

MINUTES OF THE WOKING CHAMBER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2025

PRESENT: Richard Field Rebecca Charlesworth Boris Rusen
Tariq Phillips Zo Khan Bruce Penson

APOLOGIES: Dale Roberts Bev Kuchar Dave Peet

ITEM	DETAIL	ACTION
1.	Apologies were noted and Richard opened the meeting.	
2.	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Development committee: a meeting regarding media strategy and how to re-engage members; using Radio Surrey to promote the chamber, ensuring the Executive minutes are published on the website and a link sent via email to members for their interest. • Card payments: this is outside of Bruce's remit, however Boris confirmed that Stripe is working and can take card payments. • Website proposal: in hand, waiting on Jason from Red Sentence to come back with a quote, including a re-branding. • Cocktail party: Rebecca needs to discuss with Paul Webster and get a quote from The Hilton for this. She will also speak with Dave for an update. • Planning: there is a lack of available office space/commercial stock. 	
3.	<p>WBC Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The budget will be agreed across two meetings. Thursday 27th, this week, will be the General Fund, Fees and Charges, Housing Revenue Account, and Capital Programme, and then council meet again on Monday next week to agree Council Tax setting. • Since our last meeting, government have confirmed the £171 million of exceptional financial support (EFS) required to support the £2.1 billion legacy debt. • The budget itself is focused on core services, principally housing. Over three quarters of the capital programme relates to returning the housing stock to safe and decent standards. What little capital investment (outside of housing) is being made relates to improving customer services through tactical improvements to core systems. Changes to the web site, for example, are now in public beta that provide better help to residents and businesses for Council Tax, Benefits, and Business licenses and permits. • There will be increases in fees and charges including car parking. However, this is the first increase in car parking day tariffs in two years. Whilst there is a proposed increase to the 1HR charge from £1.80 to £2.20, the 2-3 hour will be reduced from £5 to £3.50 to encourage longer stays. Independent, professional advice was taken on car park pricing. • Overall, the budget is a long way away from last year. All discretionary services are being maintained, there is a significant investment in housing, and council tax will likely be set at 2.99% in common with most district councils. 	
4.	<p>Treasurer's report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woking Borough Council have renewed their membership. • We have just under 80 members, and less than 10 are still due to renew. • There is a direct debit issue, it only takes the first payment and not subsequent ones. Boris will look into this. • Treasurer email address for Microsoft365. Boris still needs to set this up. • IT upgrade is progressing. 	

5.	<p>WMB Exhibition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask Paul to clarify the member and non-member rates for the exhibition. • We need to check people are members when they are paying for exhibition. • We have sold £7,000 of stands to date. 	
6.	<p>Planning, Property & Retail committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clare Charrett hosted the meeting which had a record turnout of 14 people. • Zo will reach out to Steve Hall and pass on our regards and see if we can get an update on his situation regarding the chamber. • Richard Taylor of Woking Council (in charge of parking) sends a report before the meetings, gave visitor data. • Closure of Victoria Way car park – indefinite – due to structural defects with the concrete. Also believe the trend suggests customers have been using it less and less over the last couple of years. • Simon Cuckow (Peacocks Centre Asset Manager) & Jon-Paul Jackson (Victoria Square) reported on the retail position. • Commercial Surveyors – not enough stock, a lot of the stock has been turned into residential. • Had two reps from Thamesway –developers are building properties to rent out rather than sell on the open market. • Franco agreed it's much easier to let properties than to sell currently. • Zo commented that over the past couple of weeks the market has picked up with properties coming in at the right prices. 	
7.	<p>Business Development committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lot going on in terms of events. • This week's networking will be cancelled, as Paul is hosting a free networking event at the Hilton Hotel on 12th March for WMB. As there are 31 people registered to attend, we will merge this month's networking with that event. We will ask Paul for a list of non-members so that we can contact them afterwards. • The March networking will go ahead as usual. Catherine Nicholas will be the speaker. • The AGM is 1st May at The Lightbox. We will invite Will Forster to attend. • House of Commons dinner is booked for 20th November. • New members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ihlara Valley Restaurant ○ St Columbus House ○ Mentally Healthier t/a Stevens Coaching Ltd • The Executive voted in and welcomed the new members. 	
8.	<p>WMB: we will ask Paul to provide an update.</p>	
9.	<p>Executive – President & Vice President.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst Dave has agreed to continue as President for a further 12 months, this is on the proviso that there is a Vice President in place who would be willing to move into the President role in 12 months. We need to speak with members of the sub-committees and see if anyone would like to join us on the Executive. • Bruce is meeting with his accountants and will speak with them about joining the chamber and potentially the committee • Tariq is meeting with Andy Carpenter of Wilson & Co Accountants, our independent auditors, to discuss networking and the Executive committee. • Richard asked the committee to think about this prior to the next meeting. • It was suggested an email go out from Dave about the opportunity to join the Executive. Rebecca will speak with Dave to get something Christine can then send out. It needs to reiterate the purpose of the committees and what they do to support the chamber. 	
10.	<p>Any other business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss whether there is funding for sub-committees who host meetings and provide sandwiches etc. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCS Insurance have decided not to renew their membership. Boris will pop into Howdens Insurance to discuss joining the chamber. • Bruce asked if we could do something with Collaborate who have lots of small companies co-working in their offices. Maybe a promotion to invite those businesses to networking events in exchange for a membership discount. The Forge, Lansbury Estates, and Workspace are also multi-tenanted so there could be more opportunities. Rebecca, Tariq and Bruce will discuss separately on drawing up a package of what this could look like. • Rebecca asked the committee if they would prefer a different day/time for the monthly Executive meetings. Please feed back to her. 	
11.	Next meeting: Tuesday 25 th March at Pro Drive IT.	

ITEM	ACTION POINT	DONE?
	<p>Woking Borough Council report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask Dale or Beverly for an update on the devolution programme of councils and where would that leave the chamber and their relationship with the council. How do we build a stronger relationship with Surrey County Council. 	
	<p>Treasurer's report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boris will look into the direct debit issue and will set up his treasurer email address. 	
	<p>WMB Exhibition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask Paul to clarify the pricing structure for WMB Exhibition – should be a member's rate and non-member's rate. 	
	<p>Planning, Property & Retail committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gilly needs to put all monthly committee minutes onto the website and send out link to members to access them. Ask businesses for incidental data on how the diversions and road chaos are affecting their businesses, then collate and send to Will Forster. Email a link to RF's radio interview to Christine so that she can put it on the News section and also to Rebecca for sending out on social media. The Executive thanked RF for taking the interview on our behalf. 	
	<p>Business Development committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask Paul to provide a list of non-members attending the free networking on 12th March. 	
	<p>President & Vice President:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bruce & Tariq to update the Executive once they have had their meetings. Executive to think about possible options for this. Dave to provide an email about the opportunity to join the committees and the possibility of joining the Executive as Vice President moving into the President role in 12 months. 	
	<p>Any Other Business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All – please feed back to Rebecca if you would prefer a different day or time of day for the Executive meetings. 	

