to time be paid into his/her hands on account of the Chamber. He/she shall pay all monies into an Account in the name of the Chamber at a Bank selected by the elected Officers. The Treasurer shall prepare annual Accounts for Examination and subsequent presentation to the Annual General Meeting.
9. The **Membership Secretary** shall record the Members of the Chamber, keeping the records up-to-date, secure and confidential at all times, and forward such details as necessary to the various Officers. The Membership Secretary shall issue annual Subscription Renewal Notices, advising each Member of the details being held in their file for confirmation of their accuracy, and shall subsequently issue annual Membership Stickers. The Membership Secretary shall not disclose a Member's details to enquirers (even to another Chamber Member) without the written permission of the Member concerned, or the express permission of the elected Officers.
10. Chamber Officers and Members shall hold a **Business Meeting** once in each calendar month
11. Any fully paid-up Member of the Chamber may submit in writing to the Hon.Secretary a **Notice of Motion**, which shall be placed on the Agenda for the next Business Meeting
12. **Ad hoc Sub-Committees** are established by the elected Officers as and when needed, and when Members are available to take action. Each Sub-Committee reports monthly at the Business Meeting. The roles and responsibilities for members are similar to those outlined for the elected Officers (*see page 5*). Any Member may join a Sub-Committee and participate in an area of interest to them, or may suggest a suitable topic for a Sub-Committee, together with an offer to serve thereon.
13. It is the decision of Members that **membership lists** are not available as such, but any Member may ask the Membership Secretary to put them in touch with relevant member(s) for a specified purpose; the Membership Secretary must have permission from the elected Officers before acceding to such a request. A Member may propose in writing to the Hon.Secretary that this Rule be re-considered at an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting, such proposed amendment being circulated to all Members at least 14 days before such a Meeting.
14. **Rules of the Chamber** may be altered or rescinded only at an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting. Written Notice from a fully paid-up Member must be given to the Hon.Secretary, who will circulate the Amendment in writing to all Members, giving 14 days' Notice of such a Meeting.

15. It shall be the responsibility of each Member to notify without delay the Membership Secretary (either by e-mail or post) of the amendment of any **contact detail**, which shall be acknowledged by the Membership Secretary.
16. Each Member will be asked to display their annual **Membership Sticker** in a prominent place, and shall direct any enquiries for membership to the Membership Secretary or one of the Officers.

### **CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP**

- (a) All **Members** shall be interested in Business, Manufacturing, Farming, or the various professions in the District. Firms may nominate one of their staff to represent them as their Main Contact, with power to vote, but no firm shall have more than one vote on any Motion.
- (b) The annual **Subscription** shall be agreed at the Annual General Meeting. Renewal Subscriptions are due in February of each year and may be paid either by cheque or in cash, or by annual Standing Order due on 20 February, updated in line with the subscription rate in force. Members joining after 30 June in any year may pay half the annual subscription. Each Elected Officer is granted an annual *Honorarium* equal to one year's subscription

### **ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF OFFICERS AND SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

#### **President(s), Vice-President(s), Elected Officers and Members**

- To promote membership amongst the business community, irrespective of business type or size
- To represent Members and look after their interests
- To be aware of local opportunities to promote the Chamber, its membership and image, and to alert the elected Officers of new opportunities which might be pursued
- To liaise with other groups, projects and committees (eg: Pub-Watch, Traidcraft, Neighbourhood Watch, etc) and report back to the elected Officers

#### **President(s)**

- To be the voice and face of Abingdon-on-Thames Chamber of Commerce
- To represent the Chamber officially at public meetings and events
- To promote membership irrespective of religion, gender, ethnicity, age or culture
- To chair Business and General Meetings, liaising with the Officers prior to each meeting to compile an Agenda

#### **Vice-President(s)**

- To be present and assume the presidential role in absence of the President(s) or on request
- To accept assigned duties and projects where necessary, as decided by the President(s), and to put forward relevant matters for discussion at meetings, providing briefing papers where relevant
- To liaise with (a) local businesses and (b) local District and County Councils on behalf of the Chamber, and report back to the President and elected Officers as applicable
- To oversee the activities of the Sub-Committees

#### **Honorary Secretary**

- To minute each meeting of the Chamber and of the elected Officers, circulating such Minutes to all Members as relevant, and subsequently presenting the Minutes to each meeting
- To ensure there is a suitable venue for Business and General Meetings, that an appropriate Agenda has been compiled (including Members' requests previously notified), and that Members are notified sufficiently in advance of such meetings together with a briefing paper if a matter is contentious
- To liaise with the Officers over administrative matters

#### **Honorary Treasurer**

- To keep the Chamber's finances in order and arrange suitable insurance cover
- To bank monies, reconcile Bank Statements and maintain up-to-date accounts
- To prepare Annual Accounts for Inspection and subsequent presentation to the AGM
- To liaise with the Membership Secretary over administrative matters

