

South African Chamber of Commerce (UK) Ltd
Minutes of the Chamber's AGM held on 17 September 2020 at 18:00 UK Time
Meeting held virtually via Zoom

Board of Directors Present

Sharon Constançon (Chairman)
Peter Attard Montalto
John Battersby
Sarah Hutton
Chris van Niekerk (Senior Independent Director)
Dennis Zietsman (Deputy Chairman)

Secretarial

Janet Gardner

Apologies from the Board

Leon Ayo

Members Present from

- Advisory Board
- Executive Committee
- Platinum members
- Other membership categories

Quorum

Quorum of 10 was exceeded

Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were stated.

Welcome

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting. She confirmed that the meeting was quorate and noted that the Directors would speak to aspects of the presentation which had been prepared to update members on Chamber business.

She noted that the minutes of the 2019 AGM had been made available to attendees and asked if members wished to raise any points of inaccuracy. None were raised.

Chairman's Report

The Chairman, Sharon Constançon, commenced a presentation of the work and activities in which the Chamber had engaged during the past year.

1. Vision, Purpose and Values

The Chairman stated that the vision and purpose of the Chamber are as follows:

Vision : *The capable connector for increased bi-lateral trade and investment between UK & SA, empowering the growth of our members.*

Purpose : *Uplift the quality of life for South Africans*

She noted that its **Values** enshrine :

- *Integrity*
- *Collaboration*
- *Service to Stakeholders*
- *Community*

In particular, for South Africans in the UK, the Chamber should be their 'home from home' acting as the facilitator for the community.

Stakeholder engagement is critical to ensure that there are connections to governments, business and trade. In connecting to the vision, servicing members in transition from SA to UK provides a key function of the Chamber.

Recent times have been challenging, and Sharon noted the positivity generated by the Solidarity Fund Walk; many had been brought together for a common purpose. Sharon confirmed that fundraising remains open for further donations. In particular, the Fund is focusing on women in SA and their welfare.

The Solidarity Fund Walk has been a key achievement in raising awareness for SACC, with positive press.

2. Activities

Sharon emphasised the importance of events to add value to members through engagement with excellent speakers via Webinars, noting that, of course, human interaction had been greatly missed during lockdown.

However, membership levels have been retained and are set to increase, given the key focus on serving members and the Chamber's growing influence. The events that have taken place during 2020 have been phenomenal in terms of their quality and breadth, ranging from the House of Lords Gala dinner to Webinar based cultural and business events across a range of groups, including the Lightning Talks and Forum and Chapter activities.

The Chairman noted also that a new Chapter has been formed – The Professional Chapter – incorporating the City of London, Financial and Legal Services. She also noted the Chamber's Chairmanship of the Council of Foreign Chambers in the UK and her work with the Lord Mayor's office to improve the standing of SA Chamber within the City.

The Chamber is also engaged in working with:

- the British Chamber to share benefits to members;
- the SA High Commission and the DTI in London;
- the UK High Commission and DIT in SA;
- influencers and businesses in different sectors, including Platinum members, with a view to reaching large companies in the UK and SA.

3. The Team

The Chairman noted her appreciation of the work of the Board of Directors, the Advisory Board, Executive Committee and the management team in delivering value to members. The Board of Directors is set to increase over the next year and diversity is key to finding the complement of people and skills to fill these important positions.

Sharon noted also that delivery to Platinum and Strategic members to fulfil their objectives is a core part of the value proposition provided by the Chamber.

Sharon noted that a 'Gold' category of membership has been introduced, which lies between Corporate and Platinum levels with a commensurate membership fee, and with the objective of offering relevant membership categories.

Her objective is for the Chamber to be the 'go to' place for business solutions.

4. Challenges faced by the Chamber

John Battersby outlined the challenges that have faced the Chamber during 2020, caused by the lockdown, which curtailed all physical events.

However, he praised the mitigating actions taken by the Team to provide for a range of webinar and media based events, including panels featuring top decision makers, as well as social activities. These had been provided to the membership free of charge and have been well supported.

The Chamber's ongoing sustainability will remain key for the next year; the Board is planning for the future executive team to relieve the Chairman who is involved on a 'hands on' basis organising and supporting the Chamber's activities.

The Chamber does not receive income from grants, does not have premises and employs no staff; nevertheless, it commands considerable influence in the business community.

John stated that the Chairman's tenure will end in two and half years' time and it will be vital to ensure that the structures are in place to enable a smooth transition. Supporting this requires funds and a steady income stream; Between five to ten Platinum members or Strategic members are needed to provide the funds necessary for employing staff.

John suggested that members should use their networks to create awareness of the Chamber and to support the trajectory of future growth.

5. Members of the Board

Sarah Hutton introduced the Board members, noting that the majority were present for the meeting. Sarah explained their responsibilities as Chairs of Board Committees which engage in

delivering value and services to members. She noted that three Board members had transitioned to the Advisory Board during the last year.

Moving onto the Executive Committee, Sarah noted that there is a strong core of people who are very delivering on responsibilities and active in creating new opportunities for the SA Chamber. Members are also leading Chamber Forums, such as Young Professionals and the Women's Forum and heading up interactive events such as the Lightning Talks and local networking events.

The Advisory Board was confirmed as being a source of advice and leadership, giving insights at strategic and political levels. It meets quarterly with the Board.

