

**THE MINUTES OF THE 114th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE
ST ALBANS DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
held by Zoom on Wednesday 31 March 2020 at 10.00am**

In The Chair: Alastair Woodgate, President*

(*Chamber Director)

ATTENDANCE

Alastair Woodgate*	Rumball Sedgwick
Anna Venetico	St Albans District Chamber of Commerce
Antony Federer	Rayner Essex
Charlotte Venturini	VOIspeed
Cheryl Luzet*	Wagada
Ginny Cooper	STANTA
Jim Lewis*	
Lee Wood	Ember Designs
Mark Fordham*	STANTA
Marianne Gearing	THOMPSON St Albans
Matt Adams*	Herts Advertiser
Melanie Fowler	Blue Skies VA
Mel Hilbrow*	STANTA
Michael Weaver	
Mike Osborne	KOMO Presentations
Pat Strods*	Rayner Essex
Paul Rosenthal*	Amthal Fire & Security
Peter Goodman*	St Albans District Chamber of Commerce
Phil Thompson	THOMPSON St Albans
Steve Maton*	5 Rings Telecom

MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD ON THE 20 MAY 2020

These minutes were approved as a true record.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members - in true Chamber tradition our aim is to keep the AGM short and sweet, as the main course this evening is to experience the culinary skills and creativity of Phil Thompson of Thompson St Albans. We look forward to being able to revisit Thompson and other great dining establishments in the district, from the end of May, as networking events in person get underway again.

So - my third and final year as your President hasn't been the year I'd expected – let's be honest it hasn't been the year any of us expected – but despite the challenges it has thrown at us the Chamber has managed to maintain a programme of online events, contribute to, advise and inform other events and organisations and make some significant changes to set us up for the forthcoming year and beyond.

We've had numerous online meetings and seminars covering practices, procedures and support around Covid-19, diversity and inclusion, local planning issues, making the most of Brexit transition, updates from Daisy Cooper MP and informal networking giving us a chance just to keep in touch with one another. I've really enjoyed the opportunity our Zoom networking sessions have given us to engage in a new way.

And we had a brilliant online Chamber Community Business Awards ceremony – once again we were bowled over by our nominees and winners. We've started a programme of network events for younger business people to keep them making effective links with their peer group.

And we took the opportunity last summer to develop a new identity for the Chamber, introducing our smart eye-catching new logo last autumn - an identity that is so rooted in our City and District. And work is in hand on our new website that will bring much greater information and interaction for members.

Certain events have had to be deferred or re-scheduled. I so wish we could have celebrated International Women's Day again with another lunch but that will be back. St George's Day lunch had to be postponed last year but returns on July 2nd all being well. Thank you - sponsors and attendees - for your continued support for that event.

Grateful thanks to St Albans City and District Council for its ongoing support and to the Herts Advertiser for its coverage of local business and for giving us an opportunity to air our voice. Over the last 3 years I've written over 30 columns keeping the wider community aware of the Chamber and its activities and contributing a few personal thoughts on business, and our city and district.

The last year has demonstrated the resilience and innovation of business people in the district. It has brought into sharp focus the value of our local businesses, to our economic and social well-being. Let's not lose what we have come to appreciate more than ever: let's continue to think, shop, eat and support local as we emerge from lockdown.

My thanks go to Emma and Anna for their unstinting support during my term, for their positivity and enthusiasm – and over the last 12 months particularly to Emma for all her hard work, organising our online events and keeping everyone in touch. And to the Chamber Directors thank you for your wise words, ideas, and inspiration.

Above all I thank the members for their continued engagement with and active contribution to Chamber activities.

I'm so pleased to be handing over the chain of office to the brilliant Pat Strods – my Vice President for the last year and indeed the last 3 years. Thank you, Pat for your insight, counsel and good humour. You will be an excellent leader and spokesperson and will bring a new dimension to the role. And I'm delighted that Cheryl Luzet will be your Vice -President. Pat and Cheryl will make an exciting, dynamic and formidable team.

Three years ago, I spoke of developing and upholding the reputation of St Albans District Chamber of Commerce as a good place to do business and of businesses doing good. I think we've done that and as we emerge out of lockdown will continue to do so in even more ways - inspiring, connecting and supporting businesses in St Albans City and District.

Thank you one and all.

The report was approved by Mel Hilbrow and seconded by Peter Goodman.

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30 SEPTEMBER 2020 – Treasurer Mark Fordham’s Summary

- Over the last year to the 30 September 2020, our income is significantly down from £145,753 to £66,130 due to the lack of income-generating events.
- We have managed to keep the Chamber going by using the reserves we have built up over the last few years and reducing our costs to a minimum.
- No staff were furloughed.
- We broke even which is a massive achievement given the loss of income from our events. We expect a similar outcome in the next set of accounts although our Not St George’s Day Luncheon and other planned events will hopefully allow us to add to our funds.
- Mark thanked Emma for her support with the financial reporting.

The accounts were approved by Jim Lewis and seconded by Pat Strods.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- Pat Strods (Rayner Essex) – Proposed as President by Alastair Woodgate and seconded by Steve Maton. No objections.
- Cheryl Luzet (Wagada) – Proposed as Vice President by Paul Rosenthal and seconded by Phil Thompson. No objections.
- Mel Hilbrow (STANTA) – Proposed as Secretary by Matt Adams and seconded by Melanie Fowler. No objections.

RE-ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

- Alastair Woodgate (Rumball Sedgwick)
- Matt Adams (Herts Advertiser)

Proposed by Jim Lewis, seconded by Paul Rosenthal. No objections.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

Pat Strods closed the AGM at 6.20pm. She said she was delighted, honoured and proud at being appointed Chamber President and thanked Alastair for navigating the Chamber through these tough times and being big shoes to fill. As she transitions into the role, she knows she can rely on the Board and Chamber members for support. She thanked Emma and Anna for their support and Cheryl for being Vice President. She is looking forward to catching up with you all in person at our upcoming events.