



STAFFORDSHIRE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE.

MINUTES OF THE 73rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on Wednesday 29 November 2022

At The DoubleTree by Hilton, Festival Park, Stoke-on-Trent

Members in attendance

Name	Company
Alan Murphy	Inxmedia
Angela Henry	M And M Group
Catherine Crockett	Lila Connect
Charlie Houston-Brown	Rushkeep Solutions
Daniel Waterman	Carrse And Waterman
Edgar Blazer	Sytech
Eve Davies	Protectapet
Faye Williams	Community Foundation
Fiona Hawkins	Plinkfizz
Geoff Riley	The Bic
Glynn Jones	Bank Of England
Grant Williams	Oakleafe
Hannah Ault	Valentines Clays
Heather Broadhurst	Now U Know Training
Ian Kelsall	Insight6
Jack Farmer	DJH Mitten Clarke
Jade Holloway	Staffordshire Chambers
Jed Eatough	Lsg Accountants
Jeremy Lefroy	African Speciality Products
Johm Tudor	Access Covers
John Berrisford	Staffordshire Fire
Josie Morris	Woolcool
Julie Mirowski	Rydale Roofing
Karen Staley	Geens
Karena Pawlak	Staffordshire Chambers



Kate Beardmore	Synectics
Keith Mitchell	Wardell Armstrong
Kelly Edwards	Staffordshire Chambers
Kerry Alexander	Ornua
Kevin Hetherington	Staffordshire University
Lee White	Sterling Transport
Lily-May Hamilton	Evy Boden-smith
Lorraine Green	Staffordshire Chambers
Malcom Henson	Henson Editorial Services And North Staffordshire Press
Marcus Roberts	South Staffordshire College
Margaret Michelle	Fendersocks
Mark Brammar	Mark Brammar Associates
Mark Swann	Uk Business It
Matt Hubbard	Reels In Motion
Matt Hustwitt	Djh Mitten Clarke
Matthew Parker	Litchfield Diocese
Micheal Frewer	Micheal Frewer Associates
Mike Herbert	Staffordshire University
Neil Dingley	Moore
Nick Phillips	Beswicks
Nigel Guest	Caja
Paul Farmer	Wade Ceramics
Peter Graham	Rsm
Rachel Buxton	Thomson Wright
Ramona Hirschi	Belvoir
Richard Faulkner	SkinBase
Ryan Dakin	Chamber
Sara Williams	Staffordshire Chambers
Scott Elliott	Hydrock
Shaun Gray	Ginho
Simon Davies	Protectapet
Simon Fogell	Healthwatch



Steve Tellwright	Capula
Steve Timmis	Sempar
Stuart Stanley	Ornua
Tom Pear	Reliance Medical
Vicki Hardie	Staffordshire Chambers
Vickie Milligan	Cottage Delight

Kate Beardmore gave the following speech:

Good morning everyone and welcome to the 73rd Annual General Meeting of Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce. I am extremely happy to see so many of you attending today. The AGM notice, Annual Accounts, Annual Review and minutes of the last AGM were sent out by e-mail and have been available on our website since Monday 7th November.

Lorraine Green, our Company Secretary has informed me that according to Article 8.0 of Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce's Articles of Association, we have a quorum present and as such we can now proceed to the formal business of the meeting.

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

Lorraine, please confirm the proxy voting instructions received before the meeting:

"I can confirm that, as at the proxy voting deadline at Tuesday 29 November at 4.30pm we received proxy voting instructions from one member. The votes have been added to the voting at today's proceedings. For your information, all votes received were cast in favour of each case."

Thank you Lorraine, and now to start the official business of the meeting

1. MINUTES OF THE 72nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

"I would now ask the meeting to confirm the minutes of the 72nd AGM which was held on Wednesday 24th November 2022. The minutes for this meeting have been available on our website since Monday 7th November.

- **May I have a proposer please? JULIE MIROWSKI**
- **And a seconder please? STEVE TIMMIS**
- **All those in favour? ALL**
- **Any against? NONE**



- **Any abstaining? NONE**

That means that the minutes of the 72nd AGM have been approved.

2. TO RECEIVE THE PRESIDENTS' REPORT

“and now we come to the President’s report.

