



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

15<sup>th</sup> June 2017  
At 6.30pm at  
Cannizaro, Hotel du Vin, Wimbledon Common

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Victoria Nicol, Chair of Merton Chamber of Commerce opened the meeting by welcoming the guests to the Annual General Meeting, as the Chamber celebrates our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and thanked Cannizaro, Hotel du Vin for their hospitality. The only director or staff member who was involved at that time was Andrew Wakefield, who sadly passed away suddenly last October. Victoria said that she was honoured to have been elected by the current Board of Directors to take over the role of Chair, which was announced in January this year.

**Apologies** were received from Jamie Stevenson, South Thames College; Paul Windsor, WSM Advisors; Pam Byfield, Jigsaw4U; Cllr David Simpson, Merton Council; .Khadiru Mahdi, MVSC; Angela Allright, Tennison Property.

Diana Sterck, CEO, then looks to review the achievements of the last year.

Diana Sterck, CEO of Merton Chamber took the audience through the highlights of the last year, which were set out in the attendees' packs:

- Membership – the past year has seen Merton Chamber research, planning and developing a new, more sustainable commercial business model and simplified the membership offer. From July 2016 we launch our new membership packages – Standard and Premier. The response has been very positive and she thanked the 20 Premier members and our 530 standard members for their support and membership.
- Premier Profile – Diana explained about the Relationship Manager role, exclusive events, the Premier Profile magazine. Our aim is to put membership at the heart of everything we do.
- Raymond Kinsella was then introduced, and 'interviewed' one Premier Member about their experience. Neil Chandler from New Wimbledon Theatre spoke about the help the Chamber had given the theatre making new contributions to community, introductions to the great businesses in the borough, and emphasis the benefit membership can offer local businesses.
- Events, from networking and workshops to the business awards have remained at the core of our offer. Over the past year we have held 17 networking events with over 800 attendees; 19 workshops with 170 attendees; and the flagship event of the year, The Merton Best Business Awards, in 2016 we received more applications than ever before, and over 225 people attending the gala dinner. The deadline date extension was announced and a video on why businesses should apply played. The sponsors were thanked for their support.



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- Other Services. In October 2016 we launched our new in-house business service “Merton Chamber Business Service” supporting businesses with four key areas:
  - Marketing and sales packages
  - Managing people, performance and productivity
  - Business growth mentoring and coaching
  - Support with commercial tenders and bid writing.
- The business centre in Mitcham has also provided the Chamber with an important income stream, with 18 offices and 5 light industrial units, the centre employs over 100 people on-site.
- Working with MVSC we are now in our 4<sup>th</sup> year of Merton Means Business service. This service influences and recognizes businesses contribution to community causes and over £45,000 has been levered in over the past 12 months.
- Diana thanked the London Borough of Merton for their support over the last year, with the Business Support programme and the Health Workplace Charter, and a JobCentre funded project to help unemployed people back into work.
- **To receive the Chair’s report.**
  - The Changing face of Membership. Victoria expressed her pleasure at being part of this process, and meeting with key stakeholders, including politicians and senior business people. With the chamber as the largest borough based chamber in London, she is keen to continue to see our reputation as organization that understands business, is connected to business and who can represent Merton businesses at the highest levels continue to grow. She is particularly passionate about seeing the creative and technology sectors thrive.
  - Building Blocks. The launch of new chamber services in the coming months, includes The Sounding Board, The Marketing Jigsaw, and tonight the formal launch of Y-our Office, which includes a virtual office facility in the heart of Wimbledon.
  - One Big Idea. As a Chamber Victoria asked the audience for their views on what the Chamber should be considering in the future. Perhaps this could be a Business Expo, combined activities with other Chambers of Commerce, building on our Premier Membership offer.
  - Victoria thanked the Directors and the Finance Committee who have this year taken on additional responsibilities, as well as thanking them for their expertise and support over the last year.
  - Finally, she thanked the staff team for their support in what has been a challenging period.

The formal AGM proceeding then followed:

- **To approve any matters arising from the minutes of the AGM held in 2016 and to address any matters arising from these Minutes.** Formal apologies (see above) were noted, and the Minutes of the last AGM held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2016 were accepted as an accurate record of



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proceedings and were unanimously received. Proposed by: Paul Seamen, Barclays Bank; Seconded by Naomi Martin, Commonsense Community Development Trust.

- **To receive and adopt the accounts of the Company for the year ended June 2016 together with the reports thereon of the auditors of the Company.** The accounts had been approved by our Finance Committee, as audited by Hartley Fowler LLP. They had been approved by the Board and it was recommended that the accounts were received by the membership. The accounts were also available on the website. The accounts were unanimously approved. Proposed: Nick Samuel, Samuel Estates; seconded by: David Fernando, Terra Ferma Media.

Diana Sterck took the attendees through the highlights of the accounts:

- Overall Turnover was £886,000
- Following deductions for operational costs we ended the year with a small deficit of just over £1000.
- Income breakdown was approximately:
  - 22% The Generator Business Centre – managed workspace
  - 10% Membership, Events and Workshops
  - 70% Managed service contracts
  - This is a pretty typical split over the past 10 years, but the % split will change as we move ahead into a time when public sector contracts are being reduced, and the chamber is mindful of public funds shrinking, which is why we are launching the Changing Face of Membership.
- **To appoint auditors of the Company.** The Chair recommended that the auditors, Hartley Fowler LLP, were appointed for another year and this was unanimously approved. The Chair thanked Hartley Fowler for their support and their work on the Finance Committee.
- **To re-appoint existing members of the Board of Directors.** The Chair then introduced the Board to the audience and thanked them for a fantastic job over the last year and for their support. Mike Smith, McDonalds, resigned in November 2015, and following the passing of Andrew Wakefield in October 2016, two new Directors have been appointed:
  - Delrose Earle and John Merriman.

These new Directors were Proposed by Ivor Heller, AFC Wimbledon and seconded by Melanie Burgess, Time & Leisure Publishing Ltd.

The formal proceedings of the AGM were then concluded, with no further formal motions. Victoria concluded with her thanks to Diana Sterck as CEO of Merton Chamber, the team and to the Directors for their support.



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## Merton Chamber – Then and Now

Diana Sterck took the audience on a brief history of Merton Chamber over the last 25 years. Back in 1992 one of the Directors designed the windmill logo.

The audience were all given a copy of the Timeline over the last 25 years, which illustrated the work that has been achieved, particularly the last 15 years since Diana took over as CEO to deliver services to the business community of all sizes.

There is a legacy of what the Chamber has done – Love Wimbledon, The Wimbledon Town Centre BID born out of the town centre management from 2004; The Wimbledon Way, as an Olympic legacy project and hundreds of businesses we have supported in setting up, developing and growing through our array of service offers over the years.

Our thanks go to our long standing members, particularly those who have been with us since the beginning; our stakeholders including South Thames College, Wimbledon College of Art, Roehampton University, our local MPs; the GLA and the local BID's – Love Wimbledon and the SWBA.

The audience was thanked for joining Merton Chamber of Commerce at the AGM and Diana and the Chamber team then invited guests to network in the Ruinart Room, Orangerie and Terrace at Cannizaro House Hotel.



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