

Minutes of Committee Meeting

Wednesday 5th March 2025 at 5.45pm in Quay House, Kingsbridge



1. Welcome & Apologies

Present:	James Spencer Scot Baston Nicola Coulson Cllr Steve Mammatt Cllr Jasper Evans Cllr Tony Price Cllr Sam Dennis Kim Willis Alex Robertson	Chair Pebbles Group Vice-Chair, Kingsbridge Cornerstone Photography Secretary Associate Committee Member, Kingsbr. Town Council Associate Committee Member, Salc. Town Council Associate Committee Member, Modbury Parish Council Associate Committee Member, SHDC Committee Member, Marketing Manager Committee Member, IT Workhouse
Apologies:	John Gardner Jane Tyler Cllr Julia Wingate Cllr Mark Goodey Cllr Sarah Wyatt Sarah Burnett Cllr Mark Long Dawn Blundell	Treasurer Committee Member, The Winking Prawn Group Associate Committee Member, Kingsbr. Town Council, Mayor Associate Committee Member, Salc. Town Council, Mayor Associate Committee Member, Modbury Parish Council Associate Committee Member, KCC Salcombe Info Centre Associate Committee Member, SHDC (esp. Planning) & Salcombe Harbour Committee Associate Committee Member, Kingsbridge Info Centre
Absent:	Cllr Rufus Gilbert	Associate Committee Member, Devon County Council
Guests:	Bradley Gerrard	Freelance journalist copywriter

2. Minutes & Actions

Minutes from February 2025 approved (with some actions pending).

Actions outstanding previously and ongoing

1. Website:		SBa
- Phase 1 completion by mid-Jan 2025, with testing & adjustments before launch.		
- SBa to test and confirm Stripe's direct debit capabilities.		
- SBa to confirm costs for hosting and maintenance, and integration with MailChimp etc.		
- Develop a detailed communication strategy for transitioning members.		KW
- KW to draft marketing plan for approval.		KW
- Ensure content is ready by 20th January.		JS/BG
- Provide training resources for committee members and administrators.		SBa
- Provide current member list for directory integration.		NC
- Decide on a renewal strategy (individual vs. fixed date).		All
- Test automation of renewal reminders before full rollout.		SBa
2. Member Survey: Draft to gather feedback and agree content. To send out via Survey Monkey.		KW/NC
<i>Update: Feedback form drafted and ready to be issued, pending approval.</i>		
3. Build on cross-Chamber collaborations - Ongoing		
4. Monitor Devon County Council's decision regarding Local Authority restructuring & Devolution and ensure businesses are kept informed and engaged as the situation evolves.		SD
5. Membership: Administrative review of members that have left over the last 3 years		JS
6. South Hams Chamber rebrand: Committee to provide feedback on proposed future plans (see below)		All
7. JS to invite Bradley Gerrard to join Committee.		JS

3. Council reports

Salcombe Town Council (STC) - JE

Local Government Reorganisation & Devolution

- Potential changes could shift responsibilities to Salcombe, such as managing public toilets and other assets.
- There is concern that the new unitary authority may keep profitable assets while offloading costs to local councils.

Park & Ride Issues

- Ongoing challenges in balancing residents' concerns (wanting fewer buses in streets) with the needs of businesses and visitors (regular seasonal bus service).
- A committee with business representatives (e.g. Salcombe Gin, Crab Shed) has been formed to find solutions.
- A proposed turning circle in Creeks Car Park faces concerns from the harbour.

Police & Crime Commissioner Meeting

- Discussion with Alison Hernandez focused on anti-social behaviour during peak season.
- Challenge: Salcombe's relatively low crime statistics make it hard to justify increased policing resources.
- Efforts continue to push for extra police presence in the summer.

Town Budget & Staffing

- 5% increase in the precept (local tax) to support town services.
- New Town Clerk: Helen Shipley (formerly Nathanson) brings extensive experience (former Town Clerk, Sarah, has joined her family's marine business in Salcombe).

Business & Development Updates

- New Rockfish & Salcombe Brewery venture at Island Street & Gould Road.
- Discussions ongoing to ensure their licensing arrangements align with community needs.