I proudly became President of Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce in November 2021. Within days, the Chambers had been deservedly crowned Chamber of the Year at the British Chambers of Commerce Awards. In a year which saw a massive period of adjustment for businesses who’ve had to face many new challenges, this award recognised the amazing job everyone at the Chambers did and continues to do, in helping businesses weather the turbulent periods and how we work to transform our services to meet the ever changing needs of our members.

However, no time for resting on our laurels! 2022 has already brought us a drawn-out war in Ukraine, rampant inflation, supply chain issues, spiralling costs of fuel, transport and raw materials and difficulty filling job vacancies.

The Chamber team continued their support of businesses, primarily making sure that the voice of Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce is amplified on these issues of national and global significance.

We ended the financial year in 2022 with 950 members, 199 of which were new to the Chambers, which was an increase of 43 members on the previous year. We engaged with 10,522 individuals with over 17,000 followers across our social media platforms, showing the breadth of engagement we have across the county and further afield.

The Chambers held over 300 online and in-person events during the 2021/2022 period with our total delegates reaching 3,897. The event programme is broad and we pride ourselves on providing something for everyone in business from, informative and insightful seminars and presentations on specialist topics, to Speed Networking and company visits, to Let’s Do Business at Uttoxeter Racecourse.

Following an online only Business Awards in 2020, we were delighted to physically welcome 223 guests to our hybrid Staffordshire Business Awards, also held at Uttoxeter Racecourse, in November 2021. The event crowned 16 businesses with our sought-after business awards ranging from Start-Up Business of the Year to the coveted Business of the Year Award, won by Stone Group. In March 2022, members visited Port Vale Football Club for our annual International Womens’ Day event where we had speakers from senior roles in the Ministry of Defence, Dairylink, the “More than a Face” charity and NatWest who inspired over 100 local women in business.



During the period, Patron membership grew to 24 with Equans and the University Hospital of North Midlands joining our impressive Patron panel. We provide Patrons with regular access to key influences and decision-makers in Government and other agencies, they join us for the British Chambers of Commerce conference each year.

Finest and Futurefinest, our memberships for those working in a professional services environment continue to be representative of their sector. They both have their own steering groups and continue to hold events where those members can meet, network, learn and socialise.

The Chamber continues to look for funding and commercial opportunities to provide business support schemes and help Staffordshire businesses start, grow and prosper.

Our Business Start-up Programme saw 201 individuals take the leap and start their own businesses. Under the Kickstart Scheme, 912 young people started a work placement with 247 Staffordshire businesses, many going on to become permanent roles. The scheme also provided around £4million worth of funding to businesses across Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire. The Chambers is committed to supporting young people and during the period supported 3,500 students from 8 primary and secondary schools on activities such as CV writing, talks from local business leaders, careers fairs and more.

The Business Crime helpline, with a full time member of staff based at Staffordshire Police HQ, offers a unique to Staffordshire Chambers helpline, supporting those business who have been the victims of crime by offering free specialist advice with the aim of minimising the effect of crime on businesses.

Let's Do Mentoring supported 161 business in the period, 57% of those being based in the south of the county and the remaining 43% based in the north. These businesses have completed 12 hours worth of mentoring using 82 business leaders from a range of backgrounds. The support provided has led to the creation of 18 jobs and a 24% increase in Gross Value Added to those participants' businesses.

The Chambers is supporting a significant number of refugees in Staffordshire through the Positive Pathways programme. In the period we supported 96 individuals, with a total of 12 going on to start their own business and 11 supported in to employment. The programme now also supports a significant number of Ukrainian refugees.

On behalf of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, the Chambers continues to deliver the Growth Hub service which plays a major role in driving strong sustainable business growth across the area. Growth Hub advisors undertake diagnostics with businesses, providing them with tailored advice and signposting to co-ordinated and cohesive funded programmes, business networks, funding opportunities and specialist information. The Growth Hub engaged with 2,978 businesses during the period, completed 615 growth diagnostics and made 1,486 referrals to 65 referral partners, helping to service business growth, the creation of new jobs and support the local economy.



The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Skills Hub, funded by the European Social Fund, engaged with local businesses to provide grants to support that business with the cost of training. During the period, further funding was awarded to the Skills Hub to be able to offer 100% funded training through different funding streams via the County Council, City Council and other Local Authorities. The Skills Hub engaged with 994 businesses across the county, completing 152 training needs analyses and receiving over £1 million worth of funding. Throughout the year, 138 grants were approved with 300 participants benefitting from upskilling.

