

Alton Chamber of Commerce & Industry Inauguration meeting in 1909

Advert in 'Hampshire Herald & Alton Gazette' local paper on 20th May 1909

AS CHAIRMAN OF THE ALTON URBAN DISTRICT
COUNCIL, I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO CALL

A PUBLIC MEETING

Of traders and others interested in the welfare
of Alton to discuss the advisability of forming

A CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

THE MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE
ASSEMBLY ROOMS, ALTON

(Lower Committee Room),

On Tuesday, May 25th, 1909, at 8pm.

As one interested will you kindly make a point
of being present.

GERALD HALL.

May 20th, 1909

Report of meeting of 25th May 1909 in 'Hampshire Herald & Alton Gazette' local paper (issue of 29th May 1909)

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOR ALTON

♦
SUCCESSFUL MEETING

♦
A PROMISING START MADE

As a result of the agitation, created largely through corresponding in our columns, a very successful meeting of traders in Alton and district was held at the Assembly Rooms on Tuesday evening to discuss the advisability of forming a Chamber of Commerce. The meeting was most representative. With few exceptions the whole of the Alton tradesmen were present, and there were also representatives present from many of the surrounding villages. Chawton. Holybourne. Binstead. Selborne. Worldham. And elsewhere. The committee room was so crowded that many had to be content with standing room, the number present being about 150.

The chair was taken by Mr. Gerald Hall, J.P., the chairman of the council, on the requisition of a number of the traders, and amongst those present were: Messrs. W. Batting, G. F. King, Kenneth Heaton, A. C. Hetherington, J. H. Farthing, J. B. Longman, H. P. Burrell, A. F. M. Downie, E. Loe, C. Young, W. Trimmer, C. Archer, W. B. Trimmer, H. Adlam, W. P. Tuckett, T. A. Chaleratt, Rev. S. P. Hopkins, Dr. Briscoe, Messrs. W. H. Curtis, R. C.

Bolton, A. J. Martin, T. Sanger, J. A. Hayden, T. S. Mitchell, M. P. Stoodley, C. H. Dyer, A. A. Thrower, G. Frost, C. Bond, A. W. Cox, S. Mussell, R. C. Hayward, J. W. Chapman, Goodwyn Hall, P. Trimming, H. Dyson, A. Hewitt, J. Everitt, H. Piggott, S. Randall, J. Kimpton, W. Blackmoor, Bro. John, G. H. Castle, J. Caesar, R. J. Gaiger, A. Debenham, M. Francis, T. G. Jeffery, J. Crow, W. Heather, T. Mugridge, J. G. Coleman, J. Tokeley, A. W. Holliday, J. Pritchard, W. H. Hetherington, F. Ames, E. Williams, F. W. Kerridge, H. Charman, E. Withers, H. Morris Wells, R. A. Hooper, W. G. Andrews, Bailey, A. E. Hale, G. Frost, Fry, and many others.

Apologies for absence were read from Mr. Perry Smith and Mr. T. Smith (Medstead). The CHAIRMAN, in opening the meeting, read the requisition, asking him, as chairman of the Urban District Council, to call the meeting, which was published in our columns last week. Proceeding, he said when he received that he considered it his duty and pleasure to consult the Urban District Council, and when he brought it before them they unanimously voted that he should call the meeting. (Applause.) As far as he was concerned he should be very sorry if they thought the meeting had been called because they were in *forma pauperis* [poor people] or anything of that sort. That he did not agree with, and he did not

think that was the idea of those who convened the meeting, but they would hear what they had to say presently. With regard to the population of the town, that was steadily and had considerably increased. Within the last few years the railway accommodation had been greatly improved, and there were now four lines of communication to Alton. The assessment, as they all knew, had, generally speaking, gone up in Alton. That did not look as if they were in a depressed state. Rents also had gone up, and he did not see many unoccupied houses. If they went to the railway station about 11 o'clock on a Wednesday it did not look altogether as if things were very bad. Supposing all those who travelled to London on Wednesday went up for pleasure (laughter) it did not look as if things were depressed. If they went up simply for business then there was room for improvement in Alton. He should like to see the attractions of Alton so improved that would induce those people to spend their money in Alton instead of going to London. (Applause.) In matters of trade that was a big question, but he thought the man who could introduce a good purchaser or occupier to the Paper Mills would be doing a very good work. The building trade had been rather slack in Alton and they hoped there would be a revival in that way. (Applause.)

