

## Minutes of Committee Meeting

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March at 5.45pm in Quay House, Kingsbridge

Vice Chairman: James Spencer  
 Treasurer: Peter Richardson  
 Secretary: Nicola Coulson



<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome &amp; Apologies</b>	
	<p>PRESENT: James Spencer, Peter Richardson, Nicola Coulson, Sarah Burnett, Alison Theaker, Anne Balkwill, Scot Baston, <i>Mark Long?</i>, Steve Mammatt, Sonia Powell</p> <p>APOLOGIES: Nikki Turton, Julia Wingate, Rufus Gilbert</p> <p>James extended a welcome to our newest committee member, Sonia Powell from The Devon Office in Modbury.</p>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes of Committee Meeting on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2022</b>	
	Pending	
<b>3</b>	<b>Treasurer's Report - Peter Richardson</b>	
	<p>As at 02/02/22, payments to the Ignite grant scheme have now reached £8,500, and DTI phase 2 £4,095, totalling £12,595 already distributed. This leaves £12,405 to be distributed in the next 4 weeks.</p> <p>The increase of £500 in Modbury Funds reflects the sponsorship for the Roosters project.</p> <p>The budget for 2022 et seq needs to be finalised.</p>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Strategic Priority #2: Discussion: Creating a Year-Round Economy - James Spencer</b>	
	<p>Round the table, high level, open discussion, on what a local year-round economy could look like for our area and how Chamber goals might assist in the short, medium, or long term.</p> <p>Alison focussed on woman entrepreneurs, some running national businesses from home. Local products (eg Cove Vodka) are moving from face-to-face selling to online, so to create a viable business all year round, she cited <b>good internet connection as vital</b>.</p> <p>Scot pointed out that the internet allows local businesses that aren't cyclical/seasonal to be viable all year round. He posed the question - <b>how do we connect local skillset with the larger workforce?</b></p> <p>Sarah pointed out that <b>people are working more from their second homes</b>. They want to use local facilities, but seasonality means things are closed between October - April. She expressed frustration with retailers and services closing outside of peak tourist trade, comparing it (unfavourably) to the Cotswolds' vibrant, all year-round economy.</p> <p>Sonia suggested that <b>Covid might have skewed the traditional holiday season</b>. People are using their properties more throughout the year, so the region is transitioning from a 6-week bucket and spade destination to an all-year-round place to do business. Scot concurred that refurbishments often happen off-peak, and Steve pointed out that his business runs all year round, as does Selworthy Vets (although business peaked in August).</p>	

Anne was keen to point out **the value to community of seasonal businesses**, pointing out that many can't afford to employ people outside of season without footfall, and rates and rents are going up.

The question was posed; do holiday lettings and tourism distorts our model?

James asked the committee to consider whether we accept seasonal fluctuations, with excessive demand in the summer then difficulties staffing out of season, OR is the issue that we're not providing enough out of season to attract visitors? How do we create an environment that people will want to spend time in, regardless of season?

Sarah was keen to use the Cotswolds as a comparison, asking if we can replicate their year-round tourism? There you find an established events programme with internationally renowned festivals running outside of the traditional tourist season.

Steve countered that Salcombe CrabFest and The Kingsbridge Food and Music Festival are specifically run out of season in May, not in peak season.

Sarah made the point that the café at Quayside Leisure Centre is now closed, despite being a hub for visitors, locals, and tourists. She suggested that if we increase the offering, we might encourage more off-peak visitors.

James asked committee to consider whether we should be encouraging other - non-tourism - sectors and a discussion ensued about whether we should be capitalising on our thriving local arts and cultural scene. Alison was keen to see the local Kings Cinema used more as a focal point for events - perhaps a festival - out of season.

Anne pointed out that our professional services - lawyers, insurance brokers etc - have a wide reach, not limited to the local community.

Alex pointed out that the cost of living prohibits people moving here. Big corporations and professional services are stopping people working from home, so people will be going back into the office. Businesses have been audited and there are supervision issues with home-based workers, plus a drop in productivity. Alex also pointed out that Bartons can't attract new people on lower wages.

Alison pointed out that her son's new job is entirely remote, and Sonia expects we will see more **hybrid working** - flexible working where employees split their time between the workplace and remote working.

Sarah pointed out that maybe there's an acceptance that we don't have a year-round economy, but perhaps we can extend the holiday season.

Sonia pointed out that we mustn't underestimate the charm of the South Hams - workers for national companies have migrated here and they're happy to work hybrid. We've had an influx of new residents during Covid so how do we keep them?

Sarah touched on affordability. Local tradesmen have moved to Plymouth and Ivybridge as house prices rise.

Alex pointed out that, long term, there's going to be a hole. As residents retire, who is going to replace them? Are we going to struggle as an economy if people don't move here?

