Staffordshire Moorlands Chamber of Commerce.

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS CHANGE OF COMMERCE
LOCAL AREA ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of the 10th Staffordshire Moorlands Chamber of Commerce Annual General Meeting held on Thursday, 6th November 2025 at The Oak Wedding Barns, Dilhorne, ST10 2PL at 09:00 hours

Present	Tony Millar	The Oaks – Great Grounds	TMi
	Ajay Kapadia	Cut The Mustard	AK
	Marc Wooton	High Peak Borough Council and SMDC	MW
	Tom Wilkinson	BETA Commercial Finance	TW
	Mark Brammar	Mark Brammar Associates	MB
	Rachel Buxton	Thompson Wright Chartered Accountants	RB
	Adrian Hide	Hide Consultancy	AH
	Natalie Hewitt	Hewitt & Carr	NH
	Tom Malpass	Buxton & Leek College	TM
In Attendance	Michelle Nagington	Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce	MN
	Karena Pawlak	Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce	KP
	Chris Plant	Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce	CP
	Tom Nadin	Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce	TN
Apologies	Aga Gronkiewicz	GRN Financial	AG
	Sarah Williams	Cottage Delight	SW
	Judy Scott-Moncrieff	We Love the Moorlands	JSM
Distribution	All		

The President gave the following speech:

Tom Wilkison, President of Staffordshire Moorlands Chamber of Commerce, welcomed everyone to the Staffordshire Moorlands Chambers of Commerce 10th Annual General Meeting (AGM) and reported that the AGM notice and minutes of the last AGM were sent out by e-mail and available on our website since Friday 10th October 2025.

A brief explanation of the voting arrangements before we begin; only members of Staffordshire Moorlands Chamber of Commerce may participate in voting. Each member company shall have one vote. The voting rights of Members of Staffordshire Moorlands Chamber of Commerce are set out in the Articles of Association.

and now to start the official business of the meeting

I would now ask the meeting to confirm the minutes of the 9th Annual General Meeting which was held on 7th November 2024. The minutes for this meeting have been available on our website since Friday 10th October 2025.

- **May I have a proposer please?** Mark Brammar
- **And a seconder please?** Natalie Hewitt
- **All those in favour?** ALL
- **Any against?** None
- **Any abstaining?** None

That means that the minutes of the 9th AGM have been approved.

On to the President's Report

Staffordshire Moorlands Chamber currently has 88 members, compared to 103 at this time last year. The good news is that our debtor position has never been stronger, and those listed as members are fully paid-up and active.

Membership retention remains a challenge, as it's often seen as a discretionary spend, but our new system and the work we've done to improve the member journey are helping us retain more members than before.

Recruitment remains strong. Events, networking, the Members Lounge, and wider business support continue to be big draws. We're still attracting new members across the Moorlands — and I'm delighted to say that Leek Building Society will be

joining us as a Patron from January 1st, 2026. That's a great example of the relationships we're building with key local organisations.

The Business Start-Up Program has supported 18 individuals with advice leading to the creation of 10 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 continue to work closely with Staffordshire Police. Our Business Crime advisers have provided crime advice to nearly 728 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 2024, the Chamber has supported 47 businesses in the Moorlands, received 142 helpline telephone calls, completed 29 Diagnostics, and made 49 referrals to partner organisation for assistance.

The Skills Hub's UKSPF contract began, funded by Staffordshire Moorlands District

Council has supported over 43 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 £1,000 is available to cover any raining 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 £200m, 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 2025

In the past year, Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce successfully hosted a total of 320 events, attracting an impressive 7,198 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 24 events, attracting 419 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 past year has seen Staffordshire Chambers continue to amplify the voice of local businesses, shaping debate, representing members and influencing decision-makers across the Staffordshire Moorlands and beyond.

A major topic has been the debate around the future structure of local government in Staffordshire. The Labour government has asked councils to develop proposals for new unitary authorities, replacing the existing two-tier system. One option under discussion could see the Staffordshire Moorlands merged with Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stone and Uttoxeter as part of a potential North Staffordshire unitary.

More than 8,500 residents have expressed opposition to a merger through the "No to Stoke" petition, organised by Councillor Joe Porter and presented to a full meeting of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council. The Council itself has supported exploring the North Staffordshire unitary model. The Chamber continues to work closely with local stakeholders to support an outcome that benefits everyone in the area, particularly by creating the best environment for businesses to succeed.

Our Policy Adviser, Declan Riddell, has been in the spotlight through a series of Chamber campaigns, including the issue of late payments. The campaign has encouraged small businesses to share their experiences as the Government consults on new legislative measures to tackle the problem, one which, according to the Department for Business & Trade, costs the UK economy almost £11 billion a year.

We continue to engage with Karen Bradley MP, the Conservative Member of Parliament for Staffordshire Moorlands. Our most recent meeting took place following last year's Autumn Budget, where discussions focused on business growth, infrastructure and the economic challenges facing local firms. Now serving as a member of the Opposition, Mrs Bradley remains an important voice for the area, and a further meeting will be arranged in the new year to continue our dialogue on behalf of local businesses.

On the marketing front, our communications reach continues to expand across Staffordshire Moorlands, Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent. Daily Focus, Staffordshire's biggest business news publication, reaches 15,000 inboxes every day, and features business stories from across the Moorlands. It provides a vital platform for Moorlands businesses to share their successes, champion innovation and inspire others. As a unified Chamber voice, we continue to connect and represent our business community through compelling storytelling and proactive engagement.

Inform of the continuation of the President and Deputy President

At the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Area Advisory Board Meeting which follow this AGM, Thomas Wilkinson of Beta Commercial Finance Ltd will continue as President of Staffordshire Moorlands Chamber for one further year. Tamsin Parker, of Parker Piredda will also service a further year as Deputy before taking over the role as President next year.

Ratification and Appointment of Local Area Advisory Board Member Elections

In accordance with the Articles of Association there are no Local Area Board members due to retire by rotation this year.

Ajay Kapadia of Cut the Mustard and Rachel Buxton of Thompson Wright Ltd is standing for re-election for a second term.

Natalie Hewitt of Hewitt & Carr Architects is standing for re-election for a third term.

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

This means that the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Area Advisory Board member has been approved.

That is the end of the formal business for the Staffordshire Moorlands Chamber of Commerce 10th Annual General Meeting, and I would like to thank you all for your attendance. Hopefully you will see that you are part of a dynamic Chamber, one which is continually looking to improve its performance so that its members have the best opportunity to prosper.