Mr. W. BATTING, who was called upon by the Chairman, said he had been asked to move the first resolution, and before doing so he should like to say a word or two to those who would perhaps might not be so well acquainted with the purposes and the reasons and the origin of the movement that had taken place in Alton. Many of them would remember that there was certain correspondence in the Hampshire Herald calling attention to the needs of Alton and one or two at any rate spoke of the desirability of forming what was called a Chamber of Trade or Commerce. He knew nothing about the authors of those letters but he quite agreed that something might be done on those lines. With that object a few gentlemen interested in the trade of the town met together and talked the matter over to see whether a Chamber of Commerce could be formed and if it would be useful and desirable to form one for the benefit of the town? These gentlemen were pretty unanimous that it would be of some good: at any rate they thought the effort was worth trying, and as their Chairman had told them they sent a memorial to him to call a meeting and he very readily agreed and accepted the responsibility of calling a meeting with the full approval of the Urban District Council. That was why they were there that night. What was a Chamber of Commerce? He was not going to pretend to answer that fully or to give a dictionary explanation of the term. As he understood it, it was a combination of business men, not necessarily traders, pledged together to work together for the good of the trade and commerce of the town and district. They would agree with him that in the large centres of England where those Chambers of Commerce had been established for many years, they had done an immense amount of good, not only locally to the trade and interest of the town but to country generally. He was speaking particularly of the great Chamber of Commerce in London. It had wielded enormous influence upon the political aspect of things, in so far as they had touched upon the commercial interests and trade matters. The opinion of Chambers of Commerce had been sought for and acted upon by the responsible ministers of the Crown when introducing measures affecting the trade of the county, and their advice and technical and practical knowledge of things had gone a great deal towards framing the

shape legislation had taken. He held what had been good for the interests of the great centres of England in that respect must in a lesser degree be good for Alton also. (Applause.) They did not expect to influence public opinion or Parliament. That was not the idea in the minds of those who called the meeting. Perhaps they would say to him what good will a Chamber of Commerce do for Alton: what might it be expected to do for Alton: how is it going to help the town? That after all was the crucial question and it was not a very easy question to answer off handed, or to give a very definite answer as to what it could do. But of this he was quite certain, if they looked into the matter they would find there was a great deal it could do, and when this Chamber of Commerce - if they agree to form one, - when the Chamber of Commerce got settled down to work it would be found there would be a great deal it could do towards benefiting the town of Alton and neighbourhood. (Hear, hear.) He felt very certain about that. He thought things would develop and ideas would be brought forward at the meetings of the Council and the meetings of the Chamber that must be for the good of the town and neighbourhood. It was difficult to be very definite and to say what these things would be. They would all be agreed that Alton was suffering from a certain amount, more or less, of depression. At any rate things were not so rosy as some of them had known them to be in the past. Whatever the causes were it would be the duty and the work of the Chamber of Commerce to find out the cause and if possible find a remedy. Some of the industries were languishing: some they were told were going. It would be the work of the Chamber of Commerce when it got to work to find out if those industries could be revived, or, if they could not be revived whether other industries could be induced to come and take their place, and so give employment in the same way or perhaps to better advantage. (Hear, hear.) Then much could be done with regard to railway facilities. (Hear, hear.) In the last few years much had been done, but there was much yet to be done. They wanted a lower railway rate to Alton: the rates were very heavy. He believed in combination a body of traders might induce the Railway Company to considerably lower their rates for much of the merchandise that came into Alton. He had himself been able

