

## End of year report March 2022

### Chairman's report

Our AGM last year was held, online, in what already seems like a very different world. We were in full lockdown and could not predict what the next few months, let alone year, would bring. I do remember that even in those unsettling times there was still optimism about the future and I am glad to say that a lot of that optimism was rewarded. In the last year we have all had to face different challenges while we learn to live with Covid. We have had to cope with everchanging guidance, staff absences, and isolating while still keeping our businesses going. In many ways this transition period has been the hardest to manage as we all try to keep the right side of the guidance, which has sometimes seemed to contradict itself. However, my experience is that the businesses of Brixham have coped well and some have even flourished in these difficult times.

My report this year will obviously feature covid very heavily as it did last year but firstly, I would once again like to thank each member of the executive for their hard work and support for the year. It is because of their hard work that the Chamber has once again been able to achieve as much, as it has. Even though we have a very effective team there is always room for a few more to share the load, even if it is just to have another opinion at meetings. If anyone is thinking about joining then please let us know. You will be very welcome. Come along and I am sure you will find it a worthwhile experience. I would also like to thank Mike Franchi for his work on our website this year. Not only did he do a great job of keeping it up to date he also completely redesigned the site this year.

This year has been my third full year as chair and it has been another challenging year. Now that we are taking stock of the last year, it is pleasing to see that we have still managed to achieve a lot this year despite another uncertain year. Brixham Chamber is still growing and it is currently the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest Chamber in Devon behind Plymouth and Exeter. For a town of our size this is a massive achievement. We are a very active Chamber and are always looking at ways in which we can benefit the businesses of Brixham. I believe that we do this well considering our finite resources however as I have said before we are always looking to see how we can improve and do things better which is why I love being part of Brixham Chamber and am honoured to be its current Chairman.

## **Summary of the year**

We started last year in a very uncertain place. We were in another lockdown and the covid vaccine programme was still just getting started. However, as I said at the beginning of this report, there was a cautious optimism among businesses that 2021 would be better than 2020. Although we would have all liked the restrictions lifted in time for Easter when the retail and leisure industry was finally allowed to open It benefited from one of the busiest summers Brixham has seen in recent years. The season also lasted well into Autumn. We had many first-time visitors to Brixham last year and I hope they will return for years to come.

The lifting of the restrictions also benefited the Chamber as we were once again able to run the craft market throughout the season. This has meant that as we look forward to the coming year, we do still have funds to invest.

One positive of Covid-19 is that it has brought a lot of organisations together across Brixham and Torbay. I am glad to say that this spirit of collaborating continued in 2021 and I hope that this new emphasis on communicating and collaboration will continue into the future.

We continued to have monthly meetings with the TDA and council to share information and ideas. These meetings allowed us to give direct feedback to the council and TDA on the specific problems that our members were facing. These meetings were very useful and are more than just a simple information exchange. The TDA and council are able to shape policy based on the direct feedback that we give and we can also raise concerns when we feel things are not working as they should be. It is important that these continue into the future as they provide an invaluable forum in which to discuss various issues, not only with the council and TDA but also with the other organisations included.

We have also had continued our meetings with Brixham Town Council to discuss the needs of our members and how Brixham Town Council could support them. Once again, these meetings were very useful and we know that Brixham Town Council are keen to make Brixham a nice place to visit so that we can attract people back in future years.

## **Tourism and marketing**

As we said at last years AGM we did not print any new guides for 2021 because we still had the guides from 2020 that were not distributed. These were not year specific and so they could still be used. They once again proved popular and were all used up in the year. I am pleased to say that we have been able to, once again, produce a new guide for 2022 which has now been launched.

Because the normal events did not happen in Brixham last year, for obvious reasons, we replaced the event boards with "Welcome to Brixham" boards. These included various pictures of places to visit in Brixham and were very well received. We even had visitors and residents asking us if we had posters of them.

We were also able to obtain funding from the TDA to update the various map boards around Brixham. We still have three spare if anyone would like one.

We also ran a Christmas and winter paid Facebook campaign which achieved the best results we have ever had. We will look to continue various paid campaigns in the upcoming year.

As well as our own Facebook and twitter accounts we also run the “Love Brixham” social media pages. These have also been well received and are making steady gains in followers. The Love Brixham twitter account currently has 1,370 followers and the Facebook page has just under 7,000 likes.

Many thanks to Liz Pippett for all the work she has undertaken in this area.

### **Markets**

Once restrictions allowed, we were able to run the Arts and Craft market in the same way as we had done in 2020. It was decided to once again run the market in a smaller area but for more days in order to allow some businesses on the harbour use of the space for outside seating. I believe the result was successful. We are currently in talks with the new harbour master regarding the use of the Old Fish market this year and will update you as soon as we have any news.

