



# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

#BusinessVoice @StaffsChambers

## MINUTES OF THE 68<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held on Friday 29 September 2017 at Commerce House, Festival Park, Stoke on Trent

### Present:

Mr P Farmer OBE (President)  
Mr J Berrisford  
Mr P Walters  
Mr G Riley  
Mr J Capper  
Mrs J Mirowski  
Mr M Broadbent  
Mr K Paszek  
Mrs K Lowe  
Mr T Jobson  
Mrs R Hirschi  
Mr D Woolrich  
Mrs W Dean  
Mr J Dudley (Treasurer)  
Mr M Frewer  
Mrs M Michell

Mr G Smith  
Mr S English  
Mr C Copestake  
Mr P Franklin  
Mr S Alty  
Mr A Ault  
Mrs H Ault  
Mrs J Jackson  
Mr J Rainford  
Mrs M Rollins  
Mr J Andrew  
Mrs S Davy  
Mr T West  
Mr J Wright

### In Attendance:

Ms S Williams  
Mr Matthew Lowe  
Mrs L Green

### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The President welcomed members to the 68<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce and Industry. The President also apologised for any errors in the meeting dates and times being incorrect due to the personnel changes at the Chamber.

### MINUTES

The President proposed the approval of the minutes of the 67<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting, held on 30 September 2016, which had been circulated prior to the meeting. This was seconded by Margaret Michell and approved unanimously.

### ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

The President stated that he would like to say a few words about the Chambers activities on behalf of the local business community and what has been achieved over the year and that Mr Dudley would shortly go through the accounts soon, but the Board was pleased to report that the Chamber remained in good financial health, achieved once again through prudent financial management and by taking business opportunities as and when they arose.

The Chamber's Annual Review for 2016-17 had been available to download on the Chambers website and copies were placed on the seats.

The President began his speech "Let me take you through some of the highlights...."

The Chamber's Annual Review 2016-17 is available today.

The Board's vision is;

- to achieve 2020 members across Staffordshire
- to increase turnover by 20%
- to help members increase their GVA by 20%
- and achieve all by 2020

This Chamber, according to BCC benchmarking is;

- the 3<sup>rd</sup> fastest growing Chamber
- the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest for number of employees (50,000) as a %, representing 20% of the Staffordshire workforce.
- We are in the top 10 for retention and subscription levels and our membership has grown by 10% in the last 12 months.

This Chamber prides itself on being the voice of the private sector, working together with the FSB on significant issues. Our campaigns include;

- Continuing lobbying for HS2 provision and other rail links to Staffordshire
- Calling for safety and road improvements to tackle M6 congestion
- Broadband 'Not spots'
- What businesses need post Brexit
- Procurement and Local suppliers

We work closely with the LEP, our local MPs and the Local Authorities.

As a Chamber we have had many other notable successes;

- Launching of the 2020 Directors Network
- Securing additional funding for the Mentoring for Growth programme
- Delivery of the Workplace Wellbeing programme
- Working with the Princes Trust in the Staffordshire Moorlands
- Helping over 6,000 businesses deal with being victims of crime.

As a Chamber we have worked with just under 7,000 students from across 22 schools to make links with over 100 businesses.

The Department of International Trade team post Brexit have been increasingly supporting businesses with 269 significant interventions resulting in £23m of extra sales. Export documentation processed over £200m worth of goods leaving the EU. The team has strengthened links with South East Asia with 8 ASEAN markets with over 200 delegates attending.

Staffordshire Chambers held its first business Festival last November, attracting hundreds of business people nationwide, the two-week festival was a huge success with key speakers, workshops facilitating good business to business interaction.

The events team delivered over 200 events across Staffordshire, attracting over 8,000 delegates. These events facilitate business networking, and the creation of new partnerships and opportunities for our members.

Staffordshire Chambers held its second annual business awards evening in July 2016, attracting hundreds of business people, continuing to build its reputation as the premier business awards evening.

The chambers set high standards and we are proud to retain our accreditations for the international environmental management (ISO14001) and quality (ISO9001).

Finally, on a personal note, as I head into my second year as Chamber President. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Deputy President, Derrith Turner, for her counsel, the Board for their continued dedication to steering the organisation, Chambers Council for their support and interest in developing the voice of the private sector, and to the chambers' team for their ongoing support throughout the first year of my term in office.

This year we say thank you and goodbye to a number of noteworthy and remarkable individuals who have given their time and commitment to the Chamber and its successes.

In April, we said thank you to John Capper who stepped down as the first President of the Staffordshire Moorlands Chamber. John took the Moorlands Chamber from strength to strength we say thank you to John's commitment as he takes the office of Deputy President. We welcomed Suzanne Davy as the newly elected President of the Staffordshire Moorlands Chamber.

We would also like to say thank you to our retiring Chamber Board members who have reached the end of their terms in office.

Thank you to Mo Trudel for supporting not only the Chamber but also the Chamber staff who have come to rely and trust on her listening skills and practical support during times of need.

Thank you to Jonathan Andrew for his time and dedication in supporting the Stafford Chamber and the Board. Jonathan's keen mind for procurement and business services combined with his comprehensible and clear advice for the Chamber has been great appreciated during his time in office.

Thank you to Jonathan Mitchell, during his time in office as Board Member and during his time as Chamber President, Jonathan steered the Chamber and championed its vision and values within the business community. I'd also like to thank Sinead Butters and Paul Morris for their time in supporting and helping to grow both the Chamber Council and the Chamber Board.

The President handed over the meeting to Jon Dudley, as Treasurer, to report on the Chamber's financial affairs.