to get one of the important rates from the midland counties to Alton lowered by 4s. 6d. a ton. (Applause.) That was only a minor thing. If that could be done by one individual where it was felt to be an injustice, surely they as a body of traders could induce the Railway Company to reconsider their rates and give them possibly lower rates. (Hear, hear.) Then they might take up the question of quicker trains to and from London: it would help and assist Alton as a residential town and neighbourhood if they could get faster trains to and from London. Gentlemen would come and live there and go up to town more frequently if they could get a better train service. A great deal had been done in the last few years to induce the Railway Company to run quicker trains, but there was room for greater efforts yet. There was one subject he had brought up before and that was the question of a more efficient secondary education in the town. (Applause.) He was not going to enter on that subject fully but he would call their attention to a scheme which had been produced for the re-organisation of the present secondary school. He believed that the scheme was in a fair way of being passed through, and it would be for such a body as a Chamber of Commerce to see that in that school the secondary education given was an efficient one, and that it was conducted on popular lines and upon an efficient basis. (Hear, hear.) There was one other subject on which he did think a Chamber of Commerce could make its voice felt, and that was with regard to the decay of the hop industry. The opinion of a body of traders would surely have a great deal of weight in bringing before the Government of the powers that be, their protest against the continued decay of the hop industry and the unemployment caused thereby in places such as Alton. (Applause.) He thought such questions as these would be for the Chamber of Commerce to take up. He did not think that the Chamber of Commerce in Alton was going to do all the things he had indicated, but he did think that if a dozen or fifteen of the best business men could think that matter out they could do a great deal towards it. The effort, he said, was worth trying. (Applause.) If they decided that the Chamber of Commerce should be formed that night it was very desirable, in the interest and welfare of the town, that a large number of traders and others should join the chamber, so as to make it a

really efficient power in the town. It would be a sure indication, if only a few joined, that it was not wanted. He might say that it was the opinion of those who had discussed the matter that the subscription should be kept as low as possible; that it should be kept as low as the necessary expenses would allow, and they were of the opinion that it would probably be 2s. 6d. a year if it could be worked at such a low figure. He hoped they would be justified in making the effort and be successful in inducing a large number of members to join. (Applause.) He should also like to say that it was not proposed for one moment that the Chamber of Commerce should be antagonistic to the Alton Urban District Council. If that should be so he should not for one moment be in the position he was that night. It would be very difficult to find a body of men who had the interest if the town more at heart than the present members of the Urban District Council. (Applause.) He did want to say this, that the movement was not antagonistic to the Urban District Council, that it was in no sense a Ratepayers' Association. In many places they had Ratepayers' Associations, and these Associations were generally more or less of a quarrelsome nature (laughter), generally antagonistic to the ruling powers, and he for one saw no room in Alton for that. (Hear, hear.) The Chamber of Commerce, so far at any rate as he was concerned, would not be a Ratepayers' Association, but it would work in friendly harmony with the Urban District Council, because he believed that such a Council as they had got, representing all shades of opinion in the town, and a Chamber of Commerce composed of the best business ability in the town, and interested in the welfare of it, were bound to work together for the good of the town. (Applause.) He begged to move the following resolution: - "That in dictating the opinion of this meeting it is most important to the interest of the town and district of Alton that a Chamber of Commerce be forthwith established and the same is hereby established." (Applause.)

Mr. G. F. KING in seconding the resolution, said a few of them met together one day last week to see if something could not be done in the way of establishing a Chamber of Commerce. He certainly in his fondest hopes did not expect as big and as representative a meeting as

