



Minutes of Committee Meeting

Wednesday 2nd April 2025 at 5.45pm in Quay House, Kingsbridge

1. Welcome & Apologies

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

SB opened the meeting, standing in from JS.

2. Minutes & Actions

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

Actions outstanding previously and ongoing

1. Website: Progress report below	SBa
2. Member Survey: Draft to gather feedback and agree content. To send out via Survey Monkey. <i>Update: Feedback form drafted and ready to be issued, pending approval.</i>	KW/NC
3. Cross-Chamber collaborations - <i>Ongoing</i>	
4. Devolution: SD to continue monitoring. <i>Ongoing</i>	SD
5. Membership: Administrative review of members that have left over the last 3 years. <i>Ongoing.</i>	JSS
6. South Hams Chamber rebrand: Committee to provide feedback on proposed future plans (see below)	All
7. Bradley Gerrard invitation to join Committee: Brad not yet formally invited; JS was to follow up	JS
8. Salcombe Welcome Stone: No ring-fenced funding but JG will request further information for funding consideration.	JG

3. Council reports

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

South Hams District Council - ML | SD

Local Government Reorganisation (ML):

- **9 proposals** for Devon’s local government restructure have been submitted, including:
 - The “145” joint proposal from district and borough councils.
 - Proposals from **Devon County Council, Plymouth** (including a proposed land expansion), and **Exeter** (Greater Exeter unitary).
- The government is reviewing these, with more detailed plans expected by **November**.
- Due to complexity, changes may be **delayed 4-5 years**; Devon might not be prioritised.
- If unitary authorities are introduced, **elections** and a **1-year transition** would follow.
- **Mayoral authorities** (strategic planning bodies) might be introduced sooner than unitaries.

Planning, Housing & Council Tax Revenue:

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- Strategic planning reforms are ongoing and must align with any new authority structure.
 - **£600,000** from second homes council tax revenue has been raised:
 - £300,000 allocated to social housing (e.g., Holywell Meadow, St Anne's Chapel).
 - Additional £600,000 from Homes England supports this.
 - There's hope that new councillors will prioritise **more funding for housing** from second homes revenue.

Economic Development & Markets:

- South Hams District Council is backing the **growth of local markets**, supporting them with grants (e.g., for gazebos).
- There's intent to grow markets in towns like **Totnes, Dartmouth, Salcombe, Ivybridge**, led by local business/community demand.
- Some friction exists between fixed retailers and market traders over fairness in costs and competition.

Local Business & Events (SD):

- **May 1 elections** highlighted.
- Businesses on **Island Street (Salcombe)** are exploring a **privately-run parking scheme** to ease pressure from increased footfall (especially due to **Rockfish** opening).
- This scheme would be open to all nearby businesses and is **not council-led**.

South Hams Festival & Event Scheduling:

- The South Hams Festival is not happening this year but is **planned for next year**.
- Towns have been asked to share their major event dates to avoid clashes.
- There's a strong push to hold such festivals in the **shoulder season** (e.g., September), to spread visitor traffic more evenly.

Salcombe Town Council (STC) - MG

- MG paid tribute to **Cllr David Higgins**, who sadly passed away over the weekend following a stroke.
- He was a valued and visionary member of the council, known for his creative and drawing skills, which were often used in council work, and his passing is a significant loss to the community and council.

Devolution & Inter-Council Cooperation:

- As devolution progresses, more responsibilities are expected to fall on local councils.
- Salcombe Town Council is exploring closer collaboration with neighbouring councils to share services and resources, aiming for greater efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Park and Ride Issues:

- There are serious challenges with the existing **Park and Ride** route (the traditional 164 route).
- Some residents caused disruption last year, leading bus drivers to feel intimidated and unsafe, refusing to continue using the route.
- A temporary route is in place until May Bank Holiday, but after that, the service may cease unless a new, safe route is agreed.
- The bus company is prepared to run half-hourly services, but only if driver safety is assured.
- Discussions with the district council are ongoing to find a permanent solution.
- The current £3/day charge remains in place, although an increase may come later in the season.

Island Street Business Bus & Trader Parking:

- The proposed Island Street shuttle bus (mentioned above) is a privately-led initiative by businesses. Whilst the council has helped facilitate early discussions, it will not directly run this service.
- There idea of trader parking permits - allocating spaces for business staff parking - at the Park and Ride was discussed, to free up more central spaces for visitors and shoppers.