Moving now to international trade, Staffordshire Chambers is number 4 in the British Chambers of Commerce accredited Chambers rankings for export documentation. In 2021, we processed documentation ensuring almost £300 million of goods were exported to over 100 countries in places as far afield as Argentina and Thailand.

The team processed over 5,000 customs declarations, ensuring Staffordshire businesses remain fully HMRC compliant.

The dedication of our team has helped customers clear goods in and out of the UK throughout the toughest period that traders have endured for many years.

We offer nationally accredited International Trade courses, translation services, preferential exchange rates and express credit check reports using well known third party providers. Through the Chamber brand, we give members access to the Global Business Network, made up of our fellow Chambers across the Globe and have 120 members regularly accessing this service.

I think that all of this, from membership to events, demonstrates the wealth of expertise and knowledge of the Chambers. Over the last financial year, as you have heard, the Chambers has helped Staffordshire businesses receive over £4 million of funding just on skills and workforce development alone. The willingness to pull together that we find in our members, Patrons, staff and partner organisations makes me feel proud and confident that we can handle whatever comes our way.

3. TO APPROVE THE ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2021/2022

“The next item on the agenda is to receive the audited financial statements and reports of the Board for the year ended 31 March 2022 which have been available on our website since Monday 7th November 2022. I will now pass you over to Paul Farmer to give the report, our retiring Honorary Treasurer.

Paul Farmer – “Good morning members of the Chambers

You may have seen the Chamber's accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 which have been published on the Chamber website.

I first point you to the income and expenditure account which you will find on page 8.

We are reporting a surplus on ordinary activities before and after taxation of £529,435 which was expected by the Board. Because of the continuing pandemic, Central and Local Government freed up a wave of funding which, because of our relationships and previous track record, put us in an excellent position to deliver the support and services needed. Previous years have delivered surpluses which have helped the Chamber to protect and sustain future delivery of services.

A number of funded projects that the Chamber delivers have, or are due to, come to an end over the next 6-12 months. These surpluses gained over the last few years will help to support the Chamber as it transitions and develops services to continue to support its members and businesses throughout Staffordshire.

Whilst we present whole company accounts here for statutory purposes, internally we continue to break down activities into five key areas: Membership, Marketing and Events, 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 10. 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 and to enable the Chamber to continue to invest in its infrastructure and future activities.

Investments (note 5) have decreased slightly withdrawn from Funding Circle. The investments of £544,309 are broken down by £254,435 into London BarrelHouse and, £289,873 into Fidelius.

Trade Debtors (Note 8) have increased due to few large invoices being raised for at the end of the year, which have subsequently been paid.

Investments (note 9) have decreased by £55,469 over the year as monies repaid by businesses are being withdrawn from Funding Circle

Creditors (note 10) have increased due to the level of VAT payable and income received in advance.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank our Auditors, Geens, for their in depth testing when undertaking the Chambers financial audit, particularly with the funding streams and the effect of the coronavirus pandemic on finances.



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

I would like to conclude my report as Honorary Treasurer by, once again, highlighting the strong balance sheet of the Chamber. Despite the coronavirus pandemic 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.

I would also like to advise that this is my last year as Honorary Treasurer as I have decided not to stand for re-election this time. I have greatly enjoyed my time working with and supporting the Chamber and whilst, in the short term, the future is challenging, I am confident that the Chamber will emerge for a strong and vibrant future.

Any comments or questions?

"Thank you Paul

- **May I have a proposer please? FIONA HAWKINS**
- **And a seconder please? HANNAH AULT**
- **All those in favour? ALL**
- **Any against? NONE**
- **Any abstaining? NONE**

That means that the accounts have been approved.

4. TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT & REMUNERATION OF THE AUDITORS

"The next item on the agenda is the appointment of the auditors. Due to their prior experience, price and their understanding of funding and how the Chambers operates, I would now like to propose the appointment of Geens as Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce auditors and to hold the office until the next general meeting at which the accounts of Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce are considered and that the Directors of Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce be authorised to fix their remuneration.

