



STAFFORDSHIRE CHAMBERS
MINUTES OF THE 69th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
28th November 2018

Members In attendance:

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------|-------------------------------------|
| • Margaret Michell | (MM) | Fendersocks |
| • Julie Mirowski | (JM) | Rydale Roofing |
| • Ramona Hirschi | (RH) | Belvoir Lettings |
| • Adrian Allen | (AA) | Anderen |
| • Alan Ault | (AAu) | Valentine Clays |
| • Mo Trudel | (MT) | Trudel Associates |
| • Kate Beardmore | (KB) | Synectics Solutions |
| • Keith Mitchell | (KM) | Wardell Armstrong |
| • Paul Franklin | (PF) | HSBC |
| • Peter Graham | (PG) | RSM |
| • Doug Flynn | (DF) | ActionCoach |
| • Suzanne Davy | (SD) | Moorland Contract Cleaning |
| • Paul Walters | (PW) | Stafford Industrial Supplies |
| • Jed Eatough | (JE) | LSGK Accountants |
| • Karen Lowe | (KL) | Geens Accountants |
| • Matt Hubbard | (MH) | Reels in Motion |
| • Ann Pittard | (AP) | Keele University |
| • David Boughey | (DB) | MGS Precision |
| • Tim West | (TW) | Wynns |
| • Carl Croft | (CC) | Croft Architecture |
| • Geoff Riley | (GR) | Business Innovation Centre |
| • Mark Brammar | (MB) | Mark Brammar Associates |
| • Dan Reeves | (DR) | Marsh Commercial |
| • Jon McArdle | (JM) | Marsh Commercial |
| • Wendy Dean | (WD) | Strategi Solutions |
| • Peter Davenport | (PD) | Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire LEP |
| • Gary Smith | (GS) | Staffordshire Precision Engineering |
| • Fiona Hawkins | (FH) | Plinkfizz |
| • Paul Farmer | (PF) | Wade Ceramics |
| • Mike Frewer | (MF) | Mike Frewer Associates |
| • Jon Dudley | (JD) | DAINS Accountants |

Chamber Staff in attendance:

- Sara Williams (SW)
- Matthew Lowe (ML)
- Lorraine Green (LG)



1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS AND GUEST SPEAKER

The Staffordshire Chambers President, Paul Farmer (PF) welcomed delegates to the 69th Staffordshire Chambers AGM. PF welcomed Peter Davenport (PD) from the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP) who delivered a presentation on SSLEP's activities, EU project expenditure and projects being developed. PD also discussed the progress of the LEP review and the combined efforts of the Chamber and SSLEP to feed into this decision.

SW provided a verbal update on the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) and Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce activities in preparation for Brexit. SW stated that the networks position is to avoid a messy and disorderly Brexit and to support businesses in legislative changes. SW informed attendees of the Chambers' new Bresillience website and the work of the Europe Direct Information Centre (EDIC) which act as repositories of information, advice and support for businesses and citizens to get ready for Brexit.

2 ANNUAL REPORT & MINUTES

The minutes of the 68th Annual General Meeting had been circulated around the room and ahead of the meeting. The minutes of the meeting were approved as a true record of the meeting.

- Proposed by Margaret Michell
- Seconded by Suzanne Davy
- Approved unanimously.

PF delivered his Annual Report, key discussion points included: -

- Chamber remains in good financial health
- We are the 22nd largest Chamber in Britain – a huge achievement for the Chamber considering the size of Staffordshire.
- We were one of only 17 Chambers within the Chamber network to have experienced any growth in Membership for 2017/18
- We grew our membership subscription rate by over 14% last year making us the third fastest growing Chamber within our chamber group (14 Chambers with memberships between 700 -999 members)
- We have the 2nd highest employee penetration rate in the UK. 12% of our catchment workforce are in Chamber Membership. The average Chamber penetration rate is just 3.6%
- We organized more events last year than every other Chamber except the East Midlands.



