



Minutes of the Chambers Council Meeting

Held on Wednesday 25 November 2020

Via Zoom

Present			Present		
Chair	Matt Hubbard	MH		Charlie Houston-Brown	CHB
	Natalie Hewitt	NH		Hannah Ault	HA
	Malcolm Henson	MHe		Daniel Waterman	DWa
	Heather Broadhurts	HB		Susan Rose	SR
	Martin Williamson	MW		Emma Catterall	EC
	Karen Staley	KS		Mark Brammar	MB
	Ian Kelsall	IK		Richard Faulkner	RF
	Caroline Brown	CB		Josie Morris	JM
	Suzanne Davy	SD		Danai Gombera	DG
	Mark Brickhill	MB		Chris Knott	CK
	Ramona Hirschi	RH		Dean Moorhouse	DM
	Carl Croft	CC		John Berrisford	JB
	Mike Frewer	MF		Jeremy Lefroy	JL
	Keith Mitchell	KM		Paul Franklin	PF
	Alex Ward-Brassington	AWB		Lisa Cooper	LC
	Muna Dilling	MD		David Woolrich	DW
	Ann Pittard	AP		Elaine Needham	EN
	Sara Williams	SW		Helen Brocklebank	HBr
	Margaret Michell	MM		Steve Tellwright	ST
	Kate Beardmore	KB		Rob Fisher	RF
	John Tudor	JT		Steve Timmis	ST
	Peter Graham	PG		Tim West	TW
	Paul Franklin	PF		Jed Eatough	JE
	Lisa Cooper	LC		Vikki Sylvester	VS
In Attendance				Apologies	
	Lorraine Green	LG		David Boughey	DB
	Vicki Hardie	VH		Laura Cohen	LC
				Fiona Hawkins	FH
				Mike Herbert	MH
				Matthew Parker	MP
				Lawrence Soleimani	LS
				Geoff Riley	GR

NO.	ACTION POINTS/DECISIONS	By whom?	By when?
	WELCOME & APOLOGIES		
9.01	MH welcomed attendees Cllr Alan White could not attend due to a ministerial meeting therefore there was no speaker.	All	Closed

NO.	ACTION POINTS/DECISIONS	By whom?	By when?
MINUTES			
9.02	Minutes of previous meeting held on 23 September were approved.	All	Closed
OFFICIAL BUSINESS FOLLOWING THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING			
9.03	<p>The President (MH) gave his speech for the official business following the AGM:</p> <p>“For 2020 there were 4 vacancies out of the 14 places to serve from November 2020 to November 2023 made up of 3 existing Board Members, who were at the end of their first 3 year term and 1 Board member who left during the year. Nominations were opened on 3 November and we received the following nominations: Kate Beardmore of Synectics Solutions Ltd who is an existing Board member John Berrisford of Staffordshire Fire & Rescue who is an existing Board member Julie Mirowski of Rydale Roofing Ltd who is an existing Board member Hannah Ault of Valentine Clays Ltd Steve Timmis of Sempar Accountancy and Tax Ltd You will see that there were more candidates than places which necessitated an election which was open from 16-20 November 2020. The Scrutiny Committee comprising Lorraine Green, Margaret Michell and Natalie Hewitt met on Monday 23 November 2020 and agreed that proper procedure had been followed. We are pleased to announce that Hannah Ault, Kate Beardmore, Julie Mirowski and John Berrisford received the most votes and I would now ask Council to confirm their election A poll will now appear on your screen, please vote now. Thank you, I confirm that Hannah, Kate, Julie and John have been elected to the Board of Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce. I would like to thank all those who have stood for election to our Board and offer my commiserations to those candidates who were unsuccessful on this occasion. I find it extremely encouraging that we have had to hold an election for Board membership as it indicates a strong interest in the continued success of the Chambers. I hope that you will consider standing again in the future and that you will continue your support of the Chambers.”</p> <p>MH thanked PF for his continued mentoring and support and advised the meeting that KB would become Deputy President from 25 November 2020.</p>	All	Agreed
CO-OPTION VOTING			
9.04	<p>MH asked the Council to vote to co-opt Nigel Guest of Caja on to the Chambers Council starting from the next meeting on Wednesday 27 January 2021.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CB expressed a conflict of interest as both she and NG work at Caja and CB therefore did not vote. • Voting by Zoom poll was carried out and MH confirmed that Nigel Guest will join the Chambers Council in January 2021 and this appointment will be ratified at the Annual General Meeting in November 2021. 	All All All	Closed Closed Agreed