Town Aesthetic and Tourism Improvements

- Welcome sculpture: Plans underway for a landmark sculpture by local sculptor, Jim Martin, at the town entrance. Possibly part-funded by long-held Chamber funds?
- VE Celebrations (5th - 8th May) Community led event at Cliff House Gardens, with music, picnic and a flotilla on the water.

Historical interpretation boards

- Three new boards funded by grants (not council funds) will highlight Salcombe's marine history, shipbuilding, and fishing trade.

Walking Tours and Town Improvements

- New historical walking tours led by Tony Price and Stephen Holt (who runs water-based tours)
- **Salcombe Green Team**, inspired by Kingsbridge in Bloom, are working to enhance Salcombe's appearance.

JS suggested that many years ago, the Chamber Committee set aside £500 for a potential **Salcombe in Bloom** initiative, primarily for an entrance feature on the main road into Salcombe. However, the project never materialised. Now the Salcombe Green Team is now working on town enhancements, including the "Welcome Stone" at the town's entrance.

Action #8: JG to review the status of allocated funds and explore how the Chamber can contribute to the Welcome Stone project.

Kingsbridge Town Council (KTC) - SM

Car Parking Charges

- Kingsbridge successfully negotiated lower parking charges in certain car parks (e.g., Lower Union Road & Cattle Market) to spread parking more evenly across town.
- Goal: Reduce all-day parking in prime spots that were being blocked by short-term renewals.
- While Kingsbridge had some say in these changes, the broader pricing decisions were set at the district level.

Anti-Social Behaviour & CCTV

- Concerns about anti-social behaviour in the parks, especially near the café.
- The town is working with the SHDC to resolve issues before confirming a new café owner.
- CCTV installed on Fore Street to deter crime (e.g., shop windows being smashed).
- Some residents objected to CCTV, but funding is in place, and cameras will be realigned to cover more areas.

Events & Festivals

Kingsbridge Food & Music Festival (30th May - 1st June)

- Scheduled for the last weekend of May.
- Vendor spots are full, and bands are booked.

Kingsbridge Fringe Week (6th - 13th September)

- Runs alongside Kingsbridge Show to encourage visitors to stay longer.
 - Opening event: Comedy Club at The Regal.
 - Daily events around town, including live performances at the Town Square bandstand.
 - Closing event: "Stars in Their Eyes" tribute show on Saturday night - a former Kingsbridge Fair favourite.
 - Around 20 confirmed events, with more being added.
 - The Mill Club & Age Concern Building are open for events.
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- The Old Warehouses will also host activities throughout the festival.

History | Community Initiatives

- A new local history group is forming to work on historical interpretation boards.
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Modbury Parish Council - BP | TP

History & Town Improvement

- A **local history group** has been formed to create **interpretation boards** showcasing Modbury's heritage.
- A town improvement charity that had been dormant has now been revitalised by Sarah Wyatt to fund community projects.

South West Water Infrastructure Project

- Modbury is set for a major drainage and sewage upgrade to reduce storm overflows into the River Erm.
- The project will separate surface runoff from the sewage system, preventing an estimated 80 sewage discharges per year into local waterways.

Timeline:

- Work will take approximately 18 months (previously rumoured to be 3 years).
- To minimise disruption, roads will be worked on 20 yards at a time.
- Unlike previous works, the main road will not be completely closed - instead, it will be managed with one-way traffic and lights.
- Side roads may be temporarily closed, but access will still be possible from either end.

Council & Business Engagement:

- South West Water has engaged in discussions with the Parish Council and committed to improving communication regarding traffic management and signage.

A funding request may be submitted to the Kingsbridge, Salcombe & Modbury Chamber of Commerce for historical signage to support the town's tourism efforts.

District & County: South Hams District Council | Devon County Council

South Hams District Council - SD

Local Government Reorganisation

- District councils in Devon have been working with Plymouth City Council, but there has been a lack of consensus, with some councils working independently.
- Devon County Council has presented their own plan, which is awaiting approval, but there is disappointment that there isn't more collaboration.

Executive Council Meeting

- South Hams District Council will present a forward-looking spending plan 6th March Executive Council meeting.
- They plan to "front load" and deliver promised projects before the end of the District Council's term.
- Tourism Tax: A mention of a proposal to lobby for the ability to implement a tourism tax has been added to the spending plan.