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- We provided full time employment to 38 people with over 20 work experience opportunities, student placements and internships have also been provided over 17/18

MEMBERSHIP AND KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Our 20:20:20 vision sets out our goal of;
 - achieving 2,020 members across Staffordshire,
 - Increasing our turnover by 20 per cent
 - and helping to grow the GVA of members by 20 per cent and to achieve this 2020.
- Chamber membership has grown by 14% over the last 12 months
- At the end of the financial year, we had 973 members.
- Our reach extends to more than 50,000 employees.
- We represent 20% of the region's workforce.
- We achieved the British Chambers of Commerce Excellence in Membership Services Awards for 2017.
- The Chamber continues to deliver Growth Hub services across the county, on behalf of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership.
- finest is recognised as the voice for professional services in Staffordshire and is a powerful vehicle for bringing people together. There are 116 members in finest
- futurefinest is our thriving professional network for Staffordshire's future leaders, offering a comprehensive range of development opportunities both professionally and socially. There are over 80 futurefinest members.
- The Chambers' Patron scheme continues to provide representation and profile growth for some of the county's largest employers. As of yearend the Chamber had 23 patrons.

BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE SUPPORT

- Additional funding was released for our **ERDF Mentoring for Growth** project. This specialist support for the creative sector incorporates Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Factory programme and Staffordshire University.
- This programme has provided specialist mentoring support to companies with the motivation, ability and resources to grow.
- Intensive mentoring support is currently being given to over 1500 businesses by 114 volunteer mentors.



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- This effort has created 125 new jobs across Staffordshire with it leading to 113 business creation projects.
- Staffordshire Chambers continues to work with The Michelin Development Fund in support of its initiative to help, support and encourage SMEs in North Staffordshire to grow and create jobs.
- During the last 12 months, we have been continued with our Domestic Abuse Advocacy Training on behalf of the OPCC (Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner) and the Skills & Opportunity Fund (Boosting Women in Business) funded by Natwest. Domestic Abuse contract, we have supported over 30 individuals towards becoming a Domestic Abuse Advocacy Champions
- The Boosting Women in Business supports vulnerable women into employment, self-employment and training. We have supported a number of women onto the programme who have access to three bespoke confidence building workshops as well as a female mentor to support them for the duration of the programme.
- Anti-Modern slavery- We are continuing to work with the OPCC to encourage companies of all sizes to implement an Anti-Modern Slavery pledge within their business through training and support.
- This year the Chamber became a Europe Direct Information Centre (EDIC) – acting as a gateway to receiving and providing communication about the European Union on behalf of the European Commission.
- We are continuing to work with the OPCC to deliver the Business Crime helpline. Working with victims of business crime, signposting them to one hour of free specialist advice and supporting their business recovery.
- We have developed a number of public sector training provider contracts with South Staffordshire District Council and Lichfield District Council – delivering bespoke training to upskill and develop their workforces.
- This year we have continued to work with Stoke-on-Trent College to deliver business start-up and training through ESF funds.
- We have continued to provide the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP Growth Hub – working with SMEs to provide business support, diagnostics and events to develop and grow businesses.
- We are delighted to have developed a partnership with the Careers and Enterprise Company, - we are working with the CEC to deliver and facilitate careers education within schools across Staffordshire.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

- The DIT was, again, the strongest performer in the West Midlands, setting the benchmark for other teams at a regional and national level.



- Over 2017/18 the DIT team processed export documentation worth nearly £200m
- Our DIT team is viewed as a role model because of its integration with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), the Make it Stoke & Staffordshire Team and the Growth Hub.
- Being nominated for the British Chambers of Commerce Award for International Trade Services.

TRAINING

- In 2016/17 we ran 53 training courses and trained over 200 delegates more than we have ever done before.
- The topics covered were diverse, including IT, social media, leadership, finance and export documentation among many others.
- The Chamber also delivered 17 bespoke training courses, with tailor-made training delivered to employees in their own workplaces on a range of subjects.

EVENTS

- The events team delivers over 200 events per year across Staffordshire, attracting over 6000 delegates.
- During the year, we ran speed-networking events, new member lunches, business breakfasts, and seminars and workshops to keep members up to date with topical issues.
- Staffordshire Chambers held its fourth annual business awards evening in July 2018, attracting hundreds of business people, continuing to build its reputation as the premier business awards evening.
- We also held our third annual Business Festival – this event attracted over 500 individuals to a series of workshops, seminars and expos showcasing the excellent businesses we have across our membership and the county.

REPRESENTATION

- This year the Chamber became the national lead for Transport and Infrastructure policy for the British Chambers of Commerce. Working alongside a national expert panel, we continued to develop a report responding to the business needs from transport.
- We regularly meet with local MPs, MEPs and other key influencers at a local and national level raising the key business critical issues on behalf of our members.
- We are regularly called upon to input into local, regional and national consultations. We do this through...
 - Our sector forums in– Planning, Transport, Social Value, International Trade, Employment and Skills, Business Tax and Finance, Manufacturing.