Mr Dudley delivered his speech "Good morning ladies and gentlemen".

You may have seen the Chamber's accounts for the year ended 31 March 2017 which have been published on the Chamber website. There are also printed copies distributed around the room for those who wish to follow my comments from these accounts.

I wish to remind you that these statutory accounts, include the traditional Chamber activity and also that of its two enterprise agencies, Business Initiative and Stafford Enterprise.

I first point you to the income and expenditure account which you will find on page 5.

We are reporting a surplus on ordinary activities before taxation of £136,944 which was expected by the Board. This surplus is partly due to the incentivization and profit surplus received from West Midlands LLP and additional income from projects. The previous year delivered a deficit which was partly due to the downward revaluation of the property in Campbell Road. However, previous years have delivered surpluses which have helped the Chamber to protect and sustain future delivery of services.

Whilst we present whole company accounts here for statutory purposes, internally we actually break down activities into seven areas: Membership, Policy, Marketing, Events, Training & Enterprise, International Trade & Export documentation, Business Services and Corporate Services.

In previous years, the two Enterprise agencies, Business Initiative and Stafford Enterprise have been reported on separately, however, they now form part of the Training and Enterprise department.

If members do have any queries about the breakdown of income and expenditure, I will be happy to take questions at the end. Before that, I would like to briefly refer to the balance sheet on page 6. This shows that the Chamber is in a healthy financial state and has a level of reserves which will enable it to continue with the levels and standards of service which members are used to during the next couple of years of economic uncertainty.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank our Auditors, Geens, for the very welcome technical support which they have continued to provide to the Chamber. These financial statements are the first financial statements of the Chamber to be prepared under Financial Reporting Standard

102, a new accounting standard and the auditors have provided the Chamber with support and advice in the implementation of that Standard.

I would also like to say a big thank you to the Chamber's finance team, especially Lorraine Green, for the tight controls operated throughout the year and for the insightful reporting which she has provided to the Board on a regular basis.

I would like to conclude by, once again, highlighting the strong balance sheet of the Chamber. Your Board is confident that this year and for the foreseeable future, the Chamber will remain in good financial health and continue to deliver a wide range of support and services to its members.

The President thanked Mr. Dudley and asked if any member wished to ask a question or comment on the accounts or Treasurers report.

Mr. Capper stated that it was great the Chamber has a strong balance sheet; however, he was concerned around the Chamber running too lean. He asked a question around investment of the Chambers surplus into events and continuity in managing the events

Sara Williams, Chief Executive, replied that the Chamber is about to appoint the new Head of Policy and Communications who will oversee responsibility of the events programme. The Chamber has also put in place a stronger events team. A key area for this new management position is the delivery of the Chamber style and branding around events. On the second point around investing, the Board agreed to spend a portion of the Chamber reserves in developing a new members business lounge in the former office of the DIT. The Chamber is also hoping to acquire the NatWest branch building which is currently on the Chambers lease to develop into a new business startup space.

In the absence of any further questions the President formally proposed that the Directors' Report and the Chamber's Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2017 be adopted. Margaret Michell seconded this proposition, which was approved unanimously.

The President reported on the election of Council members-

## **ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS**

"The next item is the election of council members."

One third of Council members are required to retire each year and the Notice of the Meeting shows that 3 Council members see re-election. They are:

Fiona Hawkins  
Jonathan Wright  
Stephen English

With other resignations, we had 12 vacancies. In accordance with Article 14, nominations for new members have also been sought from the general membership. The following nominations have been received:

Alan Ault  
Carl Croft  
Chris Knott  
David Boughey  
Jackie Walker  
James Nixon  
Mike Riddell  
Nicholas Phillips  
Nigel Eggleton  
Rebecca Bostock  
Roy Johnson  
Stephanie Talbot  
Susan Green  
Susan Rose

As there was a total of 17 candidates for 12 places. This necessitated an election, which was undertaken amongst the general membership earlier this month. The Scrutiny Committee, comprising Lorraine Green, Suzanne Davy and Margaret Michell, met on the 10 August to count the votes. The successful candidates were: -

Alan Ault  
Carl Croft  
Chris Knott  
David Boughey  
Fiona Hawkins  
James Nixon  
Jonathan Wright  
Nicholas Phillips  
Nigel Eggleton  
Rebecca Bostock  
Stephen English  
Susan Rose

The President asked for a proposer to confirm the results of the Council election, this was proposed by David Woolrich, seconded by Margaret Michell. Non- abstained and all have been elected to council unanimously.

The next item is the election of the Board members.

At the time of the Elections to Board, under Articles 58 and 59 nominations were sought to fill the 5 vacancies on the Chamber Board.

Nominations where received from;  
Julie Mirowski  
Carl Croft  
John Berrisford

As the number of nominations does not exceed the number of vacancies all nominees have been selected to join the Chamber Board of Directors with two vacancies left to be filled.

The President asked for a proposer to confirm the results of the Board election, this was proposed by Paul Franklin and seconded by Margaret Michell. Non- abstained and all have been elected to the Board unanimously.

I would like to thank all those who have stood for election to the Council and to the Board and to offer my commiserations to those unsuccessful candidates. Once again, we have had to hold an election for Council membership, indicating the strong interest in the continued success of the Chamber by the general membership.

That is the end of the formal business for the AGM and I would like to thank you all for your attendance. Hopefully you will see that you are part of a dynamic Chamber, one of the best in the country and one which is continually looking to improve its performance so that its members have the best opportunity to prosper.”

**END**