they had that night. The origin was the letters which appeared in the *Hampshire Herald*. Nobody seemed to know where the letters sprung from, but it really mattered very little. All he did know was that he did not write them. He never wrote a letter yet he did not put his name to. Well, sometimes the end justified the means. Both the chairman and the proposer of the resolution has referred to the depression and the cloud under which Alton seemed to be at the present time. Undoubtedly they were under a cloud, but had they taken the trouble to enquire about their neighbours? Had they asked them how trade was in other towns? He did not think they would find many of them who would tell them a much better tale than they could tell them about Alton. Times were bad, money was tight, the spending capacity was undoubtedly very restricted, but he did not think that if they got things better and money a little more freely circulated but what the prosperity of the old town would equal or surpass what it had been before. (Applause.) The agricultural industry was one of their fundamental industries. He did not know when the agricultural outlook was better than it was now. He did not suppose agriculturalists would agree with that (laughter); but to the casual observer the crops looked well, prices were good, and in some cases high, and let them hope that they would keep, if not high, at least at a remunerative figure. But that had nothing to do with the proposition before the meeting that it was desirable to form a Chamber of Commerce. That was rather an ambitious title, but it was in the minds of those who were at the preliminary meeting to avoid the title of Ratepayers' Association, not but what Ratepayers' Associations had done good, but, as Mr. Batting had pointed out, it was never started with any antagonism to their present authority. (Hear, hear.) Many of them thought there might be some things done better, but most of them thought the Council did the work uncommonly well, and certainly he thought a period that had been as trying as any a small community had had to face very well indeed. (Applause.) They had had to meet an epidemic they did not want to shirk, but at the same time they did not wish to advertise. They wanted to stamp it out with the least possible noise. It was no good washing one's dirty linen in public, but he thought most of the ratepayers commended the Council

for the way they carried that out. He did not think they must put the foundation of that scheme in any way as antagonistic to the Council. (Hear, hear.) As Mr. Batting had said, and he had been through most of the points, it was most difficult to point to what could be done by a combination of traders and others interested in trade, or to put their finger on any one thing that might be done. But things might be improved when they were organised and discussion had taken place; things would crop up that might be brought about that would do good to the town, and until they got organised and things were ventilated he did not think they could really put their fingers on anything and say definitely what should be done. He hoped the meeting would be unanimous in the necessity of establishing a Chamber of Commerce. There was another thing he hoped they would be unanimous in, and that was that this proposed organisation would be kept absolutely free from party spirit (hear, hear). He hoped they would have no distinction between members whether they were large or small traders. (Hear, hear). Let them welcome all, because unless they could get them all together they would not be a representative body. In many places like Alton there was that feeling that the big men did not want the small ones. Such an idea getting abroad would be fatal to an organisation such as they proposed. Those who did not believe they would do any good by establishing a Chamber of Commerce, if they could not assist them, he hoped they would not do anything that might destroy the organisation after it was started. (Hear, hear). There were more ways than one of killing a thing, and one of the ways was by ridicule. Ridicule killed very quickly, and if anybody felt they could not help them let them refrain from unkind remarks about the Chamber of Commerce until it had had a season or two in which to work, and then they would see if it could do any good. (Hear, hear). He hoped they would have a thoroughly representative committee elected. This meeting was called to pass the resolution to establish the Chamber of Commerce, and then people would be invited to become members; then after that would come the crucial time. Let them have a strong committee, let them have some of all sorts, all sizes; if they worked together he believed they would form a chamber that could do and would do a great deal of good in the town, and

bring forward and discuss matters that did not come within the purview of any individual authority. (Hear, hear). He had great pleasure in seconding the resolution. (Applause).

Mr. R. C. BOLTON, speaking as a newcomer, said during the four years he had been in the town he could see that things were not quite so well as they were. He thought, therefore, an association of that sort might do good, because they would have, he hoped, some of the best intellect of the trade on the council, and if any measures were put forward people would know there were thoroughly thrashed out. Any suggestions a Chamber of Commerce made would come not from an individual, but with the full force of the whole united Chamber, and everybody would have their say. They did know that these associations had proved useful even in such adjoining towns as Aldershot and Guildford. He knew the keen interest taken in these associations and how questions were ventilated in Parliament very often through members being approached by the Chamber of Commerce, and a great deal of weight attached to questions brought forward in that way. All he suggested was that they should give the movement a chance. (Applause).

The Rev. C. P. HOPKINS asked what would be the qualification for membership, and whether what had fallen from the lips of Mr. Batting and Mr. King would preclude the Chamber of Commerce from criticising the action of the Urban District Council.

