

**THE 172<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE WEST AND NORTH YORKSHIRE  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY**

**Thursday, 21 September 2023  
@ The Great Victoria Hotel, Bradford**

<b>Present:</b>	Mohammed Kola	Adams Foodservices Trading Limited
	Karl Oxford	African & Caribbean Business Ventures Ltd
	Suzanne Watson	Approach PR
	Andy Knowles	Assetiam Business Consultancy Services
	Ed Cliff	Azets
	Vicky Wainwright	Azets
	Suzanne Watson	Approach PR
	Alison Gustavsson	BDO UK LLP
	Mark Cowgill	Bradford Chamber President
	Matthew Dakin	Bradford Culture Company
	Bex Williams	Bradford Culture Company
	Umer Akbar	Faum Architecture
	Anthony Cope	Finance Yorkshire
	Rachel Thompson	Gordons LLP
	Nasar Hussain	ITC
	Charles Johnson	Leeds Bradford Airport
	Aqila Choudhry MBE	Love in Care
	Steven Bancroft	Mind in Bradford
	Andrew Pericleous	Mr Chippy
	Victoria Wainwright	Naylor Wintersgill
	Amanda Beresford	Schofield Sweeney / Chair
	Robert Lawson	Vanquis Banking Group
	Rebecca Fitzgerald	Yorkshire Building Society
	David Kerfoot CBE DL	
	Usman Ali	
<b>In attendance:</b>	James Mason	Chamber Chief Executive
	Julie Snook	Chamber Financial Controller
	Mark Casci	Chamber – Head of Policy
	Debra Patchett	Chamber – PA to CEO
	Shayan Ali	Chamber - Accounts Team
	Ben Forrest	Chamber – work experience

Amanda Beresford (Chair) welcomed those present to the 172<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting and introduced herself and Chamber representatives; James Mason (CEO), Julie Snook (Financial Controller / Company Secretary) and Debra Patchett (PA to CEO).

Apologies were noted from Craig Thomson (Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee).

**1. Approval of minutes of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on 22 September 2022**

The minutes were proposed by Vicky Wainwright and seconded by Suzanne Watson as a true and accurate record.

**2. To adopt the financial statements of the West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry for the year ended 31 March 2023.**

Julie Snook, Chamber Financial Controller, reported that the auditors, Azets, had carried out a full audit and in their opinion, the financial statements gave a true and fair view of the state of the company and the group's affairs as at 31st March 2023.

The financial statements of the West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce were proposed by Mark Cowgill and seconded by Vicky Wainwright. All voted in favour.

There were no questions raised on the West & North Yorkshire Chamber Accounts.

**3. To adopt the financial statements for the John Speak Foreign Languages Scholarships Trust Fund for the year ended 31 March 2023**

The AGM attendees were informed that the John Speak Foundation Foreign Language Scholarships Trust was a registered charity, operating under the trusteeship of the West & North Yorkshire Chamber. The objectives of the charity were to assist students to improve their language skills and to further export trade by providing bursaries for overseas language study to those who would work in international trade.

The funding used for these grants was generated mainly from capital investments and during the year, 14 bursaries totalling £13.5k were awarded to students.

Charles Johnson proposed the audited accounts for the John Speak Trust for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 and Karl Oxford seconded. The resolution was put to the meeting and all voted in favour.

Azets had carried out a full audit and, in their opinion; the financial statements gave a true and fair view of the state of the company and the group's affairs at 31st March 2023.

There were no questions raised about the John Speak Trust Accounts.

**4. To adopt the consolidated financial statements of the West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry for the year ended 31 March 2023.**

Julie Snook reported that the auditors, Azets, had carried out a full audit and in their opinion, the consolidated financial statements gave a true and fair view of the state of the company and the group's affairs at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

In the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 the Chamber Group returned a post-tax profit of £236,547. This balance included the £37,000 loss for the Chamber and £273,000 retained profit for the Business Enterprise Fund and its subsidiaries.

There was a trading loss for 2022/23 of £816, before exceptional items. However, the Chamber would have actually finished at a modest profit except for an investment loss of £15,077 for the year. This investment valuation loss compared to an investment profit of £32,432 in 2021/22.

The subsidiary company, trading as the Business Enterprise Fund provided loans to individuals for business use. Between them, the Business Enterprise Fund and its subsidiaries lent over £8m to businesses using capital from the Northern Powerhouse funds and from their own funds thereby creating jobs and protecting existing employment. In addition, BEF was a key partner in delivery of the British Business Banks Recovery Loan Scheme.