For the Sunday Market it was still felt that there was no safe way of placing stalls into Fore street without impacting on the ability of people to social distance in the main street. We were also keen for hospitality businesses to be given as much outside seating as possible and so unfortunately the Sunday Market could not run. Given the end of restrictions we are now looking at whether it is feasible to restart the Sunday Market this year.

We feel that the markets achieve several of our aims. Firstly, they act as a draw to Brixham increasing the number of people in the town. They also act as a platform for small start-up business to try out their products. We have had several market traders over the years move from the market into their own shops. Finally, it acts as a revenue stream for us and allows us to fund some of our initiatives that we simply would not have the funds to do otherwise.

I would like to say a big thank you to Theresa Mann who took over from Pru last year for all her hard work this year. Without her work the markets would simply not happen.

### **General Meetings**

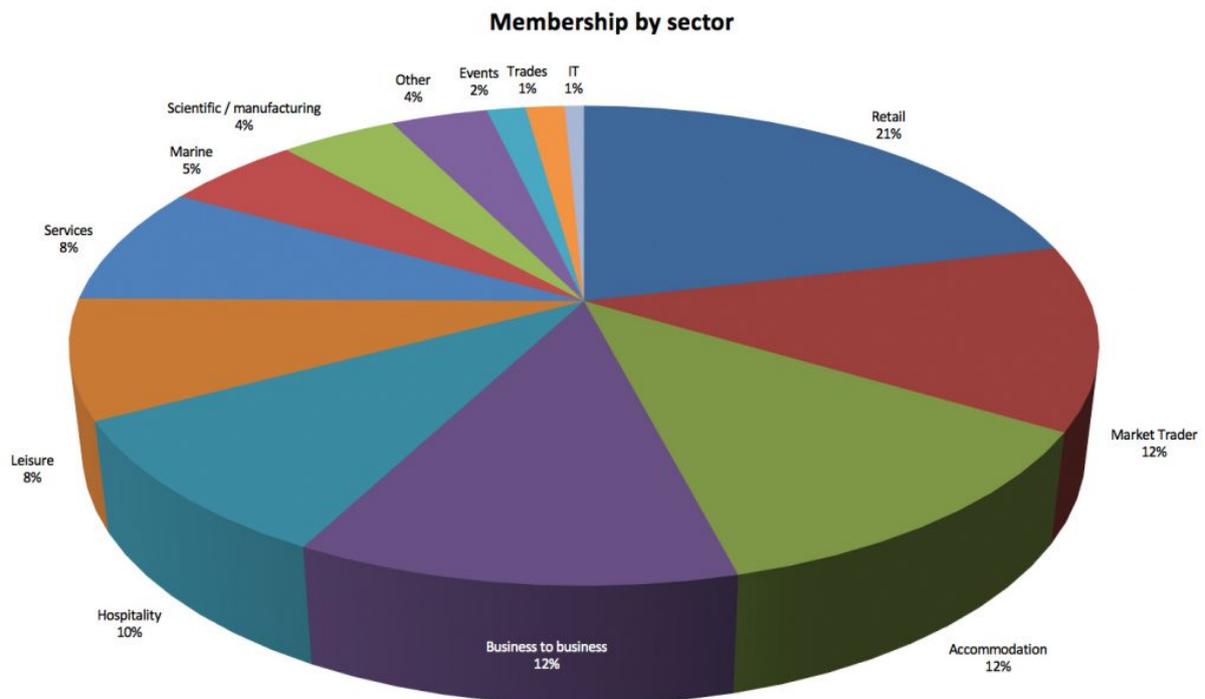
We had intended to get back to face to face meetings last year but every time we started to arrange one the guidance seemed to change and so we kept delaying their return. We have tried to keep you up to date through social media and our newsletter but this is no substitution to meeting face to face. I am glad we have been able to have our AGM in person and I can't believe it has been two years since we were last all together.

We are now planning to return to regular face to face meetings and we will decide the form and frequency of these at our next executive meeting.

## Membership

As you may remember Denis Burke joined the committee as membership secretary before the last AGM and he has done a great job for us since taking on the role.

At the last count we had 125 members which is fantastic given the size of our town. Our members are split as follows:



## Other activities

During the Covid period It is obvious that much more is achieved when we work together and we needed to make sure that this did not fizzle out. To stop this happening the chairs of the three chambers of Torbay now also sit on the committee of the business forum. The forum committee meets once a month and it gives us all a chance to put forward concerns that are relevant to our members. More often than not these concerns and problems are replicated across the bay. We can then go to the TDA or council with once voice and will have a bigger chance to influence the discissions made.

