

174TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WEST & NORTH YORKSHIRE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

Thursday, 2nd October 2025
at the Bradford Cedar Court Hotel

MEETING MINUTES

Present:

Annabelle Pounder	Annabelle Charles Associates Ltd
Scott Jenkins	Autohorn Fleet Services
Victoria Wainwright	Azets
Trevor Higgins	Bradford Breakthrough
Judith Jackson	Bradford College
Nicki Nalton	Bradford District & Craven Mind
Homera Najib	Bradford Grammar School
Suzie Bogle	Breathing Space HR Limited
Nicola Taylor	Brown Butler
Zoe Fildes	Brown Butler
Gemma Povey	Carers Leeds
Fiorella Duran-Robinson	Chamber International
Nolan Tucker	Deloitte
Saleem Kader	Fabric Freedom
Jemma McMahon	Hotel Indigo Leeds
Carl Hedley	Howarths Foundation
Marcus Cobb	Ingeus
Mark Green	John Speak Trust (Past Chair)
Katrina Lewis	Katrina Lewis Interiors
Warwick Andrews	Leeds Tykes
Kely-Marie McAllister	Luminate Education Group
Lisa Littlefair	Mott MacDonald
Duncan Pearse	Northpoint
Alastair Gordon	Ove Arup & Partners
Darren Payne	Rhodar Industrial Service Limited
Keith Rozele	Sales Marvel
Amanda Beresford	Schofield Sweeney / Chair
Chris Black	Sound Leisure
Katie Bell	St Gemma's Hospice
Jeremy Burnham	T L Dallas & Co
Amanda Selvaratnam	University of York
Karn Arndt	Whatwouldaudgesay
Tom Battams	WPA Health Insurance
Rebecca Fitzgerald	Yorkshire Building Society

In attendance:

James Mason	CEO, WNY Chamber
Debra Patchett	PA to CEO, WNY Chamber
Julie Snook	Financial Controller, WNY Chamber
Mark Casci	Head of P&R, WNY Chamber
Will Evans-Jones	Policy Executive, WNY Chamber
Matthew Seddon	Policy Executive, WNY Chamber

Amanda Beresford (Chair) welcomed those present to the 174th Annual General Meeting and introduced herself and other representatives; Victoria Wainwright (Chair of Finance & Audit / Azets), James Mason (CEO of West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce) and Debra Patchett (PA to CEO / Policy Administrator, West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce).

Amanda explained that the notice of the meeting had been issued in September and copies of the papers had been made available via the West & North Yorkshire Chamber website, circulated with a link and a QR code had been available on screen at the meeting.

The agenda and supporting papers had been circulated, available online and via the QR code on screen.

1. To approve the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 12 September 2024

The minutes were proposed by Trevor Higgins and seconded by Amanda Selvaratnam as a true and accurate record.

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

The resolution was declared as carried.

2. To adopt the financial statements of the West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry for the year ended 31 March 2025

Victoria Wainwright (FARC Chair) gave the below overview:

With regard to the accounts, the auditors, Brown Butler, and the auditors of the Business Enterprise Fund and its subsidiaries, AAB, had carried out a full audit. In their opinion the financial statements tabled had given a true and fair view of the state of the company and the group's affairs at 31st March 2025.

Victoria reported that in the year to 31st March 2025 the Chamber Group had returned a post-tax profit of £267,907. This balance included a £44,000 retained profit for the Chamber and £224,000 retained profit for the Business Enterprise Fund and its subsidiaries.

Pre-tax results for the Chamber increased from a profit of £1,000 in 2023/24 to a profit of £78,000 in 2024/25. The major differences in the financial performance resulted from changes in salary costs and reduction in the cost of utilities. In addition, the fair value adjustment of investments reduced from £35,000 gain in 2023/24 to £12,000 gain in 2024/25.

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 £23m to businesses using capital from the Northern Powerhouse funds, from the British Business Bank and from their own funds thereby creating jobs and protecting existing employment.

Copies of the annual accounts had been available on the website via the QR code on screen on the WNY Chamber website.

Thanks were given to the members of the Finance & Audit Committee for their input and support over the last 12 months.

There were no questions.

The financial statements of the West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry for the year ended 31 March 2025 were proposed by Chris Black and seconded by Saleem Kader.

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

The resolution was declared as carried.

3. To adopt the financial statements of the John Speak Foreign Languages Scholarship Trust Fund for the year ended 31 March 2025

Victoria gave the below overview:

The John Speak Foundation Foreign Languages Scholarship Trust Fund was a registered charity. The objectives of the charity had been to assist students to improve their language skills and to further the export trade by making grants to the appropriate student.

The funding used for these grants was generated mainly from capital investments and during the year 13 bursaries totalling almost £14,000 were awarded to students travelling to 9 different countries.

The Trust was grateful for the generous donation received during the year from Think German Internship Limited.

There were no questions.

The financial statements of the John Speak Foreign Languages Trust for the year ended 31 March 2025 were proposed by Rebecca Fitzgerald and seconded by Katrina Lewis.

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

The resolution was declared as carried

Thanks were given to Committee members Jo Dawson (Chair), Colin Russell, Jim Hart and Johannes Rosenthal for their hard work and commitment on behalf of the Trust.