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MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING			
9.05	<p>The minutes of the Council Meeting on 23 September were agreed as a true and accurate record.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed by KB • Seconded by PF 	All	Closed
MATTERS ARISING			
9.06	None	All	Closed
UPDATE FROM STAFFORD LOCAL AREA ADVISORY BOARD			
9.07	<p>CC gave an update from Stafford Chamber:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AGM was held in November with 7 LAAB members resigning or retiring. After an election, 7 new members were welcomed on to the Local Area Advisory Board. Martin Lennon became Deputy President at the AGM. • Membership at the AGM was 286 which is 5.6% lower than the same time last year. • Have been helping some Stafford businesses to unblock various grants. • Supported 16 business from the Stafford area with an application via the Chambers to create 45 Kickstart placements for young people in their businesses. • Pleased to see a diverse range of businesses starting up in the borough. 	All	Closed
UPDATE FROM STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS LOCAL AREA ADVISORY BOARD			
9.08	<p>NH gave an update from the Staffordshire Moorlands Chamber:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AGM was held in November with 3 LAAB members resigning or retiring. After a call for nominations, 3 new members joined the Local Area Advisory Board at the AGM in November. Received a further resignation after the AGM and this position is currently vacant. • General membership has decreased from last year at 93 but retention is good. Chamber held a Moorlands campaign in October which was successful and the focus on more Moorlands members will continue. • Would like to increase events for the coming year. • Planning event was held on 24 November with the planning dept of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council with particular focus on the Local Plan. Hoping to make this a regular meeting. • Met with Alton Towers, information regarding patronage has been sent to them and NH will follow up. 	All	Closed
UPDATE FROM TIM WEST, CHAIR OF FORUM CHAIRS			
9.09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TW advised that the Forum Chairs met on 24 November to develop a focused message and plan for the policy work for the coming year. • For the last quarter priorities have been identified which are particularly post-COVID recovery, skills, climate change and sustainability, connectivity and infrastructure. • Next steps will be looking at focusing policy work on these areas to ensure representational functions are creating a Staffordshire footprint for policy work to react but also see what is coming over the horizon. 		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keen to highlight the work of the forums as the voice of the membership and would encourage members who do not engage, to do so. 		
UPDATE FROM FORUM & SECTOR CHAIRS			
9.10	<p>Money Matters – PG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No meeting held since the last Council Meeting. Next Forum due to meet in February 2021 with Glynn Jones of Bank of England will be a speaker. <p>Digital – CHB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Felt the Forum Chairs meeting was very useful. Been using collaboration using Teams. Themes for 2021 have been chosen and will focus on one priority per meeting. Want to start promoting digital good practice, use and process and improvement to other members using the strapline Doing Digital Deftly. Would welcome anyone who wants to get more involved. <p>Social Value & Procurement – MM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Last met on 9 October with 14 attendees. Looked at a review of the Kruger Report commissioned by the Prime Minister. Pleased to see social value gaining in profile regionally and nationally. SCC Social Value Charter continues to be refined and reviewed. The SSLEP are working on their own Social Value Charter and will share when ready. Forum’s priorities for 2021 were discussed and passed TW. Forum Chairs meeting was very useful and good to see the crossover of priorities. Julie Mirowski has done some work with a student at Keele University and will appear in the student’s works as a Social Value Champion. Sarah Colclough updated the Forum on the Chambers projects which are still ongoing despite lockdown. <p>HR, Employment & Skills – CB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CB started to Chair the Forum at the start of 2020 with a focus on skills and engagement between schools and businesses. The pandemic has meant a rise in unemployment across the region. Starting to look at how the various Government initiatives can be used to help businesses after furlough and employee holidays not being taken. Trying to use social media to collaborate between meetings to encourage sharing of knowledge, experiences and challenges and looking forward to the new platform which will make this easier for Forum members. Want to encourage new membership to the forum. <p>Rural Business – SD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued with virtual meetings with 8-10 attendees and would like to raise the profile of the Forum during 2021. Rural crime continues to be high on the agenda, along with connectivity, skills and education. Planning applications and the backlog are a concern. Will focus on reaching out to the rural tourism and leisure businesses who have been affected by COVID. <p>Manufacturers – DW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would like to improve the profile and increase numbers. Skills are an important focus and supply chains as companies come out of COVID. 	All	Closed