Mr. BATTING, answering the questions, said that with regard to the qualification nothing whatever had been settled yet, but he took it that any trader, any ratepayer, or any property holder would be so far qualified as to be a member of the Chamber. With regard to the other matter, he did not mean [not legible] that there should be no criticism of the Urban District Council. He did not intend to say that, but the spirit would be friendly, or at any rate it was friendly now. The Chamber of Commerce would retain perfect freedom of action in criticising any matter of public interest that came up. He thought it would stultify the action of the Chamber of Commerce if it were not so. They must reserve perfect freedom of discussion. It was only in discussing matters of local interest that the truth of the thing was arrived at. (Applause.)

Mr. MAURICE FRANCIS said he thought it was quite as well to face the difficulty that presented itself, and it seemed to him there were several formidable difficulties in forming a Chamber of Commerce in a town like Alton. First of all the smallness of the town. Mr. Batting pointed out the usefulness of these chambers of commerce in large centres. Quite so; they were essential and most useful in those large centres. But was Alton large enough to form a Chamber of Commerce? That would be the difficulty in putting right the things which were wrong. Then there was one other thing. Mr. Batting touched upon the question of railway facilities. That was another difficulty, and what could they do with a railway company? Let them assume that Alton was a desirable residential town, and it was from every point of view. He knew of no other town more beautiful than Alton. Its surroundings were charming, and many artistic temperaments sought inspiration in much less beautiful spots than Alton. If they could get people to see its beauties and the facilities were improved he thought they would get people to take up their residence there. He was speaking to a friend of his in London, who was leaving the beautiful county of Surrey, and he was asking his opinion of a seaport town with which he was acquainted. He strongly advised him not to go there. He told him what he wanted was an inland town, beautiful, salubrious, and so on, and waxed eloquent about the beauties of Alton. His friend said "Just the place for me." Presently he said "What about railway facilities; what is your quickest services?" He replied that the quickest trains from London to Alton were 1½ hours, "Impossible," his friend replied. Unless a Chamber of Commerce could be formed with sufficient weight to make the Railway Company run an express train from Waterloo to Alton in an hour it would be little use to consider the matter from a residential point of view. Even at Farnham they had not so quick a service as that. Did they think the Railway Company could be by any kind of influence persuaded to run an express train from London to Alton? He was just indicating the difficulties they had to face. He was fully in favour of the scheme, but he thought it was necessary to put these things before the meeting so that they might be considered. They must put the town in order before they could do much. No one thought more highly

of the Alton Urban District Council then he did. They had fought strenuously with difficulties, and he believed they would overcome these difficulties which they had to contend with. Something had been said about antagonism to the Urban District Council. He was quite sure that nobody would have a Chamber of Commerce which was not free to criticise sometimes, but not in an antagonistic spirit, the action of the Urban District Council. He should like to say that in spite of these things he was quite in favour of the inauguration of a Chamber of Commerce. (Applause).

Mr. CHAS. ARCHER said it seemed to him they wanted to decide whether they should form a Chamber of Commerce or not, and then form a Committee, and at some future time they could summon the members and bring forward a scheme. Most of his life had been spent in London, and he was associated with the London Chamber of Commerce. The London Chamber of Commerce was principally made up of large merchants and manufacturers, and their business was mainly to get information as to the movements of trade in all parts of the world. So far as his experience went it was not so much advantage to the small trader as it was to the large merchant, the exporter and importer. They were able to influence freights and railway rates, which was to the advantage of the manufacturer. What they could do in Alton it was difficult to say at present. He thought that if all parties were unanimous and endeavoured to do as far as possible to further the interests of the business of the town, it would be an advantage, even supposing they could not do anything like the Chambers of Commerce had been able to do in large towns. (Applause).

Mr. E. WILLIAMS asked that the qualification for membership might be stated.

Mr. BOLTON said that it would have to be left until the rules were brought forward.

