

1. Welcome New Members and Guest Speakers

- KW welcomed new members and guest speakers

Apologies

- Jonathon Bye
- Jessica Stock
- Jackie Stockman

2. Guest Speakers - 20 minute presentations

George Cowcher, CEO Devon Chamber of Commerce – The role of the New Devon Chamber

Gordon Oliver, Mayor of Torbay- Mayors Update

Alan Denby TDA –Update on Business and local initiatives

Mr George Cowcher, CEO Devon Chamber

GC Gave a Background to Devon Chamber accreditation

- Devon has not always been recognised and needs to have a voice
- 72,000 VAT registered companies in Devon
- GC gave a presentation detailing the structure of the Devon Chamber
- Sub divisions in 4 areas – Torbay and South Devon being one area

Role of Devon Chamber

- International trade forum
- Business hub
- Arrange and oversee the development of the 4 sub area forums with plans to establish quarterly meetings.
- To be able to speak with authority on behalf of Brixham Chamber and other local Chambers

First meeting for the Torbay and South Devon Sub areas will be 17 March venue tbc

- To understand key challenges facing local business
- Public sector procurement
- LEPs growth hub
- Minimum wage
- Auto enrolment
- Pay increases for the coming year what is the picture
- Europe

For areas such as Brixham there are different opportunities and challenges

- Fishing
- Tourism sector
- South Devon highway
- Training funding ... Training levy ...due to start 2017
- HMRC issues to ensure that tax advice/ systems enable a level playing field for all businesses

A copy of the presentation will be available on the Chamber website

Mayor Gordon Oliver

Congratulated Brixham Chamber of Commerce on its on- going success. The recent South Devon Highway has demonstrated clear productivity benefits and enabled businesses to reduce travel time across south Devon.

Partnership working is a focus and needs to be built upon to deliver for Torbay.

Improvements to windy corner are intended for 2016 /17 and also dual carriageway sections of the A3032.

Northern arm – existing plans for a northern arm development have come to light and there is the potential to relook at these plans which would include the opportunity to develop a prime Seafront development for Brixham

There are opportunities to explore funding options such initiatives through LEP.

Transport initiatives needed to address access:

- Light Railway system – still being considered
- Alternative transport means – eg helipad for the Bay

Mr Alan Denby TDA

Described the function and role of TDA economic development for TDA

- Business and economic function
- Work across bay masterplans

- Austerity will continue
- TOR2 different model to other local government organisations
- What do we want our councillors to lobby for ?
- Business rate devolution still a lot of uncertainty, how will the money be collected and spent?
- Views of chamber will play a critical role.
- The business barometer survey shows that business numbers are now increasing
- Strategy for town centres

Survey of businesses- Business Barometer

- Pressures on costs
- 65% cautiously optimistic about the future
- Transport infrastructure pressure
- Technology – keeping up with the pace of change
- Skills – key growth inhibitor
- Business investment not always easy to obtain

Need to address issues of access to sources of funding.

Future business plans

There are plans proposed to develop an old refuse site next to Paignton Zoo into a light industrial site.

- Offer of funding
- Light industrial site to attract industry
- Challenges due to the terrain of the land

Town centre planning

Retail experience important for visitors

Brixham Town Council Town Centre Proposal

- Plans for 200 hotel/ residential area/ retail spaces
- Oxen cove development
- To go to next master plan meeting and then to consultation
- Fish processing plant. Fishing industry loses a lot of potential business opportunities due to lack of a modern processing plant.

Other local challenges

- Demonstrate affordability, long term sustainable future
 - There will be an update on tourism in March
 - Network events are very important for local business
 - Exporting network meetings for businesses held by TDA & Devon Chamber
 - Businesses that export tend to experience quicker growth
- A copy of the presentation will be available on the Chamber website***

QA session

The Chamber members were able to put questions to the 3 guests.

Business Barometer had only 70 businesses responding so how can we get more to respond?

- AD -the survey is being amended to make the questions shorter and it is expected to achieve a more realistic number of responses which should be about 110.
- Brixham Chamber has the website links through to our website

Tourism budget - What will happen to the Bay when the tourism budget goes?

