

**THE REPORT OF THE  
PRESIDENT OF THE  
LOUGHBOROUGH CHAMBER OF  
TRADE AND COMMERCE  
2005/06**

**FEB 2006**

It gives me great pleasure to present my Annual Report on our events and activities for 2005/06 which has been an extremely busy year for the Town and the Chamber. In this year the Chamber has continued to build on its links with the decision makers and people with influence in the town. This is certainly true of Charnwood Borough Council where we have shared a platform on many issues and are a first stop consultee on policy matters. We are also closer to the University and the Police Authority from whom we have had presentations and we are also part of the large group of Partnerships in the town covering issues from health, safety, transport and trade.

The Committee have been 'on tour' this year with meetings at Astra Zeneca, Charnwood Borough Council, John Storer House and the University which has given us a broader perspective and also spread the voice of the Chamber into different arenas.

The website [www.loughboroughchamber.co.uk](http://www.loughboroughchamber.co.uk) is now up and running and is proving to be a valuable resource to members as they can look at future events, get contact details and get access to documents. Hopefully this will be enhanced with this year's planned improvements which are already under way.

## MAIN ISSUES

The Chamber has made representations on many issues this year and below are some of the main ones.

### 1. Car Parking

This has been a 'cause célèbre' for the Chamber and has cropped up at nearly every meeting. Two members of the Council's car parking panel came to listen to our views and I believe that we were instrumental in preserving the possibility of POE (pay on exit) for the town, which we see as crucial to Loughborough's retail future.

### 2. Planning

The new planning regime has come into effect and committee members have attended seminars and workshops on the LDF Core Strategy, Science Park proposals and Strategy for Students.

We have also commented on specific proposals for the town like the Eastern Gateway, the Wharf and the Town Centre Masterplan.

### 3. Town Centre Events

The Chamber together with Charnwood Borough Council has helped to organise a series of events in the town and in particular lobbied very hard for a Christmas campaign. It was the Chamber's suggestion that free parking was given by the Council to coincide with late night shopping.

### 4. Loughborough Market

The long awaited improvements to the market are now in the implementation stage and we also made representations on parking for market traders which were taken up by the Council.

### 5. Transport

The inner relief road remains very much on our Agenda. In addition we have made representations on the question of the Bus Station and the pedestrianisation of the High Street.

## COMMITTEES

We have had representation on many committees and partnerships around the town, some of which are listed below.

#### 1. Parish Green Project

This project is to enhance the area around the Parish Church and forms an important part of the Town Centre Masterplan. The first phase is now complete and the second stage will start in the next few weeks.

#### 2. Charnwood Community Safety Partnership

This has debated issues such as community policing, graffiti and policing of the Town Centre in the evenings.

#### 3. CCTV

The Chamber were instrumental in introducing the CCTV and so we were delighted to attend the opening of the new 'hi tech' system which will give a tremendous boost to safety in the town. This is an issue which will remain high on our agenda.

4. Town Team

This is made up of many stakeholders concerned with the town centre. Several members of the Executive Committee are on this forum which will help to develop a master plan and to shape the future of the town centre for the next 20 years.

5. Fair Trade Steering Group

We have recently been invited to join this group, trying to achieve Fair Trade status for the Borough.

6. Charnwood Together

This is Local Strategic Partnership which produces and delivers a Community Strategy and to agree the Local Area Agreement, an agreement between Government and Local Authorities and delivery partnerships to simply and make better use of funding streams coming into the authorities.

7. Town Centre Partnership

The Chamber is a founding partner of this group with the Council and will seek to improve the Town Centre for all to encourage visitors and give 'added value' to services already provided by the Council as well as new initiatives.

## EVENTS

I have listed some of the events organised on behalf of the members and also others to which we have been invited.

Race Meetings

Annual Cocktail Party

Leicestershire Chamber Annual Luncheon

Christmas Dinner

New Members Breakfast Meeting

Retail Meeting with Charnwood Borough Council and WS Atkins (town centre consultants)

CCTV Opening

Opening of the Annual Fair

Chinese New Year

Annual Remembrance Day Parade

It was with great pride that I laid a wreath on behalf of the Chamber on Remembrance Sunday; also it gave me great pleasure to present the Mayor with a cheque for £250 at our Annual Cocktail Party towards Glebe House.

## MEMBERSHIP

I am delighted to welcome our new members this year and also the new members of the Executive Committee whose ranks are considerably swollen!. Of particular note is the Loughborough Market Traders who have joined and been a very enthusiastic member of the Committee. However, we need to strive to get more members for next year as the more we have the more representative we will be!

## LOOKING FORWARD

2006 will be very much about continuing to build on the previous years. We have been approached by the leader of the Council to form with them a Town Centre Partnership and we have had an inaugural meeting and agreed the Project Inception Document, this should be a very powerful group to influence all aspects of the Town Centre life.

Expo Charnwood (29<sup>th</sup> April – 9<sup>th</sup> May) will be a major event and opportunity for the Town. The Chamber are on the Steering Committee and will have an active role in the events that are being organised. This will be a national and international showcase to promote Loughborough and the surrounding district.

On the domestic front we are seeking to improve the website with a searchable database for members and direct links to/from Charnwood's own business site. We are endeavouring to improve communication to our members by use of emails, the website and also with the Press. We will of course continue to press for POE Parking which we see will be a major boost for trade in the town.

## THANK YOUS

My very great thanks go first of all to members of the Executive Committee, we regularly have over fifteen people around the table and the enthusiasm shown and the views expressed have enabled the Chamber to continue to grow in stature in the Town. I am also very grateful to those members who also sit on external committees and give their time to ensure that the Chamber's voice is heard in all quarters.

The Chamber is also indebted to Jonathan Hale of Charnwood Borough Council, Jon Walker of the University and Ashley Russell for their attendance and presentations at committee meetings during the year and their input has informed the debate and helped in making considered decisions.

Press coverage has been excellent over the past 12 months and our thanks go to Chris Dezalu, Dan Martin and John Brindley for taking the time to listen and to report on the issues of concern to the town. Our very best wishes go to John as he has now hung up his 'hacks' jacket but we hope to see him back very soon as a member!

Our tour could not have happened without the generosity of the Council, the University, Astra Zeneca and John Storer House (CVS) and we are very grateful for the hospitality given, it has been very interesting to get different perspectives and an understanding of other organisations.

My personal thanks go to Roy Jessop who was of tremendous support when I took over the Presidency and who has relinquished the post of Secretary for personal reasons, we all thank Roy for his work over several years as Secretary. Of course I am extremely grateful to Vicki Brind who volunteered to take his place and has done an admirable job and without whom the Chamber would not have functioned so successful. Our Treasurer Martin Palmer has successfully managed to balance the books yet again and I am grateful for all his advice and help on financial issues.

The Chamber can, I believe, be very proud of the work it has carried out over the last year and I look forward to continuing and building upon this in the year ahead.

A M McInnes  
20<sup>th</sup> February 2006