

MINUTES OF THE WOKING CHAMBER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 27 MAY 2025

PRESENT: Dave Peet Richard Field Boris Rusen
Tariq Phillips Rebecca Charlesworth Karen Goncalves

GUEST: Cathrine Nicholas – Heartensoul Coaching

APOLOGIES: Bruce Penson Dale Roberts

ITEM	DETAIL
1.	Apologies. Dave opened the meeting by welcoming Karen as new Treasurer, taking the reins from Boris. Also, Cathrine, a potential new member of the Executive. Apologies were noted.
2.	Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising: There were no minutes to discuss as the meeting focussed on the AGM.
3.	WBC Report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first meeting of the municipal year was on the 19th May and was 'mayor making' which appointed the new Mayor, Amanda Boote, and the chairs and vice chairs of all the council's major committees. There were no elections this year, this would normally be the year for County elections, so changes were minimal. The only other thing to point out is that the outgoing Mayor, Louise Morales, awarded Kawther Hashmi, the Eminent Citizen award and the new Mayor nominated Citizen Advice Woking her charity. The other major item is Local Government Reorganisation. Earlier in May the majority of district and borough councils submitted a proposal for three unitary councils. County, supported by Elmbridge and Mole Valley, submitted a proposal for two unitary councils. We now wait for government feedback. Finally, the government have confirmed that it intends to provide financial support to reduce Woking's debt ahead of local government reorganisation. This is good news for Woking. It will be important for local government reorganisation, and it speaks to the confidence that government have in the progress that Woking has made in the last three years on their improvement and recovery plan.
4.	Business Development Committee report including Membership update and upcoming events: Last week's meeting focussed on the diary of events, which Gilly circulated separately. There were a few additional items considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9th September (date tbc): Ihlara Turkish restaurant in Woking – in discussion to hold a networking lunch there. Food provided and a cash bar. Pricewise it will be around £23 for members, £26 for non-members. End September (date tbc): a potential "Meet the Mayor" networking event, where our new Mayor, Cllr Amanda Boote, can chat about her first few months in office. October (date tbc): talking with Saint Columbus House about a potential breakfast event. 24th October: Networking at DoubleTree. This will be a New Members event. 11th December: Christmas networking. This will be a Celebration of 2025 event where we will have a review of Chamber events over the year and invite the Leader of WBC, Ann-Marie Barker, to update us on Woking town centre. New members in April: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baisics Ltd On Point Data Business Hub Central Headway Surrey Dave Peet (Personal Member) The Executive voted in the new members.

	<p>Following the update there was some comments/feedback from the Executive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard asked where we were with having mentors from the Executive getting in touch with new members. Dave agreed that he and Rebecca need to contact new members in the first instance to welcome them to the chamber. • Richard also commented on how few committee members actually attend events, or the AGM, and perhaps this needs to be addressed. • Dave is in discussion with Inno-Lite to join the chamber and have a stand at WMB. He is progressing this. • Dave is also due to have a meeting with Porky Whites in respect of joining the chamber. • Tariq suggested we look at incentivising businesses to bring in new members. Rebecca invited him to attend the next committee meeting to discuss how this could work. • Cathrine has noticed the increased social media traffic which helps raising the profile of the chamber.
5.	<p>Woking Means Business exhibition 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% of stands are sold already. Dave is liaising with Paul daily and will be taking over the running of the exhibition from Paul in 2026 with the Executive's agreement. Paul will stay on as a consultant. • Hoping to get 100 different exhibitors and 500 visitors. Those figures will have an influence on whether the council can give exhibitors free parking on the day. • Surrey Chamber affiliation. Christine has sent out emails to our members in respect of this. Surrey Chamber don't want a stand at WMB but will promote it on their website. • Seminars: Cathrine – Health & Well-being. Bruce, Dutton Gregory, Menzies, and Baisics – AI - what it is and the pros and cons.
6.	<p>Treasurer's report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have 86 members, 6 unpaid. • Boris is working on having everything in order before handing over to Karen. Banking access needs to be arranged for Dave and Karen. Christine will check the office for any post that may contain details of this. • Rebecca's contract. Currently receives a monthly retainer with commission on new members, events, renewals. This needs further discussion so will be added as an agenda item for the next Executive.
7.	<p>Planning, Property & Retail Committee report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting takes place on the second Monday of the month, with around 10 attendees. This month, Tom Simpson and Richard Taylor of Woking Borough Council also attended and gave insight into what's happening in the town centre. • Commercial – Richard Newsam and Claire Charrett provided good insight into the sales/lettings situation in Woking. Office space to let is still busy and the new units in Sheerwater are getting good traction too. • Residential – in Franco's absence there was not much to say. • Retail – Jon Paul Jackson (Wolsey Place) and Simon Cuckow (Peacocks). JP said footfall was up 9% compared to previous April. • Parking charges – people aired their concerns about the recent increases to £15 per day. Small businesses can't afford the monthly permits for their staff. • Victoria Way car park – Richard assured us that they will continue to use it for parking. Surrey County Council have moved into McLaren (Chobham Rd) and they have a need for 220 spaces.

10.	<p>Any Other Business (including date/place for future meetings):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• IT – a meeting is to be arranged for those needing to use the website, along with their laptops, to have training with Onboard365. Dave will look at dates. Attendees: Christine, Rebecca, Dave, Karen, Gilly.• Cathrine agreed to join the Executive and was voted in.• Richard – costs of committee meetings (sandwiches/venues etc). Rebecca pays for coffees with hers and claims it back. Tariq has been paying for his. Should the chamber cover this?
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ITEM	ACTION POINT	DONE?
	<p>Woking Borough Council report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask Dale or Beverly to provide an update if they are unable to attend the Executive. 	
	<p>Business Development committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rebecca to follow up with Boots. Invite Ann-Marie Barker to speak at an event. Follow up with Ihlara to set a date. Invite the new Mayor, Cllr Amanda Boote, to an event. 	
	<p>Any Other Business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dave to advise date for IT training meeting. 	