

## BLACK COUNTRY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

### MINUTES OF THE AGM

Held at Casino 36, Wolverhampton on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at 10.40am

The meeting was opened by Jude Thompson, President of the Board of the Chamber who welcomed everyone and explained that all resolutions had been voted on before the meeting began.

The President, Jude Thompson, gave his review of the year.

“This is my final engagement as President of the Chamber before I hand over to Sarah Moorhouse as the new President. It has been an absolute honour to be President of the Chamber and to be involved for so many years as a business.

The past two years have been a struggle during the pandemic but also very positive. The Chamber has seen tremendous engagement from past and current members with the team and members meeting virtually. Nobody expected the pandemic and everyone in the Black Country has shown resilience and been supportive of each other, which is what the Chamber is all about. It celebrated its 20th anniversary this year and has a legacy of business support stretching back centuries as the successor organisations to separate Chambers which have operated across Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, and Wolverhampton since the 1860s. We are proud to be the voice of Black Country business and it is a privilege to be a member receiving great support from all the Chamber staff and the Directors of the Chamber Board.

Successful activities including Prosper magazine, training courses, Chamber Military Network, Chamber LGBTQ+, Black Country 2.0 etc. have helped increase member numbers and a positive future for the Chamber.

“I’m sad to be leaving as President but will still be around for the future as part of the Chamber Think Tank which will help drive policy and influence government and I hope businesses will get involved.”

Corin Crane, C.E.O. presented his report for the year, which is attached.

“AGMs help you reflect on the past 18 months and lock down made us look at 2 main things; how we run the business, how strong is the business, and our role in the business community. We are stronger together and we ensure we have the right sort of members to help our community.”

He thanked everyone for coming and thanked Jude for the past two years as President and the board members who stepped down today for everything they had contributed to the Chamber.



The President then began the resolutions:

1. To receive the report of the directors and the accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021  
The accounts were laid before the meeting as approved by the board of directors and will be delivered to Companies House.

The resolution was passed.

2. To re-appoint CKCA Limited as auditors from the conclusion of this meeting until the conclusion of the next general meeting before which accounts are laid and to authorise the directors to fix the auditors' remuneration.

The resolution was passed.

3. To elect three directors from the shortlisted candidates being Carl Baker, Brian Cape, Bhanu Dhir, Craig Edmondson, James Thomas-Horton, Vicki Wilkes, and Sarah Williams.

The directors who received the majority votes were:

Carl Baker, Vicki Wilkes, and Sarah Williams, who are elected to the board.

The President congratulated them on behalf of all members of the Chamber and thanked Brian, Bhanu, Craig and James, who were very strong candidates. It was the closest election for many years.

The President thanked the retiring Board members for their contributions over the years and introduced Sarah Moorhouse as the new President.

The meeting concluded at 11.15am with thanks to Chamber staff, Members and the Board and best wishes for 2022.

# Black Country Chamber of Commerce Annual General Meeting 2021

Corin Crane  
Chief Executive,  
Black Country Chamber of Commerce



BUSINESS IS DONE BETTER TOGETHER



Black Country  
Chamber of  
Commerce

## THE BLACK COUNTRY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

We are part of the British Chambers of Commerce which is a network of Chambers of Commerce that champion and support our members across the UK and in countries and markets around the world.

Our unique perspective gives us unparalleled insight into British business communities.

**We are the only UK business group with members of every size, from every sector, in both every region of the UK and globally.**

Working together with Chambers from across the UK and the rest of the world, we drive change from the ground up, helping companies, places and people achieve their potential.