Parking Updates

- Residents can now register online for discounted parking rates by uploading their vehicle details (V5).
- The new parking tariffs will go into effect on 1st April.
- Some confusion around the new system for car park permits was raised, as it seemed to suggest that only one car could be registered under the new system. Feedback from users is being encouraged.

Parking Permits

- There are ongoing reviews for parking permits, with no clear deadlines or public communications yet on changes.
- **Business owners who rely on car parks are encouraged to submit feedback.**

Public Toilets Review

- A review of public toilets has been announced, with no set deadlines for feedback.
- Businesses reliant on public toilets should provide input, as there is potential for expansion or improvement.

Bantham Estate

- The new owner, Harry Aubury-Fletcher (Chilton Home Farms), aims to avoid property development on the estate and focuses on resolving previous conflicts.
- The estate owner is keen on maintaining the estate rather than pushing forward with planning applications, which has been a concern with previous owners.

Tourism Tax

- A line item has been added to the SHDC spending plan, stating the intention to lobby the government for the ability to implement a tourism tax, likely a small levy on hotel stays. This was subtly included in the 3-year spending plan, which will be presented at the SHDC Executive Council meeting. Cllr Julian Brazil, Leader of SHDC, is leading the proposal.
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- Concerns were raised about the administrative costs of collecting such taxes, and the potential negative impact on the local economy and businesses.
- A report on tourism and its benefits to the local economy will be presented at the next Executive Council meeting on 24th April.
- The **Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP)** is working on this report, though its exact structure and function are unclear.
- Questions about the distribution of funds and ensuring they benefit the local area were raised, especially considering previous concerns over second-home tax income not being reinvested locally.
- There is frustration over the lack of visible returns in the local community from taxes collected, like the increase in council tax for second homeowners.

4. Treasurer's Report

1. Financial Statements

Report dated 31st January 2025

Account Balances

Current Account balance	£13,182.60	
(Modbury funds)	(£4,766.98)	
(Kingsbridge Traders)	(£2,573.00)	
Current Account Net Total	£5,842.62	
Deposit Account	£6,819.01	
Total Balance	£12,661.63	(December balance = £11,581.12)

Monthly Income/Expenditure Statement - as previously circulated.

Donations

Date	Beneficiary	Amount
24 March	KCC Jobs Board	£200.00
29 March	KB Easter Egg Hunt	£204.00
12 May	KB Classic Rallies	£200.00
	<i>Agreed 2024 donations limit</i>	<i>£1,450.00</i>
	<i>Current expenditure</i>	<i>(£604.00)</i>
	<i>Remaining balance</i>	<i>£846.00</i>

5. Ongoing Projects

South Hams Chamber Rebrand

1. Membership & Recent Challenges

- There was prior discussion on membership and the financial losses over the past 1-3 years.
- The focus is now on how to build a sustainable and appealing Chamber that businesses want to be part of.

2. The Long-Term Structural Puzzle

- The challenge is balancing local business club identities (e.g., Kingsbridge, Salcombe, Modbury) with the need for a strong, unified South Hams Chamber.
- There is interest in a greater sense of local business community, but also a need for an overarching body to represent South Hams as a whole.
- This conversation needs to move forward soon to solidify a clear vision.

3. Defining South Hams Chamber's Role

- JS proposed a working assumption:
 - o South Hams exists as a geographic area, even if the district council structure changes.
 - o There will be no South Hams District Council, meaning local business advocacy will need a new home.
- SD added that "South Hams" geographically means "low-lying land south of Dartmoor," reinforcing the identity.
- AR suggested aligning the Chamber's values with its different roles:
 - o Advocacy should be regional (South Hams Chamber).
 - o Events and networking should stay local (Kingsbridge, Salcombe, etc.).
- JS agreed, noting that business club events are primarily attended by locals, reinforcing the need for localised engagement while maintaining broader representation.

4. Membership Structure & Website

- SBa raised concerns about funding and membership fees, noting disparities between different chambers.
- Discussion on how membership should work: If a business joins Kingsbridge, Salcombe, or Modbury Chambers, should they automatically be part of South Hams Chamber?