#### **Membership Secretary**

- To keep a full and complete Membership File, updating details as they are made available by Members (in particular when making their annual Membership Renewal) and making available to Officers such details as may be necessary for the Chamber's administration
- To issue annual Subscription Renewal Notices each February, receive in the first instance via the P.O. Box the subscriptions, record each remittance and any changes to members' details, and pass them to the Hon. Treasurer
- To chase up by e-mail or telephone Members who have not renewed their subscription; on request of the elected Officers to notify which Members' renewals are late
- To update the annual Membership Booklet and liaise with the elected Officers on administration
- To issue Receipts for New Members' Subscriptions; to gather each new Member's relevant details for the Membership File, notifying each of the details held in their file (complying with Data Protection legislation); and to send each an updated Membership Booklet as authorised by the elected Officers

#### **ALL MEMBERS should be aware of the following:–**

***Speaking to the Press*** Should one of the Officers or the head of a Sub-Committee ask that a Member should speak to the press or media representative(s), the Member should discuss this first with the President, and then make themselves available as requested.

***Voicing the Chamber's opinion, as against personal opinions*** All Members should be very clear about the difference between the Chamber's agreed position on any matter and their own personal opinion, and should make this distinction quite clear especially when dealing with members of the Press or media

## SUB-COMMITTEES

The Elected Officers will appoint the **Members and Chairman** of each permanent and *ad hoc* Sub-Committee, which will meet as frequently as necessary, reporting monthly to the elected Officers. Any Member may ask to be appointed to a Sub-Committee. The roles for and responsibilities of members are similar to those outlined for the elected Officers.

Currently [*May 2007*] the following have been convened:–

**Breakfast Meetings Sub-Committee**

***Extravaganza* Sub-Committee**

**Sub-Committee to Review Tesco's On-going Planning Application(s)**

**Vale Car Park Sub-Committee**

**Web-site Sub-Committee**

The Chamber also has representatives serving on other groups, including:–

**ABITS**            Abingdon Integrated Transport Strategy

**Abingdon Fair Trade Group**

**JEF**              Joint Economic Forum in conjunction with the VWHDC and Abingdon Town Council

**Pub Watch**

**Foyer Steering Committee**

The Vale of White Horse District Council consider the Chamber to be a major stakeholder in the town and, as such, often requests the Chamber to send representatives to various meetings and Committees. Examples are the annual Business Rates meeting, meetings regarding the Bury Precinct and Tesco's Planning applications.

### WEB-SITE SUB-COMMITTEE

Abingdon-on-Thames Chamber of Commerce has a web-site on [www.abingdonchamber.co.uk](http://www.abingdonchamber.co.uk) which is regularly updated, and is linked to other sites including [www.oxtowns.co.uk](http://www.oxtowns.co.uk)

The web-site Patron is Ms Lesley Legge, currently an Abingdon Town Councillor. The web-site gives an introduction to the Chamber, an Abingdon Events Diary, a page for Members' stories updated monthly (with previous stories being kept available), links to Members' web-sites, and other useful information. Any Member may have their web-site linked to the Chamber's site.

To update the web-site with information of interest to other Members, and/or to request that your company provide a Member's Story, contact one of the following:–

Joint President – Jill Carver on <jill.carver@addedingredients.co.uk> ☎ 01235 537405

Breakfast Meetings Co-Ordinator – Mellie Ferrier on <merrier100@hotmail.com> ☎ 01235 524516

Membership Secretary – Diana Hasting on <diamar@onetel.com> ☎ 01235 834740

Membership of the Chamber now brings with it a new opportunity to sponsor either a web-page or (as far as outside publicity is concerned) a facet of the current major event of the Chamber's year – the yearly *Extravaganza*. Sponsoring a web-page allows for a company's logo or banner to be displayed on one of the pages in return for a donation. Donations bring extra funds to the Chamber, helping to achieve many of the goals set by the Sub-Committees. Sponsoring material is subject to approval by the Web-Site Sub-Committee or the President(s). All funding and distribution is fully open and recorded, with updated reports being tabled at monthly Business Meetings.

## **EXTRAVAGANZA & SPONSORSHIP SUB-COMMITTEE**

The *Extravaganza* is currently the largest outside event involving the Chamber. It is a late-night shopping evening prior to Christmas, and is organised in conjunction with Abingdon Town Council.

This enjoyable evening-out includes a Parade of local schools and bands, a local celebrity switching on the Christmas Lights, and Fireworks to bring the event to a close with a bang. Many town centre shops encourage their staff to dress up for the occasion, while others offer free mulled wine, soft drinks, and even shopping discounts. There are street entertainers and a small Children's Fair in the Market Place.

Featuring a different theme each year, the *Extravaganza* provides an opportunity for the local shops to take their place as the centre of the community. Many children on the Parade floats wear fancy dress, as do other children out enjoying the evening with their parents. The event should be seen as a Fun Evening in Abingdon's calendar, which can be successfully used to promote the town and its businesses, whose employees work – and maybe play and live – within Abingdon.

