

**THE REPORT OF THE  
PRESIDENT OF THE  
LOUGHBOROUGH CHAMBER OF  
TRADE AND COMMERCE  
2006/07**

**FEB 2007**

I am very pleased to present my Annual Report into our events and activities of 2006/07. This is a year in which the Chamber has been at the heart of trying to tackle the challenges that face Loughborough being in the middle of the three cities. The business voice must be heard if Loughborough is to thrive and I believe we have expressed this at every opportunity and on all of the major issues. However this will be a long process and we should not underestimate the amount of work involved to represent business well.

The Chamber is highly regarded by the decision makers and is undoubtedly a first consultee on all the major issues for the town and our input has certainly changed decisions and policy to create a better climate for business.

My concerns for the town is that it will miss out on inward investment as this is directed to the surrounding cities, and the Chamber needs to try to ensure that the town captures as much investment as it can from the growth earmarked for the region and also the opportunities from the expansion of the East Midlands Airport. We have of course raised these issues at our recent meeting with Andy Reed MP.

## MAIN ISSUES

### 1. The Town Centre Partnership

In May 2006 the Town Centre Partnership was officially launched with the Chamber as one of the founding members and I have been voted Chair of the Interim Board. This is a major initiative for the town centre and it is all about adding value and not replacing the Council services. The events that we have arranged so far have been heralded a great success and particularly the switch on of the Christmas Lights where we have rarely seen the town centre so packed.

### 2. The Town Team

We have four members of our Exec Committee on the Town Team and we have all been extremely forthright in our views to promote the business aspects. The new town centre masterplan should shortly be adopted by the Council as policy and we will have helped to shape many of the facets of the plan.

### 3. Car Parking

This has remained at the top of the Chamber agenda and we have pressed at every opportunity for better parking and pay on exit tariff. We see this is vital to ensure the prosperity of the retail business and leisure aspects of the town centre, we were privileged to have a special presentation by the Consultants employed by the Council to carry out a strategic parking review and we hope our views are taken on board in the final report.

## COMMITTEES

### 1. Parish Green Project

The second phase of the rejuvenation of the Parish Churchyard has now been completed and was opened by the Bishop in January 2007. Renewal is vital to the prosperity of the town to attract inward investment and enhancing the environment.

### 2. Charnwood Community Safety Partnership

Major issues have been looked at this year such as the amalgamation of the Police Force and the decimalisation of parking. These issues have a fundamental effect in the sense of wellbeing of the town and we have represented the case for better policing.

### 3. CCTV

This initiative was started by the Chamber many years ago but through constant lobbying now seems to be high on the political agenda and we should achieve 24 hour monitoring in the near future. The future of CCTV needs to be ensured and a business plan needs to be put in place and we will have a major input into this.

### 4. Fair Trade Steering Group

The Borough did achieve Fair Trade status and we were very pleased to be part of this as it enhances the reputation of the Borough.

### 5. Charnwood Together

The Local Strategic Partnership has split into groups to look at the core strategies and we are represented in the key groups affecting business. The Local Area Agreement is moving forward and this could change the way in which certain services are provided. It will be important to keep Chamber members aware of developments

## EVENTS

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

Loughborough Chamber Golf Day – This was our inaugural golf day and was a great success and I hope it can be repeated in future years.

Annual Cocktail Party – Attendance this year was excellent and we presented the Mayor with a cheque of £250 towards the Air Ambulance Appeal.

CREC Dinner – The first of what is hoped will be a regular event at the Mugal-E-Shahi was well attended by both Organisations

Annual Dinner Dance – This was an excellent event with around 100 people attending and heralded by our guests as one of the best they have been to.

Leicestershire Chamber Annual Luncheon – Our usual table of 10 were entertained by Roy Walker and welcomed the new Leicestershire President, Mr Andrew Granger.

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

Executive Committee Christmas Meal – The Printroom provided first class food for over 30 members and their guests.

Meeting with Andy Reed MP – We discussed a wide range of local issues ranging from inward investment to car parking.

Opening of the Annual Fair  
Annual Remembrance Day Parade  
Christmas Lights Switch On  
LeShan Culture and Trade Friendship Link  
Open Top Bus Tour of Charnwood

For the second year it was with great pride that I laid a wreath on behalf of the Chamber on Remembrance Sunday.

## MEMBERSHIP

Any organisation like the Chamber relies on its membership and we must continue to strive to increase our membership from all sectors. We have achieved better communication with our members through the website but this is a work-in-progress and must be continually improved. As the database is updated it is hoped that email addresses will be available to reach our members more quickly.

## THANK YOUS

The Executive Committee through attendance at meetings, responses to consultations and personal representation have done a tremendous job in representing the voice of business on a wide range of issues and my very grateful thanks goes to all of them as it is their hard work which has kept the Chamber at the forefront of business issues.

Our excellent relationships with Charnwood Borough Council have continued with regular visits from Jonathan Hale and other Officers for information and sounding board purposes. Also Jon Walker from the University has kept us abreast of developments there and enhanced the relationship, our very grateful thanks go to Jonathan and Jon.

The acknowledged home of the Chamber is the Ramada Hotel and they have continued to support the Chamber throughout the year and allowed us to use their facilities for committee meetings and also hosting and sponsoring the Cocktail Party which was one of the best ever. Our very grateful thanks go to the Staff and Directors at the Ramada and I hope the relationship will continue for a long time to come.

I am very grateful to Vicki Brind, the Chamber Secretary who has done a tremendous job throughout the year to make the Chamber function efficiently. Vicki has now resigned but will remain on the Executive Committee and hopefully continue to take a full role in Chamber activities.

Claire Beswick, my Secretary is also the 'unsung hero' of the Chamber and has been responsible for most of the mailshots and organisation of the Members Database etc and I would like to express thanks on behalf of the Chamber to Claire.

Our treasurer Gareth Bowen has been a tremendous support and has enabled us to look forward and plan our finances much better. I am grateful to him for all his help and advice on financial issues.

I will now be relinquishing the role of President which I have held for the last two years and I have to say I have thoroughly enjoyed. It was always my desire to enhance the reputation and influence of the Chamber and I hope I have achieved this. I wish our incoming President, Brian McInnes my very best wishes and pledge him my support in his Presidency.

A M McInnes  
15<sup>th</sup> February 2007