JS referenced a past model where local chambers had automatic affiliate membership with Plymouth Chamber.

- KW emphasised that the business directory is a strong selling point and should be maintained.

- SBa and AR suggested:
 - o Keeping localised landing pages for Kingsbridge, Salcombe, and Modbury on the South Hams Chamber website.
 - o Redirecting old domains to ensure continuity while keeping everything under one streamlined system.

5. Expanding Business Representation

- SD and KW highlighted the importance of including rural businesses and those outside major towns (e.g., Frogmore, Strete, Loddiswell, Hope Cove).
- JT noted that using “South Hams” in the brand makes it more inclusive for businesses in smaller villages.
- BG suggested a strategic committee that includes Dartmouth and Totnes as affiliate members rather than fully merging them.
- TP reinforced the need to keep things simple and define South Hams’ business identity clearly.

6. Chamber Collaboration & Next Steps

- SBa proposed an “alliance” model, where the South Hams Chamber serves as a coordinating advocacy group rather than a separate organisation requiring its own major funding.
- SD and JE urged the committee to act now, given the upcoming local government reorganisation.

7. Leadership Transition

- JS announced his decision to step down as Chair by September, citing increased business commitments.
- He expressed a strong desire to remain involved but in a reduced capacity.
- The Vice Chair and Treasurer have been informed, and succession planning will be needed.

The discussion showed strong consensus on moving forward with the South Hams Chamber brand while keeping local engagement. The next steps will focus on refining membership, structure, and leadership to ensure a successful transition.

Actions:

9. Clarify development and ongoing costs and assess whether additional admin support is needed SBa
10. Agree on a timeline and comms plan for the transition.
11. Create a Strategic Committee - Bring together representatives from other chambers (Dartmouth, Totnes) for collaborative lobbying.
12. Leadership Transition Plan - Begin identifying candidates for the next Chair.

Jobs Board

6. The month ahead

March Business Club - postponement

It was proposed - and agreed - that March’s Business Club event is postponed to 24th April due to the absence of two key organisers, KW and NC.

Key Objectives of the Event

- Stronger focus on networking: Members agree that networking is the most valuable aspect of the Business Club, so the venue must support this.
- Engagement with local businesses: The event aims to connect businesses, foster relationships, and create opportunities for collaboration.

Several venues were considered, focusing on capacity, accessibility, and suitability for networking:

- **Heron Valley** (on the edge of the Chamber’s reach): Offers a lovely outdoor space, making it a good choice for an April event, and hasn’t hosted an event for the Chamber before.
- **Gara Rock**: Management recently changed, and there is uncertainty about their willingness to host.
- **Shilstone** (near Modbury): A relatively new venue with great potential, but management did not express interest in hosting. NC reached out to them, explaining the Chamber’s role and benefits, but received a negative response.
- **White Hart Assembly Rooms** (Modbury): Previously unavailable, but now open for bookings. The Chamber has held events there in the past, making it a familiar option.
- **The Ring Feeder**: A venue similar to Heron Valley that could work well for networking.
- **Overbeck’s**: Offers a beautiful view, but limited space for a large gathering.

Attendance

- Expected turnout: 40-80 people.
- The venue must be able to comfortably accommodate this number while promoting interaction.

Guest Speakers

- It was suggested that local MP, Caroline Voaden, be invited. However, local elections are on 1st May, and the “purdah” period starts six weeks before (around mid-March), which limits political discussions and prevents public officials from making announcements or commitments at the event.

The Business Club event in April is expected to be a popular and well-attended networking opportunity, ensuring that the postponement leads to a more successful gathering.

Actions:

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| 13. Venue confirmation - Decision needed on the best location for the event. | NC |
| 14. Website update - March event will be removed, and the new date (April 24th) will be published. | SBa |
| 15. Member outreach - Communicating the new date and venue once confirmed. | KW |
| 16. Potential speaker or networking activities - To enhance engagement at the event. | Various |
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7. AOB

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1. Membership | Administrative Support - *ongoing*
 2. Tesco Planning application
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Date of next meeting: Wednesday 2nd April 2025
