

ABBREVIATED MINUTES of the Annual General Meeting of Hungerford Chamber of Commerce held at the Royal British Legion, Hungerford on Monday 21st September 2020

Present – David Small (Chair), Derek Loft (Treasurer), Frances Small (Secretary), Jane Goldstein (Membership Secretary), John Willmott, Stuart March and Penny Locke (Committee members) and 12 members of the Chamber and their guests.

1 Welcome and Introductions - David welcomed all to the meeting and conducted the usual introductions.

2 Minutes of 2019 AGM held on 23rd April 2019 – copies had been distributed by David to all present, approved as drawn with no amendments and with no matters arising being raised.

3 Chairman's Report – David reported that the Chamber had had a good year up to the start of the coronavirus pandemic in March. Meetings had been held at various venues including Fuel Cells Systems, Hungerford Football Club, Cobbs Farm, Doves Farm and the West Berkshire Injury Clinic, ending with a successful and well-attended meeting at the Herongate Leisure Centre in early March at which our guest speaker had been our constituency MP Mrs Laura Farris. The 5.30 Club had also continued to meet in the Three Swans Hotel on the third Tuesday of every month. The pandemic then intervened and prevented further members' activity, hence the decision to postpone our AGM until now. The Committee had however remained in contact with each other and had met on three occasions, either via Zoom or at the Downgate or the Three Swans.

4 Treasurers Report – Derek had circulated reports showing that the Chamber's bank balances as at the end of its 2019/20 financial year on 30th March were £3,977.37 (Treasurer's account), £6,257.68 (Extravaganza) and £500 (Visit Hungerford). The accounts had been audited by Monty Accounting.

5 Other reports were given by David as regards membership (currently 69), Visit Hungerford (currently suspended due to the coronavirus pandemic) and the Help Hungerford Business appeal, and by John Willmott regarding the continuing success of Smarten Up Hungerford. Derek also reported on another successful Extravaganza in December last year and the possibility that a further but much more limited event might take place in December this year, but by a show of hands it was decided not to proceed with this due to the continuing coronavirus-related risks. Instead the new committee will consider arranging a similar event in the Spring of next year.

6 Election of Officers – the following agreed to accept office and were duly elected:

Chair – Karen Salmon

Treasurer – Derek Loft

Secretary – David Small

Membership Secretary – tied vote: Jane Goldstein and Simon Hobden agreed to share the duties of the role between them.

Other Committee members - Penny Locke and Stuart March

7 Incoming Chair's address - Karen gave a talk about her work with British Aerospace for many years and her solicitor's practice Marlborough Law. She has lived on the outskirts of Hungerford for 25 years and has a passion for the town. She would like to do more for small businesses and also to improve links with the town's larger companies, Hungerford Town Council and the Town and Manor.

- 8 Appointment of independent auditor** – Derek reported that Monty Accounting were no longer available to continue. Steve Perkins (Claritas Accountancy) volunteered and was thanked for doing so.
- 9 Membership subscription for 2020/21:** after discussion it was agreed that the membership subscription should continue to be £50 payable annually in advance with effect from 1st October. or at the rate of £5 per month payable by direct debit. It was agreed not to continue with the reduced sub of £25 for an incoming new member's first year.
- 10 Future events and initiatives:** it was agreed that Karen's ideas should be taken forward and that further discussion should be a matter for the new committee.
- 11 Any Other Business:** A discussion took place about the recent incident in which a former member of the Chamber had been threatened by a member of the public who had objected to the 'Black Lives Matter' poster in his shop window. This had happened in August and had been reported to the Police. Some in attendance were in favour of the Chamber making a public statement condemning any behaviour of this kind but others took the view that the Chamber shouldn't get involved. A vote was not taken and the matter may therefore be reconsidered by the new committee.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm and David thanked all who had attended.