Mr. G. H. CASTLE said for several years he was connected with the Nuneaton Chamber of Commerce, and he would tell them what they did for the town. He was one of the traders who started it, and he was a member of the Committee all the time he was there. They first of all started on the Railway

Company. They wrote to them about market tickets into the town. That was what they wanted to get, facilities for bringing people into the town, not to get them out. (Hear, hear and applause.) They stuck at that and never let the Railway Company alone, for three months at a time they were continually at them. Then they had a very big market, and they found that a lot of the outside stall holders were taking a lot of money away. The Chamber of Commerce got the Council to double the market tolls to the outside stall holders; then they were not content with that, and they got the price raised to three times the price charged to local stall holders who paid rates and taxes. (Applause.) They were always doing something. They started a plate glass insurance fund and they gave the members 10 per cent. back the first year, 20 per cent. the second year. He did not know what they gave them afterwards. (Laughter and applause.) They were always working for the good of the town. For instance, when the Union of London and Smith's Bank acquired premises at a corner in the town which was a death trap, they started to build new premises, and had the walls up ten or twelve feet, when somebody was killed, and through the action of the Chamber of Commerce the Town Council, who were very glad to know they had the town behind them, got them to stop the building and set it further back. In anything which they thought was for the good of the town the Council was always very pleased to listen to what the Chamber of Commerce had to say. They had regular monthly meetings and a dinner once a year. The great thing was to start right. In their Chamber of Commerce there was no one better than the other; they all pulled together. If they did not like what the Council were doing they said so, and the Council took it in good part. He did not think they were bad friends over it. They had 150 members, and most of the tradesmen in the town belonged to it. They were affiliated with the Associated Chambers of Commerce, which cost them £2 a year he thought, and they would send down a speaker upon any subject from the Central Office. He was quite sure they would find a Chamber of Commerce a great thing for the town and it would help the town. He was not a croaker; he was rather an optimist. (Applause). The town was not as good as it was. He had known it better; still he was so pleased with it

that he was going to stop here. (Loud applause). It was many years since first he knew it. The first thing they did at Nuneaton was this. They found that when any works wanted to come into the town the first things they asked was "Is there a siding to be got?" and "What are the rates of the town?" They formed a committee to approach the largest landowners and get a price for the land, because when any landowner knew works wanted to come into the town he doubled the price of his land and kept them away. (Laughter). They wanted to get the people into the town. Then the first thing residential people asked was "What are your educational facilities?" and the second thing was "What are the rates?" They wanted to look after that. (Applause). They might approach the owners of land near the railway in Alton. There were lots of things they could do. People would not listen to Mr. Smith or Mr. Jones writing to them, but they would listen to the whole body through a letter from the clerk. He was quite sure the Chamber of Commerce would be for the good of the town, and the membership of a town like Alton ought to be 100, and 5s. a year would cover it. (Mr. Batting: I said 2s. 6d.) Well, you can try that. (Laughter). But it is like everything else, expenses are gradually going up. (Hear, hear). What you want is a strong committee and an enthusiastic secretary. (Applause). It was no good having a secretary who would go to sleep. He wanted to be very much awake. (Applause). So did anybody nowadays. (Laughter).

Brother JOHN, O.S.P., said they had heard some very big schemes put before them, such as dealing with railways and residential inducements and so on, but he thought if they wanted to be practical they wanted to get hold of that which tradesmen counted on Saturday night and which they put in the bank on Monday morning. That was what they were after if they meant business. What they wanted was a profitable turnover, and in order to get a profitable turnover it seemed to him to be necessary to cultivate the purchasing power of the people who had money to spend. That seemed to him to be the trouble. He congratulated the town on coming to this point of view, that they could come together to talk about their mutual concerns. After all their interests were largely identical. It was no good for a tradesman to have a lot

of goods if the purchasing power of the people was weak. Therefore the prosperity of the tradesmen depended upon the purchasing power of the public generally, or in other words, the object of the Chamber of Commerce was the object of the consumer as well as the tradesman. After all it was a sort of selfish altruism or altruistic selfishness. In the Cooperative movement their motto was "Each for all and all for each." He congratulated the town on coming so far towards their ideals.

