



**STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS CHANGE OF COMMERCE
LOCAL AREA ADVISORY BOARD**

**Minutes of the 9th Staffordshire Moorlands Chamber of Commerce
Annual General Meeting held on Thursday, 7th November 2024 at
Buxton and Leek College at 09:00 hours**

Present	Tom Wilkinson	BETA Commercial Finance	TW
	Rachel Buxton	Thompson Wright Chartered Accountants	RB
	Tony Millar	The Oaks – Great Grounds	TMi
	Tom Malpass	Buxton & Leek College	TM
	Tamsin Parker	Parker Piredda	TP
	Ajay Kapadia	Cut The Mustard	AK
	Adrian Hide	Hide Consultancy	AH
	Aga Gronkiewicz	GRN Financial	AG
	Marc Wootton	High Peak Borough Council and SMDC	MW
In Attendance	Sandra Nixon	Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce	SN
	Karena Pawlak	Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce	KP
	Will Burton-Hancock	Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce	WBH
Apologies	Mark Brammar	Mark Brammar Associates	MB
	Natalie Hewitt	Hewitt & Carr	NH
	Judy Scott-Moncrieff	We Love the Moorlands	JSM
	Sarah Williams	Cottage Delight	SW
Distribution	All		

Minutes of the previous AGM

"I would now ask the meeting to confirm the minutes of the 8th AGM which was held on 10th November 2023 at Leek College. The minutes for this meeting have been available on our website since Friday, 11th October 2024.

- **May I have a proposer please?** Rachel Buxton
- **And a seconder please?** Aga Gronkiewicz
- **All those in favour?** ALL
- **Any against?** None
- **Any abstaining?** None

That means that the minutes of the 8th AGM have been approved.

On to the President's Report

Moorlands Overview Speech and elections 2024

Staffordshire Moorlands Chamber **membership** currently stands at 103. This is up by 6 members compared to this time last year. It's been another challenging year for retaining members when membership can be seen as discretionary spend. However, despite these challenges, we have continued to recruit new members.

The Chamber continues to be the 'go-to' place for business advice and support in these difficult times and our levels of member engagement have increased during the year.

The **Business Start-Up Program** has supported 24 individuals with advice leading to the creation of 15 businesses in the area. Support has included workshops on business basics, cashflow forecasting and marketing as well as our One2Three Club sessions that support businesses in their first one to three years of trading.

We also continued to deliver our **Boosting Women in Business** Program to support more female entrepreneurs across Staffordshire to consider starting a business. This has provided a supportive network for female entrepreneurs to start and grow their business ideas.

We continue to work closely with **Staffordshire police**. Our Business Crime advisers have provided crime advice to nearly 650 businesses across the Moorlands area with specialist advice and support to get victims of business crime back on their feet.

The **Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire Growth Hub** also helped to support Moorland's businesses to develop and grow.

Since March 2023, the Chamber has supported **38** businesses in the Moorlands, received **117** helpline telephone calls, completed **20** Diagnostics, and made **39** referrals to partner organisations for assistance.

The **Skills Hub's** UKSPF contract began in July 2024 and has already supported over 50 local businesses through Training Needs Analysis (TNAs). TNAs offer organisations an opportunity to discuss training needs and explore funding options to support upskilling and succession planning. In addition to the tailored support that a TNA provides, businesses can also book a variety of training courses focused on digital skills, management, and net-zero initiatives. Furthermore, a grant of up to £2,000 is available to cover any training costs not currently funded, helping businesses and employees upskill.

The **International Trade Centre** here at Staffordshire chambers have processed export documents to the value of **£180m**, so far. The International trade team continues to be incredibly busy, processing import & export customs declarations as well as regular export documents. The team is processing more declarations than other Chambers across the West Midlands and ranks as 2nd in the country. They are continuing to do well with providing training across Staffordshire.

Events – The wider Chambers' events team has continued to deliver a rich and diverse mix of events throughout 2024.

