

**MINUTES OF THE AYRSHIRE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

held at the Riverside Lodge Hotel, Irvine  
on 30 September 2021 at 4.00pm

**ATTENDED**

Frank Gormanley (President), Alison Somerville (Vice President), Jane Grant (Treasurer), Lorna Gibson, David Wilkinson, Chris McMail, Craig Johnstone, Stephen McGhee, Peter Telfer, Jamie Cumming, Laura Rennie, Fiona MacKenzie, Leanne Cairns, Victoria Frater

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Val Russell (CEO), Joan McMurdo, Kate Armstrong, Glenn Hays, Danielle McPherson, Stephen McNab, Gillian Savage

**WELCOME**

The President welcomed the assembled audience and thanked the Directors, Members and Chamber staff for their attendance at the meeting.

The President gave a brief overview of the year and thanked the Board of Directors and the Chief Executive and her team of staff for their continued support and valued contribution to the Chamber during unprecedented times. The President spoke highly of the Developing Young Workforce (DYW) team who had to be more creative than ever to engage with schools that have been closed, to continue their support of young people.

During Covid-19 the Chamber team had to find alternative ways to engage with Members by going digital. The President extended his thanks to the wider membership for their continued engagement which assisted the Chamber with lobbying and the sharing of vital information.

The President shared information on several new Board initiatives including Ayrshire Chamber Digital, Members Marketplace and Ayrshire Connect. Full information can be found in the Ayrshire Chamber Strategy 2021/2022 #ForwardTogether document which is available to view online from the Ayrshire Chamber website. The President advised that Version 2 of this strategy will be launched next year.

The President thanked the Chamber's Platinum Partners for funding the Future Chamber initiative, designed to attract younger people (under 35 years old) to the Chamber and helping them get the right support at the right time. The President confirmed that Future Chamber numbers increased last year and provided an example of one young person who has successfully utilised all the help available on this programme.

The President summarised with an overview of challenges ahead such as Covid recovery, Brexit, shortage of resource in haulage and hospitality and real pressure on the green agenda and sustainability for the future. He encouraged the audience to remain optimistic and use these situations to create new opportunities. The President reminded the audience that the Chamber is here to help members and the wider community with

their aspirations for innovation and change and suggested that we all move forward together.

#### **1. Notice**

The Notice calling the meeting had been previously circulated in line with the Memorandum and Articles of Association adopted by the Board on September 2010.

#### **2. Apologies**

Apologies were received from James Thomson, Steven Easton, John McCaig and Janice Hendry.

#### **3. Approval of Minute of AGM held on 24 September 2020**

The Minute of last year's AGM had previously been made available online.

Proposed by: Chris McMail

Seconded by: Lorna Gibson

#### **4. Approval of the Report of the Directors' for the Year Ended 31 March 2021**

The President introduce Val Russell (CEO) to discuss the Annual Report which had been made available on line and virtually.

The CEO shared the challenges faced by the whole Chamber team with Covid-19. To keep everyone safe, remote working was introduced immediately. The staff stood up to the challenge and, with the support of Lighthouse IT & Network Solutions, were able to have calls diverted and home offices operational to continue to support Members.

The CEO advised that Covid-19 saw the Chamber's focus shift from local delivery to lobbying and representation on behalf of Members, both at Holyrood and Westminster. It also meant increased support for businesses most affected. The Chamber organised weekly (virtual) meetings with politicians and Members to identify and address business needs. This also led to campaigns with Scottish government and the Chamber were successful in some of these initiatives including the request for financial support for ventilation in business premises.

The CEO extended thanks to her team for updating the Covid hub daily on the Chamber website with vital information about business restrictions and funding and confirmed that, despite these very challenging times, the Ayrshire Chamber continues to maintain it's position as the largest networking organisation in Ayrshire with over 800 members. The CEO stated this was testament to the valued work carried out by the Membership team and stated that Ayrshire Chamber is now the third largest Chamber in Scotland, supporting four affiliated Chambers with additional services.

The CEO commented on the #ForwardTogether Strategy and advised that going digital became key to keeping Members updated on what was going on throughout the pandemic. As a result a number of actions and initiatives were put in place:

- The Chamber invested in upskilling staff to administer customs documents as a result of Brexit.