Alison questioned why we were having this conversation and was told that it's in line with Visit Devon's all year-round economy.

James asked Steve's opinion on META, the evolution of the internet which will likely see the rise of online 3-D or virtually integrated environments that provide users access to virtual reality and augmented reality experiences. Steve doesn't think it will come here as people aren't necessarily getting what they'd thought online.

Scot asked why the metaverse would come here when people come here to enjoy the beauty of the South Hams? This prompted a discussion about what prompted

	<p>people to live here. Whilst Steve felt it was a better environment for kids, Sarah pointed out that many of today's young people are fearful/lazy and have less inclination to leave.</p> <p>James mooted the idea that we live in a more year-round economy that we did 10 years ago, but asked if there is a way to take a less year-round economy to a more year-round economy?</p> <p>Steve felt Fibre broadband would play a part.</p> <p>Alison referred to Hay on Wye, which has made a niche for itself with the book festival, although Scot asked committee to consider that events have many ancillary costs - policing etc - and rely heavily on volunteers.</p> <p>Alison asked if we should be capitalising on what we're good at, using Slapton and eco-tourism as an example.</p> <p>She asked if we could bare influence to ensure events are spread outside of peak tourist season, asking if the local events calendar should be held by the town council?</p> <p>To summarise, there was some doubt whether a year-round economy is worth pursuing, although it was accepted that perhaps there are a few things to focus on.</p> <p>Sarah asked if hotel members could come up with an idea for a signature South Hams 'event', although she noted a level of complacency about Salcombe in peak times.</p>	
	<p><b>ACTION:</b> James to list and NC to distribute for committee to prioritise</p> <p>Results will be collated and the most popular x3 ideas will be incorporated in to Chamber action plan for 2022.</p>	
5	<p><b>Funding Report #1 - Grant#1 IGNITE - Nicola/James</b></p> <p><b>Funding Report #2 - Grant#2 DRESS TO IMPRESS 2 - Nicola/Peter</b></p>	
	<p>James updated committee on the grants schemes. When the deadline for proof of purchase submissions has passed, should we pay them chronologically?</p> <p>Do we pay any on an extended deadline and ask SHDC for extra funds?</p> <p>Are we going to cut off funding?</p> <p>Sarah was keen to raise the idea of finding a suitable forum to showcase the IGNITE applicants.</p> <p>There is an appetite to see additional support for IGNITE award winners, perhaps by subsidising Business Club tickets?</p> <p>Scot suggested:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Committee goes back to SHDC and asks for a specific amount of money - eg £10k</li> <li>2) If unsuccessful, we would have to agree a reserve amount - Peter could possibly allocate £5k?</li> </ol> <p>Peter pointed out that DTI was set up to help people recover from the impact of Covid. However, if we carry on with a grants scheme, it's valuable to support new businesses, so any funds should be to help the start-ups. DTI should therefore come to an end.</p>	
6	<p><b>Town Council reports - Salcombe, Kingsbridge and Modbury</b></p>	
	<p><b>Kingsbridge</b></p>	

	<p>Furniture in transit for new benches and seating.</p> <p>No response from Kingsbridge police on wave of antisocial activity, window smashing etc. Council is trying to get some commitment or acknowledgement about what's going on. Police are encouraging people to report crimes - if crime figures are low, they can't/won't act.</p> <p>Work on K5, the new housing development on West Alvington Hill, starts this week. Anne pointed out that there are some affordable housing issues around K5 and noted that if the developer ditches the employment centre site, space will need to be found elsewhere.</p>	
	<b>District &amp; County Councils</b>	
	Nothing to report	
<b>7</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
	<p>Peter mentioned <b>Wind Project</b> and thinks we should support it this year, along with other local events (Kingsbridge in Bloom, Kingsbridge Celebrates Christmas). Or do we primarily support business and only reserve donations for a few key events? If we don't get any money from SHDC, we might as well push out remaining funds to events. Any decision needs to be finalised before next meeting in May</p> <p>Alison asked for list of future events.</p> <p>Next step is to find out whether council will give us any extra funds</p> <p>May meeting to be focused on how we spend Chamber money going forward.</p> <p>A discussion about future Business Clubs resulted in James pushing for the format of these meetings to evolve. It was suggested that a Working Group is formed comprising Alison, Kim, and Nicola. Alison was keen to see metrics and marketing KPIs.</p> <p>Sonia pointed out that, as a new member, she didn't feel that the communications were good enough and she wasn't sure what she would be getting for her money once her complimentary membership came to an end.</p> <p><b>AGM</b></p> <p>The date for this year's AGM is Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> June, to be held at Bartons.</p>	
	<b>Date of next meeting:</b> Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2022	