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	<p>Finest/Futurefinest – AWB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finest membership has dropped again due to companies unable to justify the cost. Sought opinions from both Finest and Futurefinest steering groups and membership and will be making some significant changes to the membership. • Will include new pricing structure, events style and marketing structure. • Want to make it easier for smaller companies to join and to engage more employees from larger companies. • Marketing currently focuses on the events and have started to address more knowledge sharing and hoping to use the new platform as a tool to engage members. • Changes welcomed by steering group and hope to launch the changes in 2021. • New Finest membership will be the same as Futurefinest to encourage progression to Finest. • Trying to include more CPD style events which have so far been very well attended. <p>Staffordshire Enterprise Board – JL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board has met 4 times this year and have concentrated on the support programmes for employment and business support. • Have seen Universal Credit applications double in the last 6 months in the County and City so the new programmes are incredibly important. Paid credit to the Chambers team for all they have done in these difficult times. • Pleased to see that the new Kickstart scheme and other programmes and grants have been well received in the area. 		
UPDATE FROM THE ARMED FORCES			
9.11	<p><u>MF – Armed Forces</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once again, the Armed Forces are being mobilised to assist with COVID-19. They have already assisted with testing in Birmingham and Liverpool, receiving wide publicity and are ready for further community mass-testing and planning for the logistical roll-out of the new vaccines. Nationally, there are 2,540 troops already deployed on 45 individual tasks from a Winter Support Force of 12,500 currently on stand-by, with more promised if required. • Most of the local Cadet Forces managed to get together face-to-face at least once before the second lockdown, but much training continues on-line and is well supported. There are reports of increased recruitment in some locations. • Gold and Silver Employer Recognition Awards for Armed Forces Covenant holders in the West Midlands were recently presented in virtual ceremonies. Locally, Gold winners were Stoke City Football Club, WH Management Group of Uttoxeter and Finning UK of Cannock, but there were no local Silver awards this year. • Futurefinest will be staging a leadership event in the new year jointly with Chamber Patrons, West Midlands Reserve Forces & Cadets Association. 	All	Closed
UPDATE FROM STOKE-ON-TRENT & STAFFORDSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP			
9.12	<p>EC introduced herself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joined the LEP in 2020. EC is the LEP's SME champion, shared with HA. 		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congratulated the Chambers on a great awards ceremony. • EC encouraged Council members to attend the LEP Conference on 1 and 2 December and gave an update on subjects and speakers. • Place brand for the County has been finalised to attract investment from outside Staffordshire. • Local Industrial Strategy work continues. • Anyone who would like to get involved with how LEP and Chamber can work together can contact EC • HA advised that a marketing agency has been appointed to run the marketing of the LEP and will be promoting the Chambers as a partner. Will start in January 2021. • Business Heroes publication had positive success rate in terms of engagement and driving views to Growth Hub and LEP website. HA thanked the Chambers for their support on this. 		
CHIEF EXECUTIVES REPORT			
9.13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SW took the report as read. • Highlighted that the Chambers is trying to influence as much as possible and are working to increase engagement with local MPs. • Others in the team are joining various groups, particularly Declan Riddell who is increasing representation in groups relating to transport. • SW has joined the BSI Sustainable Performance, Consumption & Production and will update the Council after the first meeting in December. • Chambers are championing the low carbon agenda and are working with the LEP and other partners and Forums. • Starting to see a decline in Membership and are working to retain members and support them. Still working with 5,500 business a year but not all are Chambers members. • Vanilla platform should have a soft launch to Council members by Christmas to test and receive feedback and SW encouraged participation. • Kickstart – a meeting is scheduled with DWP to smooth out difficulties. A crucial scheme to help young people into work. SD pointed out how difficult it has been to work with the DWP and Job Centre Plus around recruitment which may link into the Kickstart scheme. SD to meet with SW to discuss this further. • Peer Networks – SW gave an outline of this programme and encouraged Council members to participate or share with their own networks. 	All	Closed
ANY OTHER BUSINESS			
9.14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SW advised the meeting that Staffordshire University and Keele University are both finalists in the Times Higher Awards University of the Year. • RH doing a live interview with Sky News on the Comprehensive Spending Review and will be focusing on spending for the county and investment into skills, training and health. • CHB asked if there were plans for combined virtual and physical meetings and SW confirmed that there were and the technology to do this was being investigated by the events team. 	All All All	Closed Closed Closed
DATE OF NEXT MEETING			
9.15	Wednesday 27 January 2021 at 0830hrs via Zoom	All	Closed