### THE REACH AND IMPACT OF THE BRITISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**53**

Chambers of Commerce in UK

**63**

members of our growing international business network

**68,000+**

membership base

**72,000+**

social media following

**1,677**

broadcast appearances and mentions in 2019

**55+**

events in 2019

**667,000**

trade documents issued by Chambers of Commerce in 2019

**£20bn+**

of trade facilitated by the network in 2019

### THE BLACK COUNTRY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**800**

Paid members

**3000**

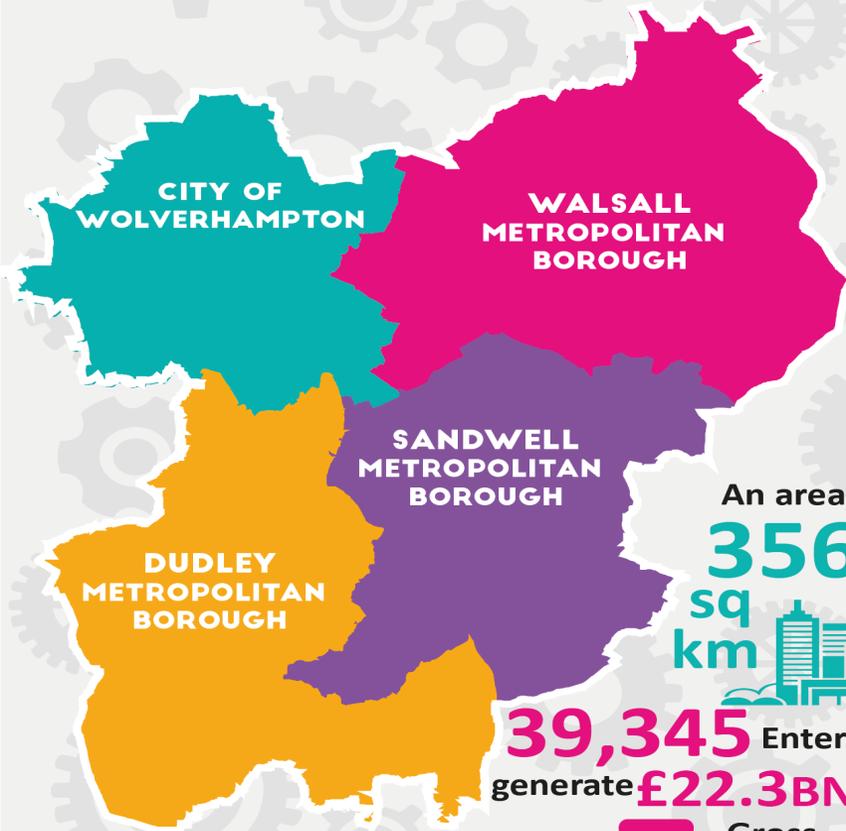
Digital members and users of our products

**200,000+ £300m+**

Individuals engaged with in 2020

of new trade opportunities and export documents facilitated by the BCCC in 2020

# THE BLACK COUNTRY



An area of **356** sq km

**39,345** Enterprises generate **£22.3BN** Gross Value Added

A very diverse community from Black, Minority and Ethnic origins. **23%**



## HEART OF ENGLAND

- Easily Accessible by all modes of transport, at the heart of the West Midlands transport hub and the M5 and M6 motorways.



## SURPRISINGLY GREEN

- 5,411 hectares of open, public green space including 900 hectares of nature reserves and an extensive canal network, covering 177 km



## GROWING POPULATION

- Home to nearly 1.2 million people
- The population is steadily increasing



## SKILLED WORKFORCE

- 210,600 (28.8%) of the working age population have NVQ4+ qualifications
- The percentage of working age population with NVQ4+ qualifications is at the highest level since records began



## THRIVING BUSINESS

- Vibrant private sector, including many family owned businesses
- 444,000 people work in the Black Country
- 76% of working Black Country residents travel within the Black Country



## HIGH VALUE MANUFACTURING CITY

- 12% work in advanced manufacturing compared to 9% nationally



## The big challenges

- Fewer foreign workers
- Transport & Logistics
- International Trade
- Manufacturing & Supply Chains
- European Funding
- Northern Ireland



# COVID-19

## The big challenges

- Economic Lockdown
- Safety of Workforce
- International Travel and Shipping
- Cashflow
- Supply Chain Issues – energy prices, microprocessors, steel and aggregates
- Consumer Buying Patterns – eCOMMERCE
- Inflation



# How did the Chamber React?

- Quick decisions – show leadership
- New 3 Month Rolling Business Plan agreed by board
- Used reserves to support with cashflow issues
- Free membership for everyone for 3 months
- All events and training shifted online
- Campaigning for local businesses in press and with government
- Explain new support packages to businesses



# What support did businesses need?

- Strategic Planning
- Human Resources
- Cashflow and Finance
- Workforce Safety
- Lobbying and Campaigning
- Shift to eCommerce and online activity
- Insolvency and Business Closures



# Beyond COVID: What a year we had....

Start-Up Business Club & Dudley Start Up Club

Supporting the Unsung Heroes, Chamber Military Network and ERS Gold Award

Commonwealth Games, HS2, Midlands Metro and House of Commons Renewal procurement workshops

Fourth year of the Black Country Business Festival

Overachieved on DIT Contract

The new Director and Board Development programme

National LGBTQ+ Network



## Black Country Business Club

- ✓ Exclusive networking opportunities
- ✓ Promote your products and services
- ✓ Share your stories and updates

zoom



# Beyond COVID: What a year we had....

Women In Leadership

Walsall Diversity Project

Black Country APPG

Business Voice with a Black Country Accent

Lobbying work with neighbouring Chambers  
and BCC

First Economic Conference

Launched Think Tank

Annual Awards Show





~~Crisis~~

Recovery

## The Next 18 Months:

- Reboot – Rebuild - Rebound
- New 3 Year Business Plan
- Dealing with debt
- Retention high
- Members going up
- On target to make a surplus