Mr. G. F. KING said he had been asked by Father Hopkins if the resolution bound the meeting to call it a Chamber of Commerce or whether they might not call it a Chamber of Traders. He believed the Rev. Father had been looking up the Encyclopaedia Britannica on the matter. (Laughter).

The Rev. C. P. HOPKINS said he should not like to do anything to throw a wet blanket on the movement, and he certainly wished to do all he could personally to further it. He said something to Mr. King about the title, but he did not think he was going to jump up and give him away. It seemed to him that such a high-sounding title was not quite suitable for a small town like Alton. They possibly might court ridicule by the adoption of such a title. A Chamber of Commerce, as he understood it, consisted of merchants, wholesale manufacturers, and dealers. It has not to do at all with retail business. The dictionary definition of a Chamber of Commerce said it was international traffic in goods, or what constituted foreign trade or countries as distinct from their domestic trade. They could call a Chamber of Commerce if they thought it wise to do so. If they were going to have an association, and it was necessary to have it all embracing, that gave him the opportunity to emphasise the point that they were going to open the door and admit the purchaser as well as the man who sold, and the residential part of the town as well. All these would be represented on a Chamber of Commerce, but they were not commercial folk, they were not tradespeople. He was in sympathy with the movement. They did not want to create anything like ridicule; they wanted to make the movement all embracing. If it was an association chiefly in the interests of traders and tradesmen in the town it would not draw from him the same kind of

sympathy if it could be a movement embracing the interests of the whole community, the poor as well as the rich, the purchaser as well as the seller.

Dr. BRISCOE said he thought such an association as had been suggested for Alton would be a very desirable thing.

Mr. ARCHER suggested they should call it the Alton Traders' Association and keep it open to all sections.

Mr. HAYDEN suggested Traders and Property Owners Association as a title.

Mr. CANDY: I think we ought to stick to the resolution and call it a Chamber of Commerce. (Hear, hear).

Mr. BATTING said that with regard to the name that had been thought over at the preliminary meeting, and they felt that there was such a body as the Associated Chambers of Commerce that met once a year, and subjects were discussed there which were very valuable indeed. They would probably want to be affiliated with the Associated Chambers of Commerce by and bye, and he saw no objection at all to it. He had in his possession the rules of the Dorking Chamber of Commerce and the Frimley and District Chamber of Commerce. If they were little they were larger than their neighbours, and he did not think there was any real objection to the title, which might very well be left. There would be another meeting when the rules would be submitted, when any alterations could be made.

The resolution was then put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

Those present were then invited to give in their names as members, when upwards of fifty handed in their names.

Mr. A. C. HETHERINGTON then proposed that a provisional committee of ten be elected to draw up a constitution and rules of the Chamber of Commerce, the same to be submitted to a [missing text] on the committee, saying he had given valuable assistance in the starting of the project.

Mr. G. F. KING said he believed, now that the movement had been successfully launched, Mr. Stewart did not wish to act on the committee.

Mr. Stuart's name was thereupon withdrawn, and Mr. T. S. Mitchell was elected in his stead.

On the motion of Mr. BATTING, Mr. R. Aitken was elected provisional secretary till the next meeting, when a permanent secretary will be elected.

It was agreed that the first meeting of members should be held on Tuesday, June 15th, at eight p.m.

Mr. H. P. BURRELL proposed a hearty vote of thanks to the chairman for the excellent way he had conducted the business of the meeting. He (the speaker) had come there to listen, and he believed he had gone away a wiser man. He hoped their action that evening would be to the great advantage of the town of Alton. (Applause).

Mr. E. LOE seconded the proposition, which was heartily carried.

The CHAIRMAN briefly acknowledged the vote of thanks and the meeting terminated.

All persons who wish to become members should send their names to Mr. R. Aitkin, the provisional secretary, as soon as possible, if they wish to attend the next meeting, which will not be a public meeting, but a meeting for members only. Only those who have given in their names will receive notice of the meeting.