

## **STRICTLY PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**

Minutes of Kilkenny Chamber of Commerce & Industry Company Limited by Guarantee

Annual General Meeting 2019

Held in Kilkenny Ormonde Hotel, Kilkenny

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2019

12.30PM

### **In attendance:**

John Hurley (Chamber CEO), Julian Hughes (Guest Speaker), Marion Acreman (President), Owen Sweeney (Honorary Secretary), Paschal Bergin (Honorary Treasurer), Brian Keyes (Board Member), Gary Graham (Board Member), Colin Ahern (Board Member), Jason Dempsey (Board Member), Gordon Murphy (Board Member), Tom O'Connor (Board Member), Laurence Conroy (Board Member), Bridget O'Dea (Board Member), Gerry Rafter (Board Member), Martin Costello (Board Member), Cathal Smyth (Board Member), Jane Devlin (Board Member), Anne Barber (Board Member), Róisín McQuillan (Kilkenny Chamber), Dominika Stoppa, Jason Dempsey, David Leonard, Ward Kinsella, Michael Gardiner, Vicky Comerford, Martin Hanrahan, Róisín Marnell, James Holigan, Christina Morrissey, Gearoid Cleere, Bridget O'Dea, Karl O'Donnell, Sean McKeown, Valerie Ryan, Olga Barry, Louise Lawless, Mary Comerford, Trish Duffe, Rebecca Reynolds, Nicola Moses, Catriona Walshe, Elizabeth Kinsella, Nathan Boccacino, David Fitzgerald, Niall O'Gorman, Liz Nolan,

### **Apologies:**

Angela Hayes, Trish Murphy, Rory Conlon, David Culliton, James O'Donoghue, Deirdre Shine, Cathal Smyth, and Stephen Kelly.

### **1. Presidents Address and Welcome**

The President, Marion Acreman called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance to the 71<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Kilkenny Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The President outlined how busy the role has been and noted that on the day after her appointment she met with the Tánaiste, Simon Coveney, who was in Kilkenny to discuss Brexit concerns with the farming industry. It was acknowledged that a lot of those Brexit concerns were still extant. The President confirmed that one of her original pledges was to improve communication to the members and encourage connections in the City and County. She pointed to a number of achievements in that regard including social media connectivity increases.

It was acknowledged that one of the previous year's AGM was to roll out the Age Friendly Business Accreditation Scheme which she noted had come to fruition in the previous few weeks. It was noted the roll-out was shortlisted in the Chamber Ireland

Awards. She thanked all of those involved who worked together to make it a success.

The President went on to note to include retail and business where members of the Local Authority and business interacted to contribute to the local plan for development and to improve their business offering, the launching of the communication around the shop Kilkenny brand, the roll-out of the programme to utilise empty shop windows for heritage attractions in the City and County, the submissions to the local County Development Plan and Regional Special Economic Strategy. These were all examples of strong engagement by the Chamber in local business issues.

The President noted some high profile engagements in the preceding 12 months to include meeting with the Minister for Finance, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Employment, Minister for Rural & Community Development where Kilkenny was pushed forward as a hub for FDI, craft and a technical university for the South East.

The President noted that the Annual Business Awards was a highlight of the year and looked forward to the upcoming Golf Classic. She further looked forward to the oncoming year and noted that it was intended to develop a 5 year strategic plan for the Chamber, but also to join up a Chamber strategic plan for the South East.

By way of thanks, the President acknowledged the help of John, Roisin and Karen in the Chamber Office and pointed to their tremendous work and strong support provided to the President during her first year. She acknowledged the assistance of the Board of Directors who give their time to the Chamber in Kilkenny. She thanked the local media, who are supportive of the Chamber endeavours, the retail and age friendly action groups and especially to the members of the Chamber for their ongoing support and positivity. Lastly, she thanked her family who have been supportive in keeping the house and home together whilst she dedicates her time to the Chamber and also to her own business at McDonagh Junction, who have carried the can and allowed her to enjoy the role of President.

## **2. Adoption of 2018 Minutes**

The minutes of the 2018 AGM were deemed to have been read by those in attendance. There were no queries in relation to the content. The minutes were proposed to be adopted by Jane Devlin and seconded by Gordon Murphy and were adopted.