- Statutory duty to provide services and as a result this has meant non priority funding has been cut, this includes tourism funding. Overall the Council Budget has been cut by £50m and Elderly and children's services are the priority.
- There is no rate support from government and monies are not available any longer.
- All the local organisations will need to work together. There are other fund sources that we need to access and bid for eg heritage lottery.
- There is an opportunity for funding and initiatives to flourish through the Chambers of Commerce

Windy corner - is the planned road change still going ahead?

- Yes it is going ahead but there are some challenges due to public owned space and planned 16/17 to start in the winter time
- Road Infrastructure planning is available to view on Torbay Council Website and members are urged to read it and comment.
- KW hoped that seasonal trade would be considered when roadworks are planned

Is the Mayor still committed to reducing traffic lights and having more roundabouts as there are now 16 sets of traffic lights between Brixham and the new South Devon highway?

- The majority of the elected council members share in the Mayors views regarding roundabouts.
- When designing traffic systems pedestrians need to be taken into account.
- There is a new roundabout system currently being use in France.
- Plans are in place to remove the traffic lights near the Grand Hotel junction

Chamber member pleased about developments of industrial development but will that also need additional traffic light systems?

- AD replied that the aim is to utilise existing systems with some amendments
- High tech forum is designed to attract SME business
- JS – Chamber supports the development of more jobs into town

- Would be interested to have more discussions about the development of northern arm and a seafront area.

Chamber member suggested that it is more important to address the road issues and have them improved prior to anymore housing developments as most households have more than 2 cars and this increase traffic volumes.

- GO suggested the key is to look at different transport links, rail, ferry etc

Isn't there an opportunity to use the existing rail link from Dartmouth/Churston railway and use the lines at times most suitable to commuters?

- GO- responded that it is a route we can look at but part of the route no longer exists.

Isn't it in the interests of raising funds for councils to attract more national retailers into our premises rather than charity shops?

- It is more viable to have Independent retailers in the High St
- Town centres need to be more attractive to shoppers

Are Pop- up shops in Brixham going to happen?

- It is intended that this model currently successful in Torquay will be used in Brixham

3. Achievements- Vice Chair JS

JS described the importance of the Arts and Craft and Sunday markets in raising valuable monies for ongoing tourism and town initiatives.

JS gave a presentation describing the Chamber achievements over the past year including how Brixham Chamber has supported several initiatives and donated funds to local events and charities.

A research study undertaken in 2015 by Institute of Place Management, Manchester Metropolitan University on the value of markets and findings demonstrate that towns with a market benefit from

- increased footfall
- supporting the local economy
- increasing employment
- increasing town resilience
- increased sense of community

A copy of the Achievements presentation can be found on the Brixham Chamber website.

4. Accounts MC

A detailed breakdown of Chamber funds, income and expenditure was provided by Matt Crabtree.

The Chamber funds for year end 31/12/15 have a surplus of over £7,000

A detailed breakdown of Chamber accounts can be found on the Chamber website.

5. Executive appointments for 2016

The Chamber secretary received 4 nomination forms as a result now have 4 new members appointed to the Chamber executive team

- Alex foley
- Lynne Peets
- Martyn Green
- Elizabeth Pippett

These members will now replace those Executive members standing down

- Sophie Bower
- Bridget Bowring
- Anthony Blackaby
- Chair - Keith Williams
- Secretary- Pauline Neal

Executive Constitutional Roles

Nomination received for post of Chair - Jacqui Shaw and this was supported by the Chamber members.

6. Meeting close

The AGM Meeting was brought to a close with the presentation of a Framed Photo of The Golden Hind at Sunset taken by Chris Slack, this was presented to KW by JS who thanked the outgoing Chair KW for all his hard work, commitment and endeavours on behalf of Brixham and Chamber.

Next Chamber executive meeting: Tues 8th March, Brixham Yacht Club 1800hs

Next General Meeting: Tues 22nd March 1900hrs-2100hrs, Berry Head Hotel