## Conclusion.

This last year has been another challenging year however, the chamber has still managed to take a very active role in helping our members and communicating with local government.

I have been proud to represent Brixham Chamber in the many meetings that I have attended this year and in many of these Brixham has once again been help up as an example to follow. One thing

Covid has proved is that community spirit is still very much alive in Brixham and I hope the connections that we have made will continue as we all learn to live with covid.

Finally, I would like to thank all of our members as it is because of the number of members that we have a voice and are able to achieve what we do.

Matthew Crabtree - Chair

## **Treasurer's report**

I am pleased to report that the Chamber's finances have strongly recovered during 2021 and are now well placed to support the Chamber's ambitions moving on into 2022. The Chamber ended 2021 with a surplus of £8,517 compared to a £4,167 deficit in 2020. The main reason for the surplus was a recovery in our market income, deferred membership subscriptions and reduction in tourism related expenses. A significant amount of new tourism promotion material had been purchased in early in 2020 before the Pandemic and we were able to spread the use of this material out over two years.

The chamber ended the year with total funds of £20,443 compared to £11,926 at the end of 2020. As mentioned in previous years, with the way our regular expenses fall in the Spring, the end of December is where our funds are at their peak. Already in 2022, we have made large expenditure in relation to Tourism Promotion and we will continue to look for ways we can put these funds to good use.

The Market has taken a new format over the last two years. It is pleasing to see our market traders continue to develop their businesses and to have the related fund which we can put to good use promoting our town. Theresa our Market Manager deserves praise for overseeing the Markets during this tumultuous time and for adapting to make the new format work despite the challenges of the past year.

Looking forward to 2022, the main challenge that faces business is the dramatic increase in inflation. The outcome of this on our town is unclear in relation to tourism; higher fuel costs make a trip here more expensive, but on the other side of the coin will make foreign travel costly. Higher food prices and energy bills will put a squeeze on business profits, particularly the hospitality sector. Our priority as a chamber must be supporting our member businesses where we can and making sure we continue to attract the consumers to our town, boosting our member's pricing power.

To summarise, the Chamber starts 2022 in a strong financial position. We will utilise our resources to promote our town and support our members.

*Aaron Dowling, Treasurer*

**Brixham Chamber of Commerce**  
**Income and Expenditure Statement for the year to 31/12/2021**

	2021		2020	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Income</b>				
Members Subscriptions	3,990.00		3,045.00	
Markets	13,032.66		3,020.00	
Social Events	<u>105.00</u>		<u>0.00</u>	
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>17,127.66</b>		<b>6,065.00</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Market Expenses	3,147.07		666.29	
Tourism Promotion	840.60		5,734.87	
Website	2,722.56		2,495.68	
Donations	1,020.00		350.00	
Insurance	343.71		353.06	
Meetings	0.00		20.00	
Paypal Fees	82.74		66.90	
Social Events	160.00		0.00	
Gifts	0.00		75.00	
Chamber Promotion	294.00		448.75	
Postage & Stationery	0.00		21.24	
Other Expense	<u>0.00</u>		<u>0.00</u>	
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>8,610.68</b>		<b>10,231.79</b>
<b>Total Surplus/(Deficit)</b>		<u><b>8,516.98</b></u>		<u><b>(4,166.79)</b></u>

**Brixham Chamber of Commerce**  
**Movement of Funds for The Year Ended 31/12/2021**

**Opening Balances**

Lloyds Bank Account	5,640.71	
Barclays Bank Account	3,562.98	
Paypal	2,722.08	
Petty Cash	-	
Total Funds At 01/01/2021	<hr/>	11,925.78

**Add:**

Surplus	8,516.98	
	<hr/>	8,516.98

Total Funds At 31/12/2021	<hr/>	<b>20,442.76</b> <hr/> <hr/>
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**Closing Balances**

Lloyds Bank Account	13,131.18	
Barclays Bank Account	3,562.98	
Paypal	3,748.60	
Petty Cash	-	
Total Funds At 31/12/2021	<hr/>	<b>20,442.76</b> <hr/> <hr/>

### **Current committee**

There were no two people going for the same role this year and so there were no elections.

The serving committee are therefore:

Matthew Crabtree	(Chairman)
Alex Foley	(Vice Chair)
Aaron Dowling	(Treasurer)
Pru Preston	(Secretary)
Dennis Burke	(Membership Secretary)
Liz Pippett	
Sally Pavely	
Sue Laurie	
Chris Slack	