- Zoom back screens, displaying Partners for Business logos, were purchased and used by staff and Directors.
- An online Christmas Gift Guide was created as part of a support project for town centres, resulting in a number of new Members.
- Job vacancy posts and company spotlights were posted on social media.
- Two staff completed a Digital Marketing Diploma with support from the Digital Boost Fund.
- ConnectMe was launched, a new mentoring service formalised into a digital platform and supported by the Board of Directors, matching mentors with business needs.
- Ayrshire Connect, another new digital platform, created with funding from Scotland's Town Partnership and Scotland's Food and Drink, to help promote retail businesses and supply chains.
- DYW team had to change to virtual interviews.
- Kickstart, a process for supporting young people, is in development this year. A UK Government programme whereby organisations can become gateway to place young people in business. Over 100 in placement and 25 waiting. Ayrshire Chamber to start work with Scottish Government to look at creating a Scottish programme.
- Ayrshire Chamber Magazine continued to be published throughout lockdown.
- Events – the type of events were changed in line with Covid-19 restrictions, with outdoor networking sessions including team walks (for Chamber staff). The Chamber organised 114 events with over 1600 members participating and joint events through affiliations.
- Business Week commencing 4 October 2021 is on a smaller scale this year with 36 stands (sold out).
- The Annual Dinner on 19 November 2021 has a reduced capacity of 50% this year but was sold out in 2 weeks.
- Ayrshire Chamber leads the way being the first chamber to undertake Dementia staff training.

The CEO summarised by advising that more detailed information can be found in the Annual Report which is available online on the Ayrshire Chamber website.

Proposed by: Peter Telfer  
Seconded by: Alison Somerville

## **5. Approval of Statement of Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2021**

The President introduced Jane Grant (Treasurer and Board Member) to present a summary of the annual accounts.

The Treasurer gave a summary of the accounts highlights and advised that the Chamber had reached the end of the financial year with a surplus.

The Treasurer thanked the CEO and her team for their valuable support and advised that she would be stepping down from the position of Treasurer but remaining on the Board.

The President thanked the Treasurer for her support and valued time in post.

Proposed by: Stephen McGhee  
Seconded by: Jamie Cumming

## **6. Resignation of Directors**

The President extended his thanks to the following Directors for their contribution to the Chamber and the Board.

Directors who have resigned this year:

- Anne Queen, AVG Management Ltd
- Ralph Porciani, Trump Turnberry Hotel
- Martin Welsh, Booth Welsh

## **7. Retiring Directors**

In accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association adopted by the Board on September 2010, the following Directors are retiring:

- Lorna Gibson, QTS Training
- David Wilkinson, Launch

The President extended his thanks to both for their contribution over the years on behalf of Members, the Board and staff at the Chamber. The President advised that Lorna Gibson takes up the position of Chair of DYW.

## **8. Re-election of Directors**

In accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association adopted by the Board on September 2010, the following Directors were eligible for re-election:

- Alison Somerville - Dustacco Engineering Ltd, Tower Works, Stoneygate Road, Newmilns, KA16 9AJ
- Craig Johstone - Gigaretts, Ingram Enterprise Centre, John Finnie Street, Kilmarnock, KA1 1DD
- Stephen McGhee - LMA Architects, The Atrium, 6 New Road, Ayr, KA8 8EX
- Jane Grant - AMAS Murrison Ltd, 8 Miller Road, Ayr, KA7 2AY

Proposed by: Chris McMail  
Seconded by: David Wilkinson

#### **9. Directors not standing for re-election**

- None

#### **10. New Directors for Approval**

In accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association adopted by the Board on September 2010, the following new Directors for approval are:

- Laura Rennie - Arena HR, Enterprise Centre, John Finnie Street, Kilmarnock, KA1 1DD
- Fiona MacKenzie - Centrestage, 15 Elmbank Drive, Kilmarnock, KA1 3AE

Proposed by: Jane Grant  
Seconded by: Craig Johnstone

#### **11. Appointment of Officers**

- Vice President  
Alison Somerville, Dustacco Engineering Ltd
- Treasurer  
James Thomson, Director of Finance, Student Funding and Estates, Ayrshire College

#### **12. Appointment of Auditors**

The appointment of Messrs Rogerson & Goldie, Chartered Accountants, 29 Portland Road, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, KA1 2BY as auditors of the company at a remuneration to be determined by the Board of Directors.

Proposed by: Chris McMail  
Seconded by: Peter Telfer

#### **13. Any other competent business**

The President introduced the Agenda for Ayrshire Business Week starting 4 October 2021 and encouraged participation and support.

The President closed the meeting by extending his thanks to Members and staff from Ayrshire Chamber for attending the AGM. He also thanked the Board of Directors for their time and support during such a challenging year.