

## Fast Facts

### What is a Chamber of Commerce?

A chamber of commerce – also known as a board of trade – is traditionally an organization of businesses that comes together to network, advocate on behalf of these businesses, and promote business activity. Today, non-profit and government organizations are also chamber members. There is a BC Chamber of Commerce which represents the interests of member chambers across BC, and a Canadian Chamber with a national remit that has been in existence since 1925. In Canada, all chambers of commerce are constituted under the “Boards of Trade Act” and are therefore non-profit but not classed as charities.

### The WestShore Chamber of Commerce

This organization first started life as the Colwood and District Chamber of Commerce in 1956 and went through a few more name changes before becoming the WestShore Chamber in 1997. The Chamber is a non-partisan, non-profit organization that exists to foster and advance the growth, prosperity and sustainability of business and community in the WestShore (Colwood, the Highlands, Langford, Metchosin and View Royal.) Our members are from all across the South Island, with the largest concentration from Langford.

The WestShore Chamber is operated by two full-time and two part-time staff members and managed by an entirely volunteer Board of Directors. Board members are nominated each year as part of the Annual General Meeting process in November.

### Why be a Member of the WestShore Chamber?

**In a nutshell, if you support us we can support you!** The Chamber advocates on behalf of member businesses and organizations at all levels of government and exists to represent this community. Funding from membership supports the services that go back to the business community and our members.

People join for different reasons and find value in different ways. While everything listed overleaf is available to everyone, this information is presented to help you find what is best for you.

**All of our members** can benefit from:

- Business advice and connections – we’re here to help you find a solution or put you in touch with someone who can help via our network
- Company profile in our website directory at [westshore.bc.ca](http://westshore.bc.ca) which helps build your digital presence within a domain that Google trusts and recognizes
- Increasing your promotional footprint through our reposts or likes of your Twitter, Instagram and Facebook content
- Information sharing about what’s happening locally, regionally and nationally via our weekly e-news and social media channels
- Our connection to all five of our local municipal staff and councillors – we can help facilitate local issues

- Our membership with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce means that you, as a WestShore Chamber member, also have access to the [Canadian Chamber's benefit program](#)
- Sponsorship of a Chamber event to get your name out there – we have opportunities to suit all budgets, from Coffee Talk to Awards Sponsors
- Discounted advertising rates in e-news, with one free ad per member per year (subject to availability)

If your organization is **in the WestShore**, you will find value in:

- Public voting for the annual Best of the WestShore Awards, which generates promotion for all those who take part, with particular benefit to those organizations who are voted into the top three

If you are a **medium to large business**, you may find most value in:

- Playing your part in and giving back to the community. The healthier the Chamber is, the better it is for businesses and business owners because the Chamber then has the necessary resources to advocate for and provide appropriate services to businesses
- Networking at our monthly mixers and coffee talks, and other events held throughout the year. The Chamber provides a supportive environment for you to get your name, and that of your business, out there and make connections with potential customers
- Hosting a Chamber mixer which although it is a business expense, allows you to showcase your business to the 40-60 members who attend as well as to the wider community in promotions before the event

If you are a **small to medium business**, you may find most value in:

- Access to the Chamber Group Insurance Plan, which is only available to members of a chamber. This plan offers medical, dental and other benefits to even the smallest of businesses, helping businesses to attract and retain staff
- Promotion through and business from Chamber Member2Member discounts
- Free occasional use of the Chamber board room, with very reasonable rates for regular use
- Our lunch and learns, provided on a variety of topics from social media to sales

If you are a business with a **store front**, you'll be interested in:

- Preferred merchant services rates with KIS Payments and Signature Merchant Services
- Ribbon cutting & special event presence: we support your grand opening, re-opening, new location or special event, and we will invite local dignitaries and fellow Chamber members as well!

If you are a **non-profit**, you will appreciate:

- Free access to upload community events to the WestShore Community Calendar
- Introduction to community members who may well be interested in supporting or sponsoring your initiative

Questions? We are happy to help! You can contact us on (250) 478-1130 or at [chamber@westshore.bc.ca](mailto:chamber@westshore.bc.ca)

