

**Minutes of the public meeting of the Emsworth Food Festival
held at The Emsworth Community Centre on Monday 11th
October, 2006 at 6.30pm.**



Present

In the Chair – Lulu Bowerman
Linda Newell
Amanda Thomas
Beryl Jobling
Peter Penhard
Jan Ford Manchester House
Steve Moore Salon 28
Becky Dridge Emsworth Flowers
John Groom
Tony Maden
Sgt Ian Grey
S.O. Richard Owen
Keith Richardson
Mary Coburn Classy Cooks
Roger Adams Emsworth Car and Cycle
Martin Carrington
Peter Mead
David Linington
Carol Common

Lulu Bowerman welcomed all and thanked them for coming. She gave a brief report about the 6th Festival.

- This was the 6th event, and we were blessed with good weather which showed Emsworth at its best. The relaunch of Terror was an added bonus, as were the fireworks.
- She pointed out that the committee worked all year to make it happen. Everyone was a volunteer and all were unpaid. The chairman and most of the officers did not have businesses in Emsworth.
- The event was inclusive of all and held in consultation with the local businesses. All are welcome to participate.
- A SWOT analysis is completed each year and is revisited several times during the year. Each year a survey is taken amongst the visitors and stall holders and this year there is one for the resident.
- On 14th February 2006 the committee took the step of converting the festival into a Community Initiative Company which puts it on a firmer footing and provides protection for its activities.
- The schools are invited to take part and Year 10 is now taking part in a competition organised in conjunction with Southdowns College and Havant Borough Council.
- Innovations this year included Kitchen Academy, additional public toilets, seating on the quay and the family fare area in the car parks near the Community Centre.
- Emsworth Food Festival is now the largest independent food festival in the UK and is one the major events of the South Coast.
- There are always people who are not happy, but the committee are always trying to resolve these problems and improving the Festival generally.
- They are always looking for new ideas and improving quality.
- The new committee meetings will begin in November.

She then invited questions and comments from the floor.

Question Session

- Manchester House commented that the atmosphere in North Street was poor this year. They did not feel part of the Festival and there were no committee members coming round to speak to people. There was no music in the street and they felt excluded from the main festival.
- Carl replied that last year the stalls near Tesco had formed a pinch point and also Tesco had objected to stalls being outside their shop. Therefore it was felt better to move all the stalls into the car parks, rather than having them dotted around piecemeal.

The police had been in attendance all through the festival and had been helping people cross the road, but there is no way that North Street can be closed to traffic. It is essential for the park and ride scheme and there are no alternative routes for the traffic to be diverted. To close the road off would involve massive amounts to work and many residents and businesses would object.

The committee were looking at using the Palmers Road car park in 2007 and hopefully signage will make this easier to find.

Carl said that in 2005 Rosemary Shuker of Moonbeam Flowers had been very active in helping North Street, but since her departure no-one had come forward to assist Carl. He felt that North Street needed to get together and work together. The entertainment depends on where the police feel that it will not be a pinch point.
- Sgt. Ian Grey supported Carl and said that each year a review of all traffic and pedestrian movements takes place. Safety of all is paramount. This year, also the police had charged for their services, so there are increased costs to the festival. We also have to take into account that there are increasing amounts of regulations that have to be obeyed.
- Steve Moore said that lots of people went straight past the car parks that had stalls, so what was to prevent people going straight past the Palmers Road car park next year.

He felt that a band was needed at the top of North Street to put people into the mood. He felt that both sides of the road need to be catered for, and not just one side.
- Jan Ford suggested that the programme should highlight the whole area as well as the leaflet.

Why were the take-aways and other food outlets not involved.
- Lulu replied that they were all asked, but could not be forced to be involved.
- Bunting was suggested to make the area look more cheerful. This is allowed in front of the buildings, but must not go over the road.
- Mary Coburn commented that the objective of the festival was to support the local businesses, so would it be possible to highlight these in the programme and advertising. She felt that the programme was not as good as it could be,
- Lulu replied that the News had produced the programme this year, and had done it in their own way. This is something that will be looked at more closely, and we will be retaining editorial control this year. We are also hoping to involve the youth organisations in selling them. It was suggested that a large format could be supplied for partially sighted people, and this was noted.
- Roger Adams asked if the committee knew how many people actually went into the shops, rather than attended the festival.
- It was suggested that people did go into the shops, but it was also an opportunity for people to see what there was in Emsworth and to visit again.
- Steve Moore wishes to be involved earlier, and not after Easter when the first meeting was held. He also wanted to know how stalls were allocated.

- Carol responded by saying that Emsworth stalls have priority, then it is local producers and finally anyone connected with food.
- Steve Moore felt that it was wrong that some stalls left before the end and that there were not enough stalls in the car park to make it worth the public's while to come in. He is a member of EBA and so is eligible to be in The Square.
- Jan Ford suggested that there should be an obligation on the stall holders that they have to bring enough goods to trade all three days and not leave early.
- The park and ride buses seemed to have problems because they were dropping people off at the right time. Roger Adams felt that this was because the owner of the buses was not there to make sure it worked properly. They did not stop at the bike shop.
- Tony Maden was on the buses and it said that there was some confusion.
- Jan Ford said that no members of the committee visited the businesses to thank them for taking part.
- It was suggested that we were victims of our own success because the areas of South Street were over crowded. The car parks were very busy and the stalls were too close together, so that people could not get to the shops. It was felt that the organisation could have been better and that there need to be fewer stalls in South Street and get people to stay in North Street.
- John Groom said that we were blessed and cursed with good weather which brings people out. Also the tide was up during the day, which is also an attraction.
- We are looking at dates for next year, but we need the tide up during the day and out in the evening for the fireworks. We also cannot clash with the Revival at Goodwood, but we will have a date in September.
- Some shops had not received their bottles of champagne for their window dressing. They had been taken around, but one or two shops were closed when they visited.
- It was generally agreed that the fireworks were great and they should be a regular occurrence.
- Sgt. Ian Grey commented that he attended lots of events in his job, but it was lovely to see everyone enjoying themselves; there was not trouble and his officers did not have to control anyone; and he felt that the weekend of the Food Festival was what life was all about.
- Why was the area not cleaned up after the event? All stall holders should be asked to clear their own areas.
- Mary Coburn asked if the event was supported by the local area. She felt that some of the businesses gave a very negative attitude to the event.
- David Linington had done some surveys which showed that the feedback from stall holders was overall very good. Those who were also Emsworth businesses gave an OK response, but some were negative. It is difficult to fathom as the event is staged with the aim of supporting the Emsworth businesses.
- The comment was that with business becoming more difficult and small businesses failing there should be more support from local businesses. Of the visitors surveyed 80% said that they would return at other times of the year, so it has to be good for local businesses.
- Why were Tesco not asked to be sponsors. It was felt that the public perception of Tesco would change if Tesco were a major sponsor, because it does not embrace the ethos of the local independent food producers. Waitrose does embrace this ethos and that is why the Festival is happy to be linked with Waitrose.
- Who decides which stalls go where. John Groom replied that returning stall holders have the choice, and Emsworth businesses have the centre, which is around The Square. It is a major task, but it is hoped to make it computerised

next year, which will then make it possible for sections to be printed and sent to stall holders, so there is not the problems of everyone trying to find out which part of the festival they are based in.

- David Linington the businesses were only enduring the Festival, rather than embracing it. They need to be much more proactive. After all there were more committee members than businesses present at the meeting.
- Steve Moore wanted to know how they could be more involved and how the meetings worked. Lulu said she would feed the information back through Carl.

Lulu thanked everyone for coming and putting their points of view.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.05pm.