

Minutes of the 126th Annual General Meeting

Held on Thursday 24 November 2022 at 9.20am

The Zoological Society of East Anglia, Kenninghall Road, Banham, Norfolk, NR16 2HE

PRESENT: Nova Fairbank Chief Executive
Lynsey Sweales President
Paul Vincent Chief Financial Officer & Company Secretary

Together with representatives of member firms who attended this meeting – as per the list attached to these minutes.

Nova Fairbank welcomed all to the meeting and ran through the format of the meeting. She gave the apologies of the Treasurer and she declared the meeting was formally opened and introduced the President of Norfolk Chambers, Lynsey Sweales.

Opening Welcome

Ms Sweales said:

“Thank you for joining us today at Banham Zoo. Today marks my last day as President and I hand the reins to Paul McCarthy, who has been an amazing support as Vice President. My Presidency has been about supporting and guiding the Chamber through what have been extraordinary times. We have seen the growth of the Board, a new CEO, the Digital Chamber and agile growth. Alongside Covid, a Recession, and other economic challenges.

“I am really excited and proud of the Chamber and what we have achieved. Other Chambers and the British Chambers of Commerce are all now looking and wanting to learn our magic formula. It boils down to one thing – being wholly focussed on what the business community needs and supporting them has been our amazing team of Nova, Paul, Julie, Sam, Ethan, Kirsty, Andrea, Will, Charlotte, Amy and Amy, Haze, Janna and Emma, along with the Board, Lizzy, David, Carol, Simon, Kelly, Michael, Paul, James, Lexi, Neil, Gez, Glen, Helen and Jonathan.

“So what has the Chamber done in the last 12 months? Netwalking and paddleboarding, a Bikers Breakfast, Climate Change Expo, lunch and learns, supply chain events for Sizewell C and Hornsea Wind Farm and a general procurement event for Norfolk County Council. Co.Next engaged, empowered and encouraged the under 35s with networking, mentoring and training. We did Lite Nites in West Norfolk and Coastal Connects in Great Yarmouth and in September this year we launched a new series of Engagement Focus Groups that are free to attend by any business – member or non member. These are opportunities to talk about the challenges and opportunities being faced by business. They have been held in Norwich, Great Yarmouth and King’s Lynn and will be coming out to market towns and all corners of the county. Demand-led events included health and wellbeing, mental health awareness and women’s events as well as our flagship events of The Big Debate, Talking Tech, B2B and Bank of England.

“Thank you to the amazing Chambers team. Whilst things might be challenging, with a strong business community and support we can be stronger together. Every business is doing an amazing job we should all be proud.”

Chamber Annual Update

The financial year 2021/22 was a strong financial year with income up on the prior year. Membership income was supported by two successful contracts; Road to net zero and the Kickstart work placement scheme. The additional administration expenses were in part costs of delivering events as the business community opened back up for in person events, event income went from £2.6k in 2020/21 to £49.5k in 2021/22. Overall, there was an operating profit in year of £38,433.

Governance & Future View

Nova Fairbank, Chief Executive provided an overview of the governance changes and the anticipated activity for the coming year.

Changes to the Mems & Arts.

Ms Fairbank advised that it was proposed to update the mems and arts to reflect the following areas:

- The original Mems & Arts stated that we needed to carry out a full audit annually. Our Finance & Risk Committee recommended to our Board that whilst an annual Financial Review should be carried out by an independent provider – a full Audit should be carried out every 3 years. This ensures the financial wellbeing of the Chamber, but allows for a significant cost saving on a full annual audit.
- The Area Councils have also been removed and replaced with Engagement Focus Groups – to allow for continued grass-roots feedback, as well as a greater level of inclusivity from a broader business audience.

Ms Fairbank asked for a proposer and seconder of the updated Mems and Arts?

Proposed: Lynsey Sweales, Social B

Seconded: Jonathan Cage, Create Consulting Engineers

Changes to the Board

Ms Fairbank advised the following changes to the Board.

Huw Sayer from Business Writers has resigned – we would like to thank him for his support over a number of years.

The following people were recruited to the Board:

Lexi Brackpool – Furthermore Marketing

Carole Burman – MAD HR

Simon Girdlestone – Solinatra

Neil Foley – Business Growth Club

Lizzy Dring – Huxley Events

Kelly Cartwright – Core Recruiter

James Howells – Turning Factor

Gez Chetal – Thomas Paine Hotel

As Lynsey Sweales has been President for two years, she now steps down and becomes our Past President for a further year and as a result, Paul McCarthy, our Vice President now steps up to become our new President for 2 years.

Please can I have a proposer and seconder for this appointment?

Proposer: Claudia Roberts, Zoological Society of East Anglia

Seconder: Glen Webster, Barclays

The Board members have also elected 2 new Vice Presidents

Michael Baldwin for VP 1

Lizzy Dring for VP 2

They will both serve at least 2 years in post.

