



Hungerford Chamber of Commerce

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Chamber held at Herongate Leisure Centre on Tuesday 14th June 2023 from 6.30 pm

Present – Karen Salmon (Chair), David Small (Secretary), Derek Loft (Treasurer), Simon Hobden (Membership Secretary), Jane Goldstein and Penny Locke (Committee members), Helen Simpson (Town Mayor), Chris Scorey (Town and Manor of Hungerford), Matthew Barber (West Berkshire Police and Crime Commissioner), Dennis Benneyworth (West Berkshire District Councillor for Hungerford and Kintbury), James Cole and Claire Winser (Hungerford Town Councillors), John Willmott (Smarten Up Hungerford), Tracey Waldron (National Animal Welfare Trust), Jim Chetwode (We Are Chain Ltd.) and 15 past and present Chamber members and guests

1 Welcome and Introductions – Karen welcomed all to the meeting and introduced all Chamber Committee members, the Mayor Helen Simpson and all representatives present as listed above.

2. Guest speaker – Matthew Barber, local Police and Crime Commissioner addressed the meeting by invitation as he had to leave early to attend another meeting elsewhere. He described his role as a P&C Commissioner with particular reference to improving contact as between the Police and the public and the victim support service, creating a better online reporting facility via social media platforms, increased recruitment of new police officers and PCSOs, a wider CCTV network and data sharing as between local businesses. Karen thanked Matthew for his attendance on behalf of the Chamber and all present at the meeting.

3. Minutes of last AGM held on 14th September 2022 – copies had been distributed to all present and there were no comments or queries.

4. Chairman's Report and review of activities since the last AGM – Karen summarised the Chamber's main activities since last September with reference to another successful Extravaganza, the proposed Friendship Bench and Heritage Trail and various co-operative ventures involving Hungerford and West Berkshire Councils aimed at promoting and improving Hungerford as a business and visitor centre, which had been discussed at meetings which she had attended. James Cole provided further information about the Newbury Heritage Forum and Jane Goldstein agreed to become a member of this.

5. Treasurer's Report – Derek Loft reported on the Chamber's current bank balances and distributed spreadsheets showing current figures of £4,703.91 (Treasurer's account), £4,611.18 (Extravaganza) and £278.71 (Visit Hungerford). The Treasurer's account included ring-fenced amounts of £1,510.88 relating to Smarten Up Hungerford and £750 in respect of the Town and Manor of Hungerford's 2019 Community Award, and the Visit Hungerford funds would be applied towards the costs of the proposed new town website. The accounts had been audited by Claritas Accountancy and Derek thanked them for their assistance in this connection.

6 Other reports

(a) **Extravaganza** – Derek reported that last December's event had been a great success and the display board giving the names of all sponsors will be erected underneath the railway bridge within the next few weeks. This year's event would be managed by Simon Hobden, with Derek stepping down from the role after many years of service. A vote of thanks to Derek for all his hard work was given by Town Mayor Helen Simpson and approved by all present.

(b) **Membership** – Simon Hobden (membership secretary) acknowledged that the number of paid-up Chamber members had declined significantly over the past year or so, stemming from the decision not to chase up membership renewal subscriptions during the Covid lockdown period. He confirmed that lapsed subs would now be followed up and members and potential new members encouraged to 'sign up' and come along to future meetings.

(c) **Smarten Up Hungerford** – John Willmott confirmed that SUH is ‘thriving’ with an increased number of volunteers and invaluable funding support from Hungerford Town Council and the Chamber. SUH now manages 24 tubs and planters in and around the town and its volunteers also deal with litterpicking and the town’s collection of hanging baskets. Help is needed with fund-raising and Nigel Perrin agreed to join as a new volunteer to assist in this connection.

7. **Election of Officers for 2022/23** - the following were proposed, seconded and duly elected after confirming their willingness to stand:

Chair: Karen Salmon

Treasurer: Derek Loft

Secretary: David Small

Membership Secretary: Simon Hobden

Marketing and social media: Jane Goldstein and Penny Locke

8. **Future events and initiatives** – Karen referred again to the forthcoming Extravaganza as the Chamber’s main responsibility over the rest of the current year, but it is hoped to resume the previous practice of arranging regular members’ meetings and to take part in discussions concerning matters of local interest and concern such as the possible acquisition of the Queen Anne building in the High Street and the establishment of a local Enterprise Centre. Details of these and other initiatives will be communicated to all Chamber members.

9. **Appointment of independent auditor** – agreed that Claritas Accountancy would be asked to continue.

10. **Membership subscription for 2023/24** – agreed that the annual membership subscription should continue to be £50.

11. **Guest speakers** – the meeting was then addressed by the following:

(a) **Chris Scorey** gave an illustrated talk about the Town and Manor of Hungerford’s acquisition on 2018 of 40 acres of former farmland known as Undy’s Meadow which is to be transformed into the Kennet Valley Wetland Reserve. This will restore the area to its historic function as a River Kennet floodplain, and subject to necessary planning approvals will be open to public access all year round and will include a small wooden building to be used as an Education Centre.

(b) **Jim Chetwode** of We Are Chain Ltd. described and provided illustrations regarding the new Visit Hungerford website in development, which will feature the new Hungerford Heritage Trail that is designed to raise footfall in the town. There will also be links to other information for tourists including accommodation and transport. Photographs are needed and Ken Findlay suggested that Forbes Stephenson be contacted in this connection.

12. **Any Other Business** – Nigel Perrin raised the issue of how the Chamber could and should provide benefits derived from membership. Various suggestions were raised in response for consideration and discussion by the Chamber committee at its next and future meetings.

The meeting ended at 8 pm and Karen thanked all who had attended.

Signed as a true record of the meeting



Karen Salmon, Chair

Date: 15/6/2023