

**Notes from Ilminster Chamber of Commerce meeting 9th September 2015 from Cllr R. Drayton**

The Chamber was given a presentation on the local work of the Dementia Action Alliance to help transform the lives of people with dementia and their carers. Members were told that most businesses and traders in the town were already 'dementia friendly' and the aim was to keep that momentum and also to promote to the people of Ilminster where help can be found. The Chamber was asked to consider joining the Alliance, and to promote staff becoming aware of dementia issues and providing help for customers.

An update on the chamber's First Tuesday promotion was given and it was reported that of 1,300 e-newsletters sent out there was a 32 per cent take up rate. It was agreed to investigate promotion of the idea further and to involve more shops and businesses, with a relaunch planned for January. It was seen as a valuable resource for members for a small monthly cost.

Plans for Victorian Evening on November 27th were outlined and a number of new ideas which will open the evening were described - details released nearer the day. This will involve an improved opening parade and transport for Santa which it is felt will be a big hit with the town.

A point of collection has been set up by Green House in Silver Street for aid and goods to support the refugee crisis, originally for Calais but then expanded to other parts of Europe.

An open evening was to be held the following week for ideas and comments on the Midsummer Experience.

The Fair Trade organisation was discussed and disappointment expressed over the organisation's refusal to set up a constitution and to continue without an official 'membership'. Both issues were sought by the chamber. It was agreed to continue to offer support to Fair Trade while not being members and individual requests for specific support would be considered as they occur.