In the past year, Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce successfully hosted a total of 267 events, attracting an impressive 5,414 delegates. These events provided valuable opportunities for networking, learning, and collaboration among local businesses, showcasing our commitment to supporting the growth and development of the Staffordshire business community.

In Staffordshire Moorlands, we hosted 10 events, attracting 276 delegates. Events included speed networking, our quarterly Moorlands Business “Meet Up” at The Stafford Arms, and a charity football tournament.

We hope to continue to grow the numbers coming to each meeting and continuing to develop a stronger and prosperous business community in the Moorlands.

Policy

The UK went to the polls in July and whilst much of the political landscape across Staffordshire has shifted from blue to red, Dame Karen Bradley retained her Staffordshire Moorlands seat. The constituency itself has expanded and now includes the market town of Cheadle, which was previously inside the Stone constituency. We will be meeting with Dame Bradley on 15.11.2024. and look forward to a constructive discussion around the key business issues for Staffordshire Moorlands. All Chamber members welcome to join us and can book a place through the events page of our website:

<https://staffordshirechambers.co.uk/events-calendar/meet-the-mp-dame-karen-bradey-mp-for-staffordshire-moorlands-constituency/>

In July, our CEO (Rachel Laver) met with Andrew Stokes, Chief Executive of the alliance authorities Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and High Peak Borough Council. Discussions focused on devolution and green infrastructure. We encouraged Mr Stokes to share good news stories with our Comms team, to highlight positive developments taking place.

Earlier in the year, we wrote to Staffs Moorlands District Council, on behalf of one of our members, to raise concerns about some of the guidance being applied in the delivery of an SME Innovation Grant, funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

These concerns related to the specification to obtain three quotes for a specific piece of work, which our members felt would be a challenge, given the nature of innovation work being delivered. The Council listened to the points raised and acknowledged the need for more clarity about the way funding programs are delivered.

We strive to serve as the voice of our members through our lobbying and representation role.

Ratification and Appointment of Local Area Advisory Board Member Elections

In accordance with the Articles of Association there are not any Local Area Board members due to retire by rotation this year.

Three Local Area Board Members have served their first term on the Board and stand for re-election.

Peter Rogers of PR Lean Associates has decided not to stand for re-election. I would like to thank Peter for his hard work and past support of our Staffordshire Moorlands Chamber Board.

Tom Malpass of Buxton & Leek College is standing for re-election for a second term.

- **May I have a proposer please?** Tony Millar
- **And a seconder please?** Adrian Hide
- **All those in favour?** All
- **Any against?** None
- **Any abstaining?** None

Your re-election is confirmed Tom by the show of (unanimous) hands.

Tony Millar of Great Grounds, (The Oaks), is standing for re-election for a second term.

- **May I have a proposer please?** Tamsin Parker
- **And a seconder please?** Tom Malpass
- **All those in favour?** All
- **Any against?** None
- **Any abstaining?** None

Your re-election is confirmed Tony by the show of (unanimous) hands.

New nominations for the Local Area Board Members have also been sought from the general Membership. The nominations received are:

- Marc Wootton of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
- Mark Brammar of Mark Brammar Associates (who is on holiday this week and sends his apologies).
- **May I have a proposer please?** Ajay Kapadia
- **And a seconder please?** Tamsin Parker
- **All those in favour?** All
- **Any against?** None
- **Any abstaining?** None

Your positions on the Board are ratified by the (unanimous) show of hands.

Rachel Buxton of Thompson Wright Accountants will be stepping down as Deputy President of Staffordshire Moorlands Chamber. I would like to thank Rachel for her hard work and commitment. Rachel's replacement, as Deputy, will be Tamsin Parker, of Parker Piredda. Good luck in your role Tamsin.

- **May I have a proposer please?** Rachel Buxton
- **And a seconder please?** Adrian Hide
- **All those in favour?** All
- **Any against?** None
- **Any abstaining?** None

Tamsin, your position as Deputy on the Board is ratified by the (unanimous) show of hands.

I can confirm the formal business for Staffordshire Moorlands Local Area Board 9th Annual General Meeting is done and I thank you all for attending.