Any sponsorship opportunities will be made available to all Chamber Members. All requests to sponsor any part of the *Extravaganza* should be addressed to Joint President Jill Carver on <jill.carver@addedingredients.co.uk> ☎ 01235 537405

### **MEETINGS**

*Please also refer to the Rules of the Chamber on pages 3–4*

#### **BUSINESS MEETINGS**

These are scheduled for the **third Tuesday of each calendar month** except December, normally from 6.30pm to 8pm, and are open to all Members to attend but only the elected Officers may vote. The current [*May 2007*] venue is at the offices of Wenn Townsend in Victoria House, 10 Broad Street, Abingdon, OX14 3LH, with a further venue offered at the Management Centre of Abingdon Business Park, Wyndyke Furlong, OX14 1DY. **Minutes** are distributed to all Members who have registered their e-mail address, and in hard-copy format to any Member who has requested this and has provided a stamped-addressed-envelope to the Hon.Secretary.

The **format** of each Meeting is similar, with Welcome and Apologies for Absence; the Minutes of the previous meeting; correspondence received; a report from each Sub-Committee; a Treasurer's Report; other Agenda items; and finally Any Other Business. Any Member may propose an **Agenda** item for discussion, by prior notification to the Hon.Secretary. All Members are reminded by e-mail at least three days before each meeting.

On occasion a speaker is invited to speak to a specific topic, in which case the **Speaker** talks at the start and leaves before the first Agenda item is taken. On such occasions the meeting will last for up to 2 hours.

#### **BREAKFAST MEETINGS**

Breakfast Meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month except January, opening at 7.30am for a 7.45am start. Currently they are held at the *Broad Face Pub*, 30–32 Bridge Street, Abingdon, OX14 3HR ☎ 01235 524516, where the proprietors (who are Chamber Members) provide the venue, FairTrade tea & coffee and refreshments. The main purpose of Breakfast Meetings is for Chamber Members to **network**. The formal meeting is timed to finish by approximately 8.30am, after which there is an informal gathering until about 9am, offering extended networking opportunities.

At each meeting an invited **Speaker** talks on a topic of interest to the local business community. We have heard from the Business Link, a taxation practitioner, the Leader and Opposition Leader of the VWHDC, a specialist on stress in the workplace, and the MP for Abingdon. Additionally there is an opportunity for one **Member** at each meeting to update those present on what their business does and the services provided.

Breakfast Meetings are open to **prospective members**, who are welcome to join in the Breakfast Meeting. This is also an opportunity to speak to current Members, find out how the Chamber is growing and moving forward, and – hopefully! – decide to join the Chamber. Members are therefore able to offer prospective members the

opportunity to see if they would like to join, and there is an Application Form in the back of this booklet. Further forms can be obtained from any of the Officers, or application can be made through the Chamber's website [www.abingdonchamber.co.uk](http://www.abingdonchamber.co.uk)

### USEFUL CONTACTS

Joint President – Jill Carver on <jill.carver@addedingredients.co.uk> ☎ 01235 537405

Breakfast Meetings Co-Ordinator – Mellie Ferrier on <info@broadface.com> ☎ 01235 524516

Hon.Secretary – Margaret Inger on <margaret@scuffs.ox14.com> ☎ 01235 559911

Membership Secretary – Diana Hasting on <diamar@onetel.com> ☎ 01235 834740



Abingdon-on-Thames Chamber of Commerce

P.O. Box 361, ABINGDON, Oxfordshire,OX14 2XX

### New Membership Subscription, year 2007–2008

Company Name .....

Main Contact Title ..... Initials ..... 1st Name ..... Surname .....

Position in Company .....

Address .....

..... PostCode .....

Invoice Address (if different from above) .....

..... PostCode .....

Type of Business .....

Telephone: ..... Fax: ..... Mobile (if applicable) .....

e-mail: ..... website: .....

Tick  if you would like a web-link to be created to your web-site from the Chamber's site .....

Cross  if you do not wish to receive correspondence via your e-mail address .....

We apply for Membership of the Abingdon-on-Thames Chamber of Commerce, and enclose herewith our Subscription \*and donation\* to the Chamber. We agree to be bound by the Rules of the Chamber.

*\*please delete if inapplicable*

Signed: ..... Dated: .....

One-Year Chamber of Commerce Subscription £50.00

Optional Donation\* towards running expenses of the Chamber £\_\_\_\_\_.

†Remittance Enclosed £\_\_\_\_\_.

*\*Suggested Donation – between £50 and £100*

*†Please make cheque payable to Abingdon Chamber of Commerce*

Under the Data Protection Acts, we hereby notify you that information is held on computer by the Membership Secretary. With a receipt for your subscription you will be sent a copy of your details held – **please CORRECT or AMEND these as relevant**, sign as correct and return them to the Membership Secretary.

The Chamber undertakes **not to use this information** for any purpose other than its own Membership Administration, for which selected details may be transferred to and used by other Officers. The Chamber undertakes that it **will not sell or transfer** any details to any other person or body.