6. Membership Data

The Chairman introduced a series of slides relating to member data, in terms of categories, the proportion of paying to non-paying members and the revenues and contributions generated by each category.

Sharon noted that during Covid, one member had downgraded to a lower category and one resignation had been received; however, there are two or three new members on the horizon.

Membership fees are currently the only source of income – revenues had been significantly affected during 2020 as events had gone online.

7. The Chamber's Focus

Peter Attard Montalto informed the meeting that Board structures had been strengthened during the last year, with enhanced governance systems in place. There are regular meetings of key Committees, including Finance, Membership, Strategic Communications, Stakeholders and Governance. Future growth in membership and a return to live events will be key focus areas going forward.

Peter noted that the Stakeholder Committee, of which he is Chair, seeks to leverage opportunities and to exercise influence across communities, business sectors and individuals. He stated that, in this context, the Chamber's future is positive.

Annual Financial Report

Dennis Zietsman, Chair of the Finance Committee, provided an update of the Chamber's current position with a summary of the year to date and the forecast for 2020. He stated that the Balance Sheet on 30 September 2020 was strong, with more than £20K in the bank and external creditors stand at £16K.

The comparison with 2019 is clearly marked by the lack of events since end of March reducing income. The Autumn renewal of memberships should support decent cash balance at the year end.

Dennis confirmed that administration expenses include IT and the running of the Chamber, commissions and consultancy fees.

Dennis stated also that cash flow is carefully managed and informed the meeting that a Bounce Back Business Loan had been applied for. He thanked the Chamber's Treasurer, Rob Clark, for his diligence in maintaining the accounts.

Finally, Dennis sought approval for the 2019 accounts, which had been reviewed by Exceed, the accountants to the Chamber, which will be filed with Companies House. The accounts were approved by 14 members.

Re-election of Board Directors

The Chairman sought the re-election of the Board of Directors in turn.

Leon Ayo – 20 votes

Peter Attard Montalto – 20 votes

Sharon Constancon – 20 votes

Sarah Hutton – 20 votes

Chris van Niekerk – 23 votes

Dennis Zietsman – 23 votes

All Directors were, therefore, re-appointed for 2020/2021.

The Chairman confirmed that there were no resolutions to be passed for this AGM.

Any Other Business

The Chairman invited comments and questions from attendees.

a. Thanks were extended from the audience for the Chairman and the Board, with congratulations given for a remarkable series of online events in a very difficult operating environment.

b. Kuseni Dlamini informed the meeting of a trade delegation that had received KZN in the North East of England, involving Richard Swart, a member of the Advisory Board, during which good relationships had been built at both business and personal levels.

c. Jennifer Rademan queried as to how the purpose of the Chamber meets the purpose of its paying members during the pandemic.

The Chairman replied that one of the benefits of Covid had been the effectiveness of communications with members, with increased engagement with Strategic and Platinum members.

Increased relevance to all members was delivered through up to seven webinars a month. Increased event frequency allows for members to engage with the Chamber to deliver events which reach a wider membership. She stated that for the future, when physical events become possible, technology will be employed to reach an online audience.

d. Martin Watkins asked, in relation to the Board and the Executive Committee, how members can help to reach the right level of diversity and inclusiveness (D&I). This is a shared challenge with the membership, rather than a problem simply for the management. His question led to a wide ranging discussion, in which the following summary of points were made:

- the Board is set to increase by three members considering suitable people who are representative of the country

- a skills matrix and D&I have been undertaken by SA Chamber. The Chairman confirmed that it is key to find complementary qualities and suggested that technology can aid the sourcing of individuals from outside of the UK. However, individuals must have commitment and demonstrate passion for the Chamber. Additionally, members' own networks could assist in sourcing individuals. She noted that many individuals that have fitted the criteria for D&I have not been able to give the time and commitment. The Chamber is mindful that this issue must be addressed. Larger member companies have been approached previously and have not yielded possible Directors, given the commitment needed, which amounts to around 1.5 days per month. She promised, however, to revisit this avenue.

- John Battersby stated that individuals from the commercial world are needed – noting that there are eligible black SAs working in the City on secondment. He added though, that they work long hours in formative positions.

- Ethnicity data was felt to be important in terms of this debate; if only 5% of South Africans in the UK meet Board Director criteria, then the pool from which the Chamber can recruit is small.

- Mike Miller suggested a potential contact from a B-BBEE presentation given at the SA High Commission in March 2020, could be ideal for the Executive Committee.

- Peter Attard Montalto and John Battersby were seen as pivotal in having a global conversation on thought leadership and to share the values and ideals of the Chamber.

- Martin Watkins suggested that major sponsors may be able to help the Chamber with a short term secondment – with a view to developing talent via the Executive Committee. Sharon confirmed that this had been explored with Platinum members.

e. Deva Pannoosami asked if there was an update on the President's visit to the UK. It was stated that there were no available details. Sharon noted, in reply to a comment on quarantine restrictions, that the Chamber had done much to assist South Africans repatriate home.

Close of the AGM

The Chairman thanked all members present for their attendance. She looked forward to the next showing of Sir Nick Stadlen's film in the presence of Office Holders of the City of London and also to a Heritage event on 24 September, which is being organised by Lucy Mashigo.

The meeting closed at 19.10 UK time.