An indication of the range of activities of the Chamber, included the Enterprise Fund and its subsidiaries as outlined in the annual report. The report was available on the Chamber website.

Thanks were extended to the Chair, Craig Thomson and members of the Finance and Audit Committee for their input and support over the last 12 months.

There were no questions raised about the Chamber consolidated accounts

**5. To adopt the Annual Report of the West & North Yorkshire Chamber for the year ended 31 March 2023.**

Links to the Annual Report had been shared and published on the Chamber website which covered the activities and achievements of the West & North Yorkshire Chamber and how it had supported local businesses.

The Chair gave a brief summary of items covered in the Annual Report and thanked the Chamber for its continued hard work.

The acceptance of the Annual Report for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 was put to the meeting, which was proposed by Suzanne Watson and seconded by Vicky Wainwright. All voted in favour.

The Chair informed of the impact of the political upheaval in the past 12 months with three Prime Ministers. Against this backdrop businesses were dealing with sky high inflation and interest rate rises which had dismantled much of the appetite for investment. However, optimism levels remained high in Yorkshire than the national average and businesses had been showing little sign of looking to reduce head counts. The Hospitality Forum had been successfully launched and had attracted a great deal of interest. The two Local Skills Improvement Plans had been officially approved by the Secretary of State for Education and were now in delivery stage. There had been lots of interest in Chamber services and policy groups and the Chamber had grown in numbers of patrons and executives. Frequently called upon by regional and national media to comment on economic matters, the Chamber's tone, image and personality had been increasingly modernising to reflect Yorkshire's business community in 2023.

The Chair informed that the Chamber were hugely grateful to members for their continued support.

Chamber Patrons and sponsors were also recognised and thanked for their continued support.

**6. To approve the new articles of the West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry**

The new articles had been shared via email and were available to view on the Chamber website.

The Chair presented the new articles of the West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry to the meeting which were proposed by Rebecca Fitzgerald and seconded by Charles Johnson. The resolution was put to the meeting and all voted in favour.

**7. To appoint the following Directors nominated by the three area representative groups**

The Chair proposed the appointment of sixteen individuals (listed below) who had been nominated by local Chamber leadership groups as non-executive directors of the West & North Yorkshire Chamber.

- Laurence Beardmore, Chamber Board member
- Amanda Beresford, Schofield Sweeney / Chair
- Chris Black, Sound Leisure / Leeds Chamber President
- Mike Briffett, Clarion Housing Group
- Aqila Choudhry, Love in Care / Leeds Chamber Vice President
- Mark Cowgill, Bradford Chamber President
- Sarah Czarnecki, Grays Court Hotel / YNY Chamber President
- Rebecca Fitzgerald, Yorkshire Building Society
- Kerry Hope, Castle Employment Agency Limited
- Scott Jenkins, Autohorn Limited
- Nasreen Karim, Platinum Partnership / BAME Business Committee Chair
- James Mason, Chief Executive, West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce
- Dan Murray, Leeds List
- Craig Thomson, Airedale Chemical
- Victoria Wainwright, Azets
- Suzanne Watson, Approach PR

The Chair proposed that all sixteen nominees be accepted en bloc, which was proposed by Karl Oxford and seconded by Ian Ward.

The resolution was put to the meeting and all voted in favour.

**8. To accept members of the 3 area representative groups**

- a) the Bradford Chamber Leadership Group
- b) the Leeds Chamber Leadership Group
- c) the York & North Yorkshire Chamber Leadership Group

Members of each group (listed on appendix 1) would be elected for a period of three years. Each group would hold an Annual Election Meeting and an Annual Meeting to appoint Directors to the Board of the West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce, a President and Vice-President.

The Chair stated that all listed on appendix 1 be nominated en bloc.

Nasar Hussain proposed the resolution, which was seconded by Karl Oxford. The resolution was put to the meeting and all voted in favour.

The three Leadership Groups continued to expand and produce valued work, covering all three regions. Members of these groups were thanked for their time and contributions.

The Chair stated that their input allowed the Chamber to influence locally, regionally and nationally.

**9. To adopt the auditors and authorise the directors to fix their remuneration**

The Chair thanked Ed Cliff, Alan Sidebottom and their colleagues at Azets for undertaking the audit. Approval was sought for the directors to fix the remuneration of the auditors at the appropriate time.

The resolution was proposed by Mohammed Kola, which was seconded by Karl Oxford. All voted in favour and the resolution was carried.

The Chair thanked members for their attendance at the Annual General Meeting and declared the meeting closed at 11.55am.