- **May I have a proposer please? GEOFF RILEY**
- **And a seconder please? MARGARET MICHELL**
- **All those in favour? ALL**
- **Any against? NONE**
- **Any abstaining? NONE**

That means that the Geens have been approved as auditors until the next Annual General Meeting.



5. TO RATIFY THE APPOINTMENT OF CHAMBERS COUNCIL MEMBERS

"A total of six elected Council members resigned during the year or retired by rotation and Mark Brammar, of Mark Brammar Associates wished to seek re-election for a further three year term.

There were two vacancies unfilled from 2021

Nominations for nine vacancies on the Chambers Council have been sought from the general Membership and eleven nominations were received. This therefore necessitated an election which ran from Tuesday 1st November to Friday 4th November and those candidates with the most votes were:

Vickie Milligan	Cottage Delight Ltd
John Moran	JPR Mechanical & Electrical Services Ltd
Mark Brammar	Mark Brammar Associates
Clare Wood	British Ceramics Biennial
Shaun Gray	Ginho Group
Simon Fogell	Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent
David Cooper	Wood, Goldstraw & Yorath
Derrith Turner	Rowtype Printers Ltd
Edgar Blazier	Sytech Technology Consultants Ltd

The results of the election of the Chambers' Council members have been scrutinised by members of the Board and Audit & Governance Committee in accordance with Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce's practice.

- **May I have a proposer please? HANNAH AULT**
- **And a seconder please? RACHEL BUXTON**
- **All those in favour? ALL**
- **Any against? NONE**
- **Any abstaining? NONE**

This means that the new members of the Chambers Council have been approved.

6. SPECIAL BUSINESS

"As a matter of special Business, the Board propose that the Articles of Association of the company be amended. The new Articles are intended to make the Articles refined and easier to comprehend. Amendments include:

- An extension to terms in office for Board and Council members from a maximum of 2 terms (6 years) to a maximum of 3 terms (9 years) to give members a longer time on the Council or Local Area Advisory Board to gain experience before nominating to become Deputy and then President, and



to ensure that enough time is left in their elected term in office to cover the 4 years these roles require.

- The necessity for one-third of the Board and Council to retire each year has been removed to give greater flexibility on retirement and rotation rules. The one-third rule assumed that all vacancies each year would be filled, and did not take into account any resignations during the year or at the AGM. Therefore, this rule is no longer applicable.
- Reference to UN Sustainable Development Goals has been added.
- Terms in office for Deputies and Presidents of the Chambers and Local Area Advisory Boards do not count in those members' elected terms to give consistency across both the Chambers' Board and Local Area Advisory Board's as elected officers terms should not be to the detriment of their elected terms.
- If, on the winding up of the Chambers, there remains any surplus after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities, the surplus shall be given or transferred to some other body (whether or not it is a member of the Chambers) having objects similar to those of the Chambers, or to another body, the objects of which are charitable. This brings us in line with many chambers in the accredited network and ensures we can bid for sources of funding.
- Gender neutral wording, spelling and formatting has been changed throughout to make a more cohesive set of Articles of Association.

The special resolution proposed is:

"that the Articles of Association produced to the meeting be approved and adopted as the formalised Chambers' Articles of Association with immediate effect, overriding the existing Articles of Association"

- **May I have a proposer please? FIONA HAWKINS**
- **And a seconder please? STEVE TIMMIS**
- **All those in favour? ALL**
- **Any against? NONE**
- **Any abstaining? NONE**

This means that the new Articles of Association are adopted.

"That is the end of the formal business for the Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce 73rd 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 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.

Before we end the meeting, I would like to thank Paul Farmer for his dedication and engagement with the Chambers, as he has decided not to stand for re-election. He



served an extra year as President and has been Honorary Treasurer for the last 2 years. Steve Timmis will be taking over as Honorary Treasurer for 12 months starting today.

I would also like to thank Keith Mitchell for his service on the Chambers' Board and the Investment Committee. His input and advice has been invaluable over the last 6 years.

It now gives me pleasure to introduce Glynn Jones, Bank of England Deputy Agent for the West Midlands and Oxfordshire who will be our speaker today.

The President confirmed that the formal business for the Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce 73rd Annual General Meeting was completed and thanked Members for their attendance.