

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 14th October 2020 (via Zoom)

Present:

Committee

Annemarie Thurgood (President), David Fowles (Vice President), Adam Vines (Vice President), Howard Smith (Treasurer), Jan Sparrow, Hilary Norris-Evans, Howard Burr, Fran Coulter, Hannah Hockley and Sarah Somers (Secretary)

Members

Derek Callanan, Virginia Stourton, Christine Gore, Aidan Stevens, Kay Ransom, Rebecca Cotton, Carole Boydell, Shirley Alexander

Guests

Michael O Bray

1. Apologies for Absence

Mark Harris

2. Minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the 2019 AGM were approved by a show of hands.

3. Matters Arising

None.

4. President's Report (Annemarie Thurgood)

This year has definitely been different. We started the year with our usual monthly networking events and were working to introduce some new venues and topics. The 10th anniversary Business Awards were launched in January with a fabulous theme of a 1920's big band night to be held at Ingleside House. Then boom, COVID-19 hit. After the initial shock we regrouped and organised more regular fortnightly newsletters which offered support and advice as well as

members' news and we started holding monthly meetings by Zoom and geared our topics around things to help our local businesses during the pandemic.

Plans for the year ahead are to continue to meet the objectives set out in our constitution:

- To do anything lawful which may be conducive to the improvement of the prosperity of its Members and the development and improvement of the Cirencester areas, for the purposes of increasing commercial activity
- To represent, promote and advance the interest of its Members
- To make representations on behalf of its Members on issues relevant to them
- To co-operate and engage, in so far as that may be of benefit to its Members, with anybody or association in the UK whose objects are similar to those of the Chamber

We are now taking part in regular meetings with the Town Council to brainstorm how we can together, safely, given current circumstances:

- Sell Cirencester as a destination
- Encourage people to spend locally
- Make it easier to run a business in Cirencester

We've now also started to take questions to the District Council with regard to parking and their economy recovery plans and there has been regular contact on matters such as the town's internet connectivity and the Kickstart Employment Scheme. We're all very positive about developing these relationships and working together for the good of Cirencester.

So if there is anything members would like discussed, please let us know as the platforms are there, so we should not waste these opportunities.

The Business Awards, mentioned earlier, had to be postponed for obvious reasons but we are still going ahead, albeit virtually, as this year more than ever we need something positive to focus on and our local businesses need to receive the recognition they deserve. This pandemic has demonstrated just how much we need to be able to use and embrace technology, so Cirencester is going to be one of the first towns to host a local Business Awards ceremony online. The message is - we are still very much in business!

Finally, it was reported that Mark Harris was stepping down from the committee and he was thanked for his time, energy and enthusiasm whilst on the committee.

5. **Treasurer's Report (Howard Smith)**

The Treasurer summarised the financial statements for the financial period 1st July 2019 to 30th June 2020. There had been no Business Awards event in the period and therefore income was limited to memberships and some breakfast meeting income pre-COVID, presenting a relatively flat year. After deducting meeting and other administration costs there was a deficit, however the

Chamber had built up sufficient reserves to cover the deficit incurred in this period.

Some monies had been received and paid out in relation to the 2020 Business Awards but these not recognised in this year's financial statements and have been deferred to the next period when the event itself will take place.

It was noted that the financial statements had been independently reviewed by Millers Chartered Accountants, who were duly thanked for their services. If anyone wishes to see a copy of our accounts please feel free to contact us.

The Treasurer put forward the financial statements for approval.

Proposer: Rebecca Cotton Seconded by: Michael O Bray

There were no questions and the Chamber's accounts were approved by a unanimous show of hands.

6. Election of President and Officers

David Fowles (Vice-President) took over at this point whilst the post of President was voted for. Annemarie had agreed to stand as President for a final year and David asked the members if they were happy for Annemarie to continue.

Nominated as **President: Annemarie Thurgood**

Proposer: Jan Sparrow Seconded by: Howard Smith

Annemarie was duly elected by a unanimous show of hands (and applause) and immediately took back the role of meeting host.

David Fowles & Adam Vines had agreed to stand again as Joint Vice-Presidents

Nominated as **Joint Vice-Presidents: Adam Vines and David Fowles**

Proposer: Jan Sparrow Seconded by: Hannah Hockley

David and Adam were duly elected by a unanimous show of hands.

Howard Smith was happy to continue as Treasurer of the Committee.

Nominated as **Treasurer: Howard Smith**

Proposer: Adam Vines Seconded by: David Fowles

Howard was duly elected by a unanimous show of hands.

7. Election of Committee

The remaining Committee Members had agreed to stand again:

Jan Sparrow, Hilary Norris-Evans, Howard Burr, Fran Coulter and Hannah Hockley

Proposer: Aidan Stevens Seconded by: David Fowles

This group of individuals were duly elected by a unanimous show of hands.

A new committee member had put himself forward for election to the Committee

Nominated: **Aidan Stevens**

Proposer: David Fowles Seconded by: Adam Vines

8. Any Other Business

This item was in fact taken at the beginning of the meeting whilst we waited for registered members/guests to log in.

Carole Boydell (Corinium Radio) spoke to the assembled company about the Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan of which she is on the Steering Group. This is an important document that will set out the future plans for the town, looking ahead 30-40 years. It will have legal status so she wanted to encourage the local business community to engage with its development, hence her address to the Chamber of Commerce.

She explained that she had been working with Adam Vines of Lounge Design in the design of the document and wanted to share their workings with the assembled company who were invited (via Zoom chat) to give comments which were all very positive.

End of meeting at 6.55pm