Easter Event - "Spot the Duck":

- A "Spot the Duck" trail replaced the Easter Egg Hunt this year, inspired by the success of "Spot the Elf" at Christmas.
- Held between 11-19 April, the trail involved families identifying named ducks in shop windows.
- On the 19th April, a small local fair will be held on the Over 60s' Terrace, with stalls selling items like flowers, gin and hampers).
- The model of themed window trails ("Spot the...") is considered a successful and scalable approach for future seasonal events, helping maintain town footfall.

Business Engagement via WhatsApp:

- WhatsApp is proving highly effective for coordinating traders, receiving more immediate engagement than emails.
 - The group has helped increase participation, even creating a sense of "peer pressure" to join in.
 - Traders also use the group to report issues like shoplifting or closures.
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Town Centre and Economy:

- Kingsbridge is performing relatively well, with fewer vacant shops than many other towns.
- The Town Council continues to support local business and events to maintain footfall and vitality.

Parking and Car Parks:

- The Town Council fought hard to keep parking rates low and has been successful in most cases.
 - Fore Street Car Park was previously used for long-stay parking by town workers, but this blocked access for shoppers.
 - Now reclassified as short stay only to prioritise customer parking.
 - Workers are being directed to alternative long-stay options like Lower Union Road and the Cattle Market, both of which have consistent availability (though usage varies by time of day).
 - The approach is designed to reduce commuter blockages and encourage shopper turnover in central areas, while still offering options for employees willing to walk a short distance.
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Modbury Parish Council

Apologies from Modbury

4. Treasurer's Report

1. Financial StatementsReport dated 28th February 2025

Account Balances

Current Account balance	£15,275.53	
(Modbury funds)	(£4,531.19)	
(Kingsbridge Traders)	(£2,573.00)	
Current Account Net Total	£8,171.34	
Deposit Account	£6,819.01	
Total Balance	£14,990.35	(January balance = £12,661.63)

Monthly Income/Expenditure Statement - as previously circulated.

Donations

<u>Date</u>	<u>Beneficiary</u>	<u>Amount</u>
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>

JG reported that the council's financial position is currently strong, which is expected for this time of year.

2. Bank Balance:

- The net total in the bank stands at just under £15,000.
- This figure excludes ring-fenced funds, such as the Modbury Fund and the Traders Fund.

3. Income and Spending:

- The healthy balance is largely because around 80% of membership subscriptions are received in January.
- Minimal spending so far this year has also contributed to the surplus.

4. Grant Reimbursement:

- The council received £1,900 from SHDC as a 50% rebate for the website rebuild project. This was processed promptly and has positively impacted the accounts.
- JG noted that he has served as Treasurer for approximately two years. He is still in the process of becoming the primary user of the council's bank account, having made his fifth attempt earlier in the week. The bank has assured him that this should be resolved shortly.

5. Stepping down:

- With regret, he announced his intention to step down from the role due to increasing work commitments. He proposed stepping down within 3 months but expressed willingness to be flexible to ensure a smooth transition.
- He acknowledged the unfortunate timing, given that JS is also stepping down, but assured the council that the accounts are in good order and were fully reconciled last year, with no outstanding issues.

6. Account Signatories:

- JG and SB now both serve as account signatories, ensuring greater resilience in case one signatory becomes unavailable. This replaces the previous setup, where access could have been limited if a single signatory became incapacitated.

7. Stripe Account:

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- Both JG and SB currently have access to the Stripe account, which handles payments for events and memberships. However, Peter Richardson remains the primary user, and changes to the account cannot be made until that role is transferred.

8. Traders Fund:

- The Traders Fund currently holds a balance of £2,573. This money was originally allocated as COVID-19 relief funding from the government via the District Council and has remained untouched. It was suggested that the council consider appropriate ways to use this fund in the future.
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5. Ongoing Projects

South Hams Chamber Rebrand | Website

Rebrand Overview and Strategic Direction

- Committee reviewed progress on the transition from Kingsbridge, Salcombe & Modbury Chamber of Commerce to South Hams Chamber.
- While the name change has been approved, there is **no shared understanding** of what this rebrand should *look like in practice*.
- Discussions focussed on two broad visions:
 - i. A **minimal rebrand**, maintaining the original structure and membership focus, but operating under a new name.
 - ii. A **more ambitious transformation**, expanding the Chamber's remit to become a regional voice, engaging in advocacy, and potentially integrating or coordinating with other local chambers (e.g. Dartmouth, Totnes).
- A **hybrid model** was also discussed: retaining the Kingsbridge/Salcombe/Modbury identity for local events and member services, while developing South Hams Chamber for advocacy and **strategic partnerships**.
- With JS and JG stepping down, concerns were raised over who will lead and manage a more ambitious, region-wide chamber.
- It was acknowledged that the Chamber must strengthen its current operations and internal capacity before considering structural expansion or formal collaboration with other chambers.