Special thanks were given to Mark Green who had recently stepped down as Chair of the Committee.

4. To adopt the annual report of the West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry for the year ended 31 March 2025

The Annual Report had been available to view online via the QR code displayed on screen.

The Chair presented the Annual Report of the West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry for the year ended 31 March 2025. This was proposed by Rebecca Fitzgerald, seconded by Saleem Kader.

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

The resolution was declared as carried.

Members were thanked for their continued support.

5. To appoint the following directors nominated by the three area representative groups and the West & North Yorkshire Chamber Board:

The Chair suggested that the ten individuals named below, voted for by the three local representative groups, be appointed en-bloc onto the West & North Yorkshire Chamber Board.

The ten named individuals were:

- Amanda Beresford, Schofield Sweeney / Chair
- Victoria Wainwright, Azets
- Chris Black, Sound Leisure / Leeds Chamber Immediate Past President
- Aqila Choudhry MBE MBA, Love in Care / Leeds Chamber President
- Alastair Gordon, Ove Arup & Partners Ltd / Leeds Chamber Vice President
- Mark Cowgill, Talk-Straight Group / Bradford Chamber Immediate Past President
- Rebecca Fitzgerald, Yorkshire Building Society / Bradford Chamber President
- Scott Wilson, Christeys / Bradford Chamber Vice President
- Scott Jenkins, Autohorn Limited / YNY Chamber President
- James Mason, Chief Executive, West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce

The resolution was proposed by Matthew Dakin and seconded by Kelly McAllister.

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

The resolution was declared as carried.

Special thanks were given to Suzanne Watson of Susan Watson Communications, Sarah Czarnecki of York St John University and Nasreen Karim of Platinum Partnership, who had stepped down from the Board.

6. To accept members of the area representative groups.

A full list of members of each group were displayed on screen and had been available on the website.

- the Bradford Chamber Leadership Group
- the Leeds Chamber Leadership Group
- the York & North Yorkshire Chamber Leadership Group

Each of the three geographical areas had its own local representative group. In July, three separate election meetings had been held to appoint their respective members.

A list of members of each of the current representative groups had been circulated with the meeting papers. The Chair asked that the meeting voted on all of the groups en bloc, which was proposed by Rebecca Fitzgerald and seconded by Alastair Gordon..

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

The resolution was declared as carried.

The Chair thanked all Leadership Group members who helped to respond to consultations, monitor the local economies and the needs and concerns of local businesses. Such input allowed the Chamber to influence locally, regionally and nationally.

7. To appoint the auditors and authorise the directors to fix their remuneration

Colleagues at Brown Butler were thanked for undertaking the audit.

The Chair proposed the resolution to appoint Brown Butler as the Auditors of the Chamber to hold office until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting and that their remuneration be fixed by the Directors.

The Chair asked for approval to fix the remuneration which was proposed by Chris Black and seconded by Lisa Littlefair.

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

The resolution was declared as carried.

Chair's concluding remarks

In the 12 months since our last Annual General Meeting, there had been a great deal of change.

Following the general election, the new Labour Government was now in full swing. While challenges existed, the Chamber had been working with Government via it's umbrella organization British Chamber of Commerce and ensuring business voices were being heard by those who needed to hear it. The Chamber had been working closely with colleagues at the two Combined Authorities and retained good relations with the Mayors, Tracy Brabin in West Yorkshire and David Skaith in North Yorkshire. The Chamber continued to work closely with both Mayors to make sure the business community's interests were served to create the jobs and investment that helped power Yorkshire's motor.

Two new chief executives had been welcomed at both Leeds City Council and Bradford Metropolitan District Council. The Chamber had already been enjoying good relations with Ed Whiting in Leeds and Lorraine O'Donnel in Bradford.

In York, the Chamber had successfully adopted a Planning Protocol with City of York Council, speeding up and clarifying the process for those developers looking to invest into the city. The Chamber continued to support York Central and successfully lobbied on behalf of members Pavers and Helmsley Group on their respective plans to create jobs and wealth for the city's residents.

The Chamber worked hard to ensure the connection of Yorkshire to the world, having organised a successful trade mission to the United Arab Emirates in the Spring, with a further delegation set to depart for Saudi Arabia and Bahrain in October. These missions were driven by Chamber members and were organised based on their recommendations. The Chamber aimed to open new markets and create new transactions with the aim of enriching our region.

Bradford was enjoying its year in the spotlight as UK City of Culture for 2025. The Chamber enjoyed a strategic partnership with BD25, putting us at the heart of a year-long cultural celebration that very much showcased the best of Bradford to the world. Those present could agree the work done to regenerate the city centre had been successful. When British Chamber of Commerce President Martha Lane-Fox visited the city, she was at pains to state how much she was impressed with the city's feel good and optimistic vision. Let Bradford's rise continue.

Our two Local Skills Improvement Plans had been functioning well in both West and North Yorkshire.

Our members were never far from the media, with many people in the room having featured in local and national press and broadcasting.

Extensive lobbying had been carried out across our three chambers to help our members grow their businesses, benefit from improved infrastructure and achieve trading conditions that bring them the confidence needed to grow and create prosperity.

Members were thanked for attending.

The meeting was closed at 11.56am.