

# PLYMOUTH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

(Company number 00617795)

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

10am - Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020

On Zoom

### Minutes

#### Item

#### 1. Attendance

Richard Stevens – Chair of the Board

Stuart Elford – CEO

Tim Jones – Vice Chair

Paul Woods – AGM Chair

Paul James – Treasurer

Donna Barnes – Vice Chair

Suzi Cumberland

Carolyn Giles

Richard Adams

Pauline Hands

Mark Dibbens

Paul Philpotts

Linda Middleton-Jones

David Williams

Helen Hart

Samantha Kerswill

Daffne Zamudio

Olivia Paterson

Nick Byrne

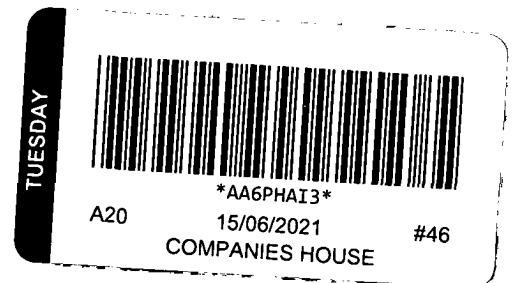
Melanie Ceasar

Claire Mahoney

Laura Campbell

Tamsin Jago

Nathan Coughlin



#### 2. Apologies and declarations of interest

Apologies had been received from Craig Moore.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

#### 3. A welcome from the AGM Chair, Paul Woods

PW welcomed everyone and gave an update on the political changes and BREXIT predictions made by the Prime Minister since the last AGM. PW then acknowledged the impact of the recent pandemic.

#### 4. Minutes of the 2018 AGM

Minutes of the AGM from 2019 were shared during the meeting and could be requested post event. TJ proposed they be adopted as a true record of the meeting, which was seconded by MD, with all in favour.

#### 5. Chamber Chairman's Report

There was a welcome from RS who touched on the challenging year that the Chamber had overcome due to the pandemic.

The Chamber has adapted not only for itself but who it represents, the members. This was down to the team who used their agility to get through the situation. Separately the International Trade team have been exceptional in preparing members for BREXIT and spreading the word that not only is Britain open for Business, but the Chambers are here to help.

RS reflected on the great support we have had from stakeholders this year such as the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (HotSW LEP).

TJ was announced as the new Vice Chair to fill the vacancy.

A few minutes were taken to honor the passing of Steve Whiteway, a former Director at the Chamber. A tremendous loss and he will be missed.

RS thanked the current board for their engagement and commitment for the Chamber to move forward over the past year.

From the Chair's perspective, the Chamber is looking fairly stable and the financial reports belie the present which looks pretty strong also.

We continue to lobby at a local, regional and national level making sure that the voice of businesses is being heard.

## **6. CEO Report**

SE provided an update on the Chamber. He has now been in post for two years.

Noting this is an update for the 2018-19 year, so somewhat out of date.

To put it into context we had set the bedrock for the coming year with new branding, premises, IT and staff as part of a deliberate investment strategy.

The new membership packages launched at the last AGM going to a choice-based system were very well received and we saw membership numbers climb for the first time, helped largely by our membership executive Sam Kerswill.

Our events programme continued to evolve and our new events executive hugely increased the turnout at our events, such as City Conversations which began to regularly reach 100. The Devon Business Show was a roaring success and saw record attendance.

Our International Trade team saw a new team member Claire Mahoney join Nick Byrne and help process the increased export documentation and prepare for the forthcoming EU exit.

Our marketing communications channels grew and embraced the digital, as well as video, as we released our first impact video (now updated).

Helen Hart drew the strands of membership, events and communications together as head of members services.

Our finance manager Melanie Ceasar has done a sterling job of steering us through the investment year and keeping us running and sustainable.

Various meet the MP events saw our lobbying activities increase, with notable successes such as the extension to the increase in Annual Investment Allowance. I chair BCCSW that brings together the accredited county Chambers of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset and Business West in a regional voice, while PABC grew under the umbrella of the Chamber to be our powerful city voice.

So the investment we made were beginning to bear fruit and although that investment shows itself as a loss in the accounts I am pleased to report that, despite all the current difficulties with the pandemic and impending EU exit, we have turned that into a near breakeven point already – with future projections looking positive despite the climate.

Final thanks to the entire board, who under Richard's stewardship have supported me and the strategy that started returning the Chamber to the successes it used to enjoy, once again becoming the pre-eminent business organisation in the City, County and Region.

## **7. Treasurer's Report**

PJ highlighted features of the audited accounts, which were shared during the presentation. PJ emphasized that this was an investment year, so all loss was factored in to ensure resources, structure and facilities were appropriate to deliver to our members.

Over the last 18 months debtors have decreased due to the work of Melanie Ceasar, Finance Executive. The current position was also expected and planned for - so the board are pleased.

Lockyer street was also sold at a premium.

Bishop Fleming (external auditor) echoed the financial report.

There was nothing unexpected in the accounts. The motion that the accounts be accepted was proposed by RS and seconded by CB, with all in favour.

## **8. Election of Auditors**

It was noted that Bishop Fleming had continued to do an excellent job as the Chamber's auditors and it was proposed they should be re-elected. This was proposed by DB and seconded by EB, with all in favour.

## **9. Special Resolution to adopt new Articles of Association**

The members were asked to pass a Special Resolution to adopt the amended Articles of Association, details of which were shared. Proposed LMJ, Seconded TJ, with all in favour.

## **10. Special Resolution to Change the name of the Company**

The members were asked to pass a Special Resolution under the new articles to change the company name from Plymouth Chamber of Commerce and Industry to reflect our trading name as Devon and Plymouth Chamber of Commerce. Proposed PJ, Seconded TJ, with all in favour.

## **11. Results of the Election of Board Members**

The members were asked to pass a Special Resolution in accordance with article 6.1, and disapply article 19.3 and article 20, to allow all director appointments, including co-