

## Report on Chamber of Commerce Meeting held on 14 January 2015

There were three items on the Agenda

### Town Councillor's Report

The Mayor spoke about the meeting held in the Parish Hall and explained the reasons why the C J Fry application to build 330 houses in the Shudrick Lane area had been approved. It was pointed out that:

- Town Councillors do not make the final decision on planning applications – they are only consultees. However, being local councillors, they are expected to comment
- Councillors are expected to make comments/judgments on the information/evidence they have before them
- At that meeting there was no evidence that could be used to go against the application and a letter from the Secretary of State reinforced that opinion.

The issue of pedestrianisation of the centre of Ilminster was then discussed. It was pointed out that the comment made by one of the Councillors had related to a proposal in a Vision Document that had been created by a previous Town Council.

The national government at the time were proposing changes to the planning system (the Local Development Framework) and the Town Council's Vision Document was an attempt to ensure that the Council and local residents had more say over what happened in the town. When the present government came into power a new planning system was proposed - the Local Plan.

The point was made that although a lot of consultation with the public and organisations within the town had taken place any future 'vision document' would need to go out for consultation.

### First Tuesday/Loyalty Card

Although the First Tuesday project has been very successful, the Chamber of Commerce Committee feel that the scheme needs to be revitalized. Some retailers already operate individual shop loyalty cards but the Committee believe it would more beneficial and cost effective to have town wide loyalty card scheme.

To that end a draft proposal has been put-together which will be sent to retailers and businesses for their comments. A survey form has been created using survey monkey and the Committee are asking that businesses and retailers respond to the proposal using the survey form.

### Any Other Business

The Ilminster Town Crier took part in the inaugural 'Town Crier' Competition in Axminster. He has suggested to the Chamber of Commerce that it would be good for Ilminster if a similar competition were held in the town

The proposal is that it takes place sometime in the Spring. There would obviously be a cost element, which the Town Crier estimates would be around a hundred pound. There was some discussion as to where the funding would be and members were reminded that the Town Council no longer provides grant funding. The consensus was that it was a good idea and needed further consideration.