Please can I have a proposer and seconder for these appointments?

Proposer: Paul McCarthy, Chantry Place Shopping Centre
Secunder: Lynsey Sweales

Finally, we need to elect our Treasurer for a further two year period – the Board have nominated David Armstrong from Flagship Housing Group, our current Treasurer.

Please can I have a proposer and seconder for this appointment?

Proposer: Michael Baldwin, Bank House Hotel
Secunder: Simon Girdlestone, Solinatra

Overview of 2021/2022

Ms Fairbank commented that 2021 / 2022 was a year of hard work for all businesses including Norfolk Chambers, we recruited new Board members, new members of our Customer Experience Team, we moved offices and delivered some large scale successful projects including Kickstart for the DWP, the Norfolk Knowledge Hub and Business Climate Leaders for the Road to Net Zero funding. Co.Next – our support for young professionals under 35 continues to evolve and grow.

As the largest Kickstart Gateway in Norfolk, we supported 78 businesses to provide nearly 300 kickstart placements.

The Norfolk Knowledge Hub delivered 3 x free-to-access Digital Media Channels: Business Brilliance / Business Broadcast / Digital Academy. These delivered over 293 Hours of quality, Norfolk-based rich business relevant Content: (Written / Audio / Video). It delivered 48 business relevant Digital Events and engaged over 2,000 delegates. Reached (NKH Campaigns): 652,271 and engaged (NKH Campaigns): 153,498. 111 Norfolk businesses, mainly members, have provided the content. Today, we continue to add content and love adding peer to peer knowledge and learning from local businesses for the benefit of other businesses to our Knowledge Hub.

We have brought events to all corners of the county and continue to strive to reach market towns as well as the main conurbations. We also have continued to innovate our technology and develop the Digital Chamber. There has been lots of hard work and development around cleansing the data and future-proofing our digital offering – to ensure the Chambers is fit for another 120 plus years.

Looking forward into 2022 / 2023

We have continued with our digital innovation – by the end of 2022 our website and our CRM system, together with our accounting system will all be synchronised. The next steps will be to create customer dashboards.

Co.Next has seen and will continue to develop new support strands. Developed so far are Mentoring Monday and roundtable discussions as well as Five after Five – our new Co.Next social networking event.

Business Climate Leaders goes from strength to strength – to date, we have delivered 11 events reaching 441 attendees, our online resources have had nearly 7,000 click throughs and we have achieved over 1,350 direct interventions with businesses. Business Climate Leaders programme digital and online reach was 12,168 and visibility included 342,921 impressions.

The Festival of Knowledge – a week of knowledge sharing events was launched in spring 2022 and will grow in 2023.

We will of course be delivering our flagship events such as The Big Debate, Talking Tech and B2B, as well as a host of networking event and the Bank of England lunches.

In late summer this year we launched our Engagement Focus Groups – these will replace our areas councils and will be more inclusive of the wider business community, as members and non members can

attend and get involved. So far, we have delivered in Norwich, King's Lyn and West Norfolk but we already set dates for Heacham, Diss, Attleborough, Fakenham, Downham Market, Holt, Snetterton and Wymondham and more.

In September 2022 Norfolk Chambers was awarded the Local Skills Improvement Plan for Norfolk and Suffolk – our role is to put employers at the heart of the skills agenda. This involves working closely with key stakeholders from Suffolk Chamber, to local authorities, education providers and other business organisations, as well as reaching a whole range of businesses

My mission as CEO for the next 5 years is to capitalise on all of our business engagement activity and drive increased membership growth.

Ms Fairbank then introduced Mr Paul McCarthy to deliver his inaugural Presidents Speech.

Paul McCarthy - Incoming Presidents Speech

“Firstly, I’d like to say thank you to Lynsey for the leadership and support she has given to Nova and the whole team over the past couple of years – the Norfolk Chambers of Commerce has remained a fantastic and relevant organisation, connecting, supporting and giving voice to every business in Norfolk through these challenging times under her stewardship. If I can be as effective as she has been come the end of my office, then I would have done very well indeed.

“I’d also like to thank our two new vice presidents, Michael Baldwin and Lizzy Dring, as well as the rest of our Board for the support that they’ll offer as we move forward.

“As the country enters into a recession, the Norfolk Chambers of Commerce has never been more important as a space to come together, to learn from each other, to share and create opportunities, influence policy, empower the young professionals of the future, and provide proven and trusted ways to assist in the journey to net zero. As such I’m very proud to be part of that journey with you.

“So, thank you for being our members, here’s to our future.”

Ms Fairbank thanked the outgoing President and the incoming President and drew a close to the formal part of the AGM at 9.30am.