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- Hosting consultations and workshops with our members – gathering case studies and business intelligence to drive our thinking.
- Listening to our members and being in the right conversations with strategic partners.
- Our Quarterly Economic Survey.
- We coordinate the Midlands Policy Group, driving the regional policy agenda, coordinating Joint Patron Events and researching business critical issues across 7 other Chambers.
- We regularly represent our members at the BCC's Strategic Policy Group, Survey and Research Group, Reactive Poll Group, Brexit Working Group and CEO roundtable.
- Greater investment in local economic infrastructure has remained a priority for businesses in Staffordshire and we have called for:
 - access to HS2 procurement opportunities, improved connectivity and faster journey times,
 - the M6 J15-16 to be upgraded to Smart Motorway standards,
 - better east-west rail infrastructure and services,
 - competitive access to superfast broadband.
- Members have met with top ministers from the departments for Business, Treasury and Transport during continued meetings at Westminster and with meetings with Staffordshire MPs.
- In October we met with 5 secretaries of state, all 12 MPs for Staffordshire and other influential ministers, former ministers and key influencers.
- Stafford Chamber has worked with MPs, local authorities and the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), to promote Stafford Borough as a place to invest and grow a business.
- Members have had input into local planning policy, education and skills, broadband, and town centre developments, as well as holding regular meetings with the Bank of England agent.
- Staffordshire Moorlands Chamber has grown and its members have worked with partners to promote local economic growth and business success.
- The number of members who engaged in our policy activities increased again during the year, with a record participation in our surveys and forum meetings.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- This year we continued as the leading chamber of commerce for our work, dedicated to Social Value, Social Enterprises and Corporate Social Responsibility.



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- The Social Value forum, which is made up of members from the private, public and charity sectors, exists to make sure Staffordshire Chambers acts responsibly and encourages members to follow our example.

ACCREDITATIONS

- The chambers set high standards and we are proud to retain our accreditations for the revised international environmental management (ISO14001) and quality (ISO9001).
- Our internal Quality Environmental Safety Team (QEST) continues to monitor and report on areas of quality, environment and health and safety.
- The Chambers retains its position as one of the 53 accredited chambers forming the British Chambers of Commerce network. We are also a proud support of the pay in 30 days campaign.
- We remain the only Chamber to be a member of Social value UK, Social Enterprise UK, the United Nations Global Compact.
- We retained our accreditation within the national enterprise network, and we became a living wage employer.

3 TREASURERS REPORT

Mr Dudley delivered his speech “Good morning ladies and gentlemen”.

You may have seen the Chamber’s accounts for the year ended 31 March 2018 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 £38,084 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. 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 and Events, Training, Business Support, International Trade & Export documentation and Corporate Services.

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.



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During the year, 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 has also acquired the former NatWest building.

The Board also agreed to invest £100,000 of the Chambers monies to gain a better rate of return than the banks can offer. After investigating the various possibilities, the Chamber invested the monies into Funding Circle in October 2018, and from that date until the financial year end, generated £1,700 interest.

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.



4 ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

One third of Council members are required to retire each year and the Notice of the Meeting shows that a total of 6 Council members resigned or retired by rotation and of those the following are seeking re-election. They are:

- Karen Lowe
- Paul Franklin
- Ramona Hirschi
- Gary Smith

The President asked for a proposer to support the re-election of the above candidates to the Chamber Council, this was proposed by Margaret Michell, seconded by Adrian Allen. Non-abstained and all were elected to council unanimously.

In accordance with Articles of Association nominations for new members have also been sought from the general membership. The following nominations have been received:

- Douglas Flynn
- Jed Eatough
- Lee White
- Paula Rowland
- Kate Beardmore

The President asked for a proposer to support the nominations to the Chamber Council, this was proposed by Carl Croft, seconded by Suzanne Davy. Non- abstained and all have been elected to council unanimously.

5 SPECIAL RESOLUTION

By recommendation of the SCC Board the Members of the Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce were asked to approve and ratify the following: -

- A one-year extension in office of the Chamber President for Paul Farmer OBE
- A one-year extension in office of the Chamber Deputy President for Matt Hubbard
- A one-year extension in office of Honorary Treasurer for Jon Dudley

The Chief Executive Sara Williams asked for a proposer to support this special resolution to the Honorary Officer terms in office, this was proposed by Mo Trudel, seconded by Mike Frewer. Non- abstained and approved unanimously.

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 OF FORMAL BUSINESS.