Website

- The new website has been developed (southhamschamber.co.uk) and is ready for launch.
- SBa explained that maintaining two separate branded sites would increase hosting and admin costs significantly and is not sustainable.
- A transitional approach was discussed, including the possibility of dual-branding during an interim period to maintain continuity while signalling change (e.g. "South Hams Chamber in association with Kingsbridge, Salcombe & Modbury Chamber").
- The existing website domain can be redirected to the new site, with a landing page explaining the rebrand to reduce confusion among members.
- The new website offers significantly improved functionality for events and membership, including several key features for members:
 - o Self-service job board
 - o Editable business directory listings
 - o Event listings
 - o Forum and training resources
- These are live but likely unfamiliar to existing members. SBa suggested a communications push, potentially including a video walkthrough.
- Online payment systems are being trialled. SBa confirmed BACS transfers are functioning but take 7-10 days to process.

Member Communication:

- SB and NC emphasised the need for clearer, more compelling membership package and being able to communicate the chamber's purpose effectively to members and prospective members.
- It was agreed that clear messaging and a marketing plan will be essential to communicate any name or brand change to existing members.
- Feedback suggested that any changes must be framed carefully to avoid alienating current members or confusing the local business community.

Branding and Identity Discussion:

- JT expressed frustration regarding the lack of a firm decision and urged the committee to take clear and timely action.
- MG and others highlighted the lack of clarity as a barrier to member recruitment, creating confusion externally.
- SBa noted that the delays around the website and rebranding stem from a deeper uncertainty about the Chamber's identity - particularly during a time of local political flux - and with JS stepping down.

Next Steps

To break the current impasse and move forward with a clear mandate, JG proposed a formal vote at the next meeting to reach a definitive outcome and move the process along.

Actions:

9. Vote Required: Website launch and branding to be finalised at the next meeting SBa
 10. Continue website development in preparation for launch
 11. Member Engagement: Prepare messaging and walkthroughs to inform members about new site functionality and benefits.
 12. Governance Check: Review the constitution to confirm the committee is quorate for making decisions. Feedback to be incorporated into a refined version of the plans.
 30. Final decision will be put to a vote among full chamber members.
 31. If approved, implementation will begin, including updates to the website, establishment of the online forum, and outreach to local chambers.
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Jobs Board

No update

6. The month ahead

Business Club | Thursday 26th April

- Planning a Business Club event at Stokeley Taphouse, Stokenham; awaiting costs.
- The aim is to test engagement in a more remote location.
- The venue will offer individual pizzas.

Format ideas:

- Prioritise networking time over long presentations.
 - Add a session on effective networking for confidence building.
 - Avoid formulaic formats and focus on useful takeaways.
 - Include short elevator pitches with a timer.
 - Explore interactive formats like speed networking or ticket swaps.
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7. AOB

1. Chamber Membership:

- Adam was welcomed as a new member of the Chamber.
- SBa proposed, JG seconded to confirm Adam's committee membership.

2. KCC Newsletter and Rebranding:

- KCC is rebranding their PTFA and mentioned a collaboration with the Chamber in their newsletter.
- There was uncertainty about this partnership; SD had some contact and clarified they intend to be more business-like and were planning to attend the March Business Club (which was cancelled).

3. Grant Funding Requests:

- Potential grant inquiries received from Kingsbridge in Bloom and Devon Young Fishers.
- JG suggested a simple process: ask applicants why they want the money and how it will benefit the Chamber. NC to follow up using this approach.

4. Easter Egg Hunt:

- SW asked about organising. NC to connect her with JT, who has relevant experience.

5. Kingsbridge Guide:

- DB shared a new Kingsbridge guide, available since mid-February at the Information Centre.
 - It includes business ads, places to eat, things to do, and is a more consolidated version of previous years' separate leaflets.
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1. Membership | Administrative Support - *ongoing*
 2. Tesco Planning application
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Date of next meeting: Wednesday 7th May 2025