## **3. Directors Report and Audited Accounts**

Paschal Bergin as Honorary Treasurer of Kilkenny Chamber ran through the report and financial statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018. He thanked DeLoughry O’Gorman for their assistance in advising the Chamber and preparing the annual accounts and Auditor’s Report.

Paschal Bergin acknowledged the auditor’s statement on page 7 and page 8 of the accounts. He confirmed the net surplus for the Chamber in the year 2018 was a sum

of €11,577.00. at the end of the year, the company had assets of €189,704.00 and liabilities of €132,329.00.

He acknowledged that the auditors were happy to continue in their role. He ran through the annual accounts and noted that membership revenue was down slightly on the preceding year.

The income from the Golf outing was €4,438.00 and it was noted that the Medieval Mile income had doubled from the preceding year and that things were going in the right direction in respect of that offering.

Paschal Bergin noted there was €37,000.00 in cash and that the Chamber held net assets/reserves of €57,375.00.

CEO, John Hurley, thanked both DeLoughry O’Gorman and Paschal Bergin for their work in respect of the accounts on an ongoing basis.

#### **4. Adoption of Report and Audited Accounts**

Both the Report and Audited Accounts as presented were proposed and adopted (Proposer Brian Keyes and Seconded by Garry Graham).

#### **5. Election of Auditors 2019/2020**

Nomination of Auditors was discussed. The firm of Deloughry O’Gorman were elected as auditors for 2019/2020 (Proposer Martin Costello and seconded by Laurence Conroy).

#### **6. Dissolution of 2018/2019 Board**

The Outgoing Board of Directors of the Chamber stood down and the election of the Officers and Board of Directors for 2019/2020 commenced.

Marion Acreman had been nominated to continue as President of the Chamber for a further year. There being no other nominations, it was proposed by Patricia Duff and seconded by Gordon Murphy that her election of President be confirmed as per the Memorandum and Articles of Association. Marion Acreman was then deemed duly elected President for 2019/2020.

There were no new nominations to the Chamber Board of Directors and Office for 2018/2019. The current board, as detailed on the inside page of the Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019, were proposed to be re-elected. Bridget O’Dea and Lawrence Conroy were proposed to be appointed to the Board.

The re-election of the officers to the Board of the Chamber, those being as set out on the Report and Financial Statements, was completed also with the first proposal being David Fitzgerald and seconded by Patricia Duff.

#### **7. Resolutions to AGM**

There being no Resolutions presented to the AGM John Hurley then introduced the guest speaker.

#### **8. Guest Speaker Address – Julian Hughes**

Julian Hughes of Hughes Farming gave an informed presentation about the growth of their business in Kells, Co. Kilkenny. They were the winners of the Chamber Business of the Year in 2018. He shared the journey with those in attendance in respect of the setting up of a consultancy and training business between 2008 and 2012. In 2012 they set up the Hughes Farming Limited business and he gave some detail as to the model whereby the company owns no lands but leases 100% of the lands upon which it is farming.

Hughes Farming Limited had just completed a 1 acre factory build in Kells with integrated offices and had a 2019 turnover of in or around €3.9 million. They employ 45 full-time staff and supply fresh farmed produce to a number of core retailers including Lidl, Dunnes Stores, Aldi, M&S, Supervalu and other farmers' markets.

Julian Hughes gave some details around the next frontier of precision farming to include diversification and risk mitigation.

He stated that winning the Chamber Business Award had given both the business and all employees a significant boost and he was very thankful to the Chamber for its support.

#### **9. CEO Sign-off**

John Hurley thanked Julian Hughes for an interesting and insightful presentation. He went on to thank Marion Acreman for her hands-on engagement with everything the Chambers done the preceding year and confirmed he looked forward to working with her over the coming year.

He further thanked the Board members for the work in the past and commitment going forward. He also thanked the Office Administrator, Roisin McQuillan, whose contribution and work effort was acknowledged and also assisted by Karen O'Mahony.

He extended thanks to Colin Ahern and the team at Kilkenny Ormonde Hotel for providing the excellent venue for the AGM. Lastly, he thanked all those in attendance and the members of the Chamber. He asked that all members and those in attendance let their colleagues know about the Chamber so that everybody knows the Chamber is for them and can continue to be one of the best Chambers in the Country.

He pointed to a number of upcoming Chamber events, including the ongoing Chamber chats, local elections event, and golf challenge in Mount Juliet.

**10. AOB**

There being no further business everyone was thanked for their attendance and the 2019 AGM was called to a close.