



# Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce

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## Media Release

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 20:00 WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, 2015**

**As the nomination and election process is confidential, no board member should be contacted in relation to this release before 20.00 on Wednesday**

**Wednesday, June 17, 2015**

### **New Chamber president appointed**

Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce has appointed a new president at its annual general meeting.

Edel Harris was confirmed as president at the Chamber's AGM today (Wed) as Alec Carstairs stands down having completed his two-year term.

Edel is chief executive of Cornerstone, one of Scotland's largest social care organisations providing a wide range of health and social care services to people with disabilities and other support needs

Speaking after her appointment, Edel said: "I feel very honoured to represent the business community of the North-east of Scotland in my new role as president.

"As someone who has lived and worked in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire for the last 26 years, I am passionate about the area.

"I am committed to supporting the Chamber and its members to ensure the region remains a great place to live and work."

Two existing board members were confirmed as vice-presidents of the board and they were joined by four new elected board members.

John Brebner, city director - Aberdeen at Clydesdale Bank, and Peter Sharp, a consultant at Pinsent Masons LLP, are now serving as vice presidents.

Joining the board after having been elected by the membership are:

- Stephen Nicol, chief financial officer at Wood Group PSN
- Judith Thorpe, co-owner and director at Thorpe Molloy Recruitment Limited

- Jill Webster, director at Rubberatkins and until recently councillor and provost of Aberdeenshire Council
- Jennifer Young, chairman and partner at Ledingham Chalmers LLP

Continuing board members are:

- Edel Harris (president), chief executive of Cornerstone
- John Brebner (vice president), head of regional business and private banking centre - East of Scotland at Clydesdale Bank
- Peter Sharp (vice president), consultant, Pinsent Masons LLP
- Alec Carstairs (immediate past president), director, Cela Consulting
- Fiona Bayne, head of communications - Upstream UK - Shell UK Limited
- Carol Benzie, managing director, Aberdeen International Airport Ltd
- Alastair Green, group head of strategy and development, Wood Group
- David Mair, group sales and business development director, the Ferguson Group

Members of the Chamber also elected their representatives to its policy council, who are:

Philip Smith, VisitScotland; Fiona Mann, Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre; Jennifer Stanning, Oil & Gas UK; Duncan Cameron, ARR Craib Transport Limited; James Dunphy, Robert Gordon University; John Michie, Firm of Charles Michie; George Thom, The Royal Bank of Scotland; Derick Murray, NESTRANS; Gary Craig, Aberdeen Inspired; Craig Stevenson, Bon Accord & St Nicholas; Stephen Hepburn, Clydesdale Bank.

### **Edel Harris biography**

Edel Harris has spent the last 15 years in senior management and leadership positions working in the social enterprise sector. A former Metropolitan Police officer, she holds a first class honours degree in Health and Social Care, and worked for NHS Grampian for many years. She joined Cornerstone as chief executive in May 2008 having previously been deputy chief executive of Aberdeen Foyer.

Edel is a former chairman of the Life Changes Trust, director of The Fragile X Society and a board member of Aberdeen FC Community Trust. She is also a former chair of the Scottish Government's Scottish Investment Fund.

She lives in Stonehaven with her husband and she has two grown up sons. She enjoys swimming, spending time with her family and is an avid football fan.

## **History**

The Chamber board is directly elected by members of the North-east business community who are members of the Chamber. It provides corporate governance to the organisation, and informs and guides its policy position and direction.

The establishment of a Chamber of Commerce was first mooted in 1853 when leading members of Aberdeen's business community met up in the Lemon Tree Tavern in Huxter Row to consider “the best mode of accomplishing the objects of a proposed Society for the Protection of Trade”.

Under the leadership of their first chairman – highly respected warehouseman Baillie John Forbes - the intention was to form a group of individuals who would work together to promote common business interests and support.

The society became the Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce and North of Scotland Trade Protection Society. For many years it was known simply as the Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce, until 2002 when it became the current Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce

## **Ends**

### **Notes to editor**

- Please find attached an image of new Chamber president Edel Harris.
- Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce (AGCC) is North-east Scotland's leading private sector, member-focused, business organisation. The Chamber represents more than 1,350 businesses with almost 130,000 employees in the private sector covering all industry sectors, ranging in size from sole traders to multi-national corporations.
- Under the Chamber constitution, one third of the board is required to retire by rotation each year.

### **Media enquiries to Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce**

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