

End of year report February 2023

Chairman's report

Our AGM last year was held in March just as we were emerging from the last of the Covid restrictions. At that time we were unsure if this was truly an end to the Covid restrictions or whether we would have further restrictions announced in the future. This made it hard for all of us to plan too far in advance as the future was still very uncertain. I am glad to say that almost a year on and, although it hasn't been all plain sailing, it does feel like we are finally putting the covid restrictions behind us. Of course this year has brought with it a whole new set of challenges. As the world has emerged from covid we have had to cope with a whole new set of challenges. Costs of materials and energy are increasing at their fastest rate for decades, resulting in the current high inflation economy that we now find ourselves in. I still feel that there is optimism for the future. The business of Brixham have shown themselves to be agile in this fast-changing market and I am hopeful that more stable times are ahead. There has still been investment in Brixham, new businesses are opening in the town and Brixham continues to be a popular destination for tourists. It was also great to see the fish market set a record for the value of fish landed in Brixham last year. The current rate of inflation will no doubt fall to a more normal level and while energy prices are still high, they do not appear to be increasing anymore and are showing signs of falling again. Even if it is slower than we would all like.

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. 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. He is responsible for keeping our website up to date with all the great articles which I hope you find interesting.

This year has been my fourth full year as chair and each year has been very different to the last. 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 still has a very healthy membership standing at 125 members at the time of writing this. It is currently the 3rd 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.

It has also been brought to my attention that Brixham Chamber was founded in 1923 making this our centenary year. I would very much like to mark this in some way and any ideas are welcome.

Summary of the year

This year has been another busy one. One of the main roles of any chamber is to be a voice for its members and it was identified before covid that without working with the other organisations across Torbay our Lobbying power was very much reduced. Therefore we started working together with the other Chambers, Torbay Council, The business forum, and Brixham town Council in a more formal way. Throughout the covid restrictions these links were invaluable, and I am glad to say that as we enter the post Covid world there is still a willingness from organisations across the bay to work together. In order to formalise this the chairs of all three chambers now sit on the executive committee of the Torbay business forum. We meet once a month and discuss the problems our members are facing and how we can support each other with them. We also discuss any initiatives that would be helpful for our local business. On the committee there is representation from South Devon College, The Devon Chamber, the TDA, and other business leaders. This makes this a great forum to highlight problem areas and to put forward ideas. It would be great to hear about any problems or ideas that our members have so that we can air them at these meetings.

As well as the business forum I have also been attending regular meetings with the other chambers and Torbay council. At these meetings we can put forward problems and suggestions directly to Torbay council to try and change policy for the better. Again, it would be great to have any feedback from our members regarding any difficulties that they are facing or ideas of how things could be improved so we can put them forward at these meetings.

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 meeting 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. It was a particular triumph for the council to be able to attract the banking hub to the town and we thank Brixham town council in including us in the meeting with them.

Finally I have also been attending the Torbay climate partnership meetings. The aim of this partnership is to work towards a Carbon Neutral Torbay by 2030. I am hopeful that there will be support and help for business who want to become more environmentally friendly. Please keep a lookout for updates on this.

The summer of 2022 was another very busy one for Brixham although quieter than 2021. It was still great to see so many visitors enjoying what Brixham has to offer. The season also lasted well into Autumn and included many first-time visitors to Brixham. I hope they will return for years to come.

I am glad to say that 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.

We were also glad to invite speakers back to a live meeting held toward the end of this year. One of the presentations was from the Brixham Food bank. Following this meeting it was decided to set up a link on our page to allow people to donate directly to the Food bank. This project was the idea of

Mike Franchi who also set up the link for us. This cost the Chamber £350 and since mid-November it has raised £1,060 in donations which with Gift aid added comes to £1,325. This has been a real success and I hope the donations keep coming in. If you want to donate you can find the link on our page under the Community tab at the top of the page.

At the end of the year a lot of our time and effort was focused on objecting to the closure of Brixham road at windy corner. Alex Foley took on this project and he spent countless hours in meetings, writing emails and letters, and putting the case over to the developers. While ultimately the road was still closed the pressure that Brixham Chamber and other organisations put on the council and developers did result in real changes considering that at our first meeting we were told that all eventualities had been considered and that we were being presented with the best, (Least worst), plan. During the meetings we did manage to persuade the developers to move a section of the drainage out of the road and into a field. This brought forward the planned end date of the road closure from May the 12th to the end of March. It also meant that Hunters Tor could now be used as a route for emergency vehicles if Dartmouth Road was blocked.

We also managed to get the developers to perform some traffic analysis of the planned diversion route which to our dismay had not already been done. The result of this was that they changed their plans for the temporary traffic lights at the end of Goodrington Road to a more efficient layout. They also agreed to man the traffic lights throughout the road closure so that the sequence can be changed in real time to facilitate traffic flow.

One good thing to come out of the road closure was to see how the various organisations in Brixham can work together. I hope these links will continue.

Tourism and marketing

In 2022 our Brixham guide had a full facelift with a new design, branding and colours. We felt that because of these changes the guide stood out very well when racked. This resulted in the guide having its best year since we started the project in 2016. We printed 30,000 guides last year and all of them has been distributed by the first week in September. We also introduced new areas of distribution including Bath Spa, Bristol Temple Meads and all transport hubs in Somerset. A small amount also went into Cardiff central and proved very popular.

We also produced our map pads again which once again proved very popular. We initially ordered 10,000 maps and most of these has been distributed in the first month which was the start of the summer season.

We continued to send out regular messages through our social media channels being our own pages and those of Love Brixham. We launched a Christmas facebook marketing campaign which was more popular than ever this year with over 150,000 impressions. For this campaign we produced seven adverts over seven weeks each with a different audience and geographical reach which seemed to work well and worked better than fewer adverts for longer periods. We once again tried to promote any events happening in Brixham and there were lots of positive comments.

We maintained the “Welcome to Brixham” boards that you may have seen dotted around the town. These included various pictures of places to visit in Brixham and were very well received. As I said last year we have even had visitors and residents asking us if we had posters of them.

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

Markets

The arts and craft Market once again had a very successful year. 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 planning to do the same this year.

We are also keen to resurrect the Sunday market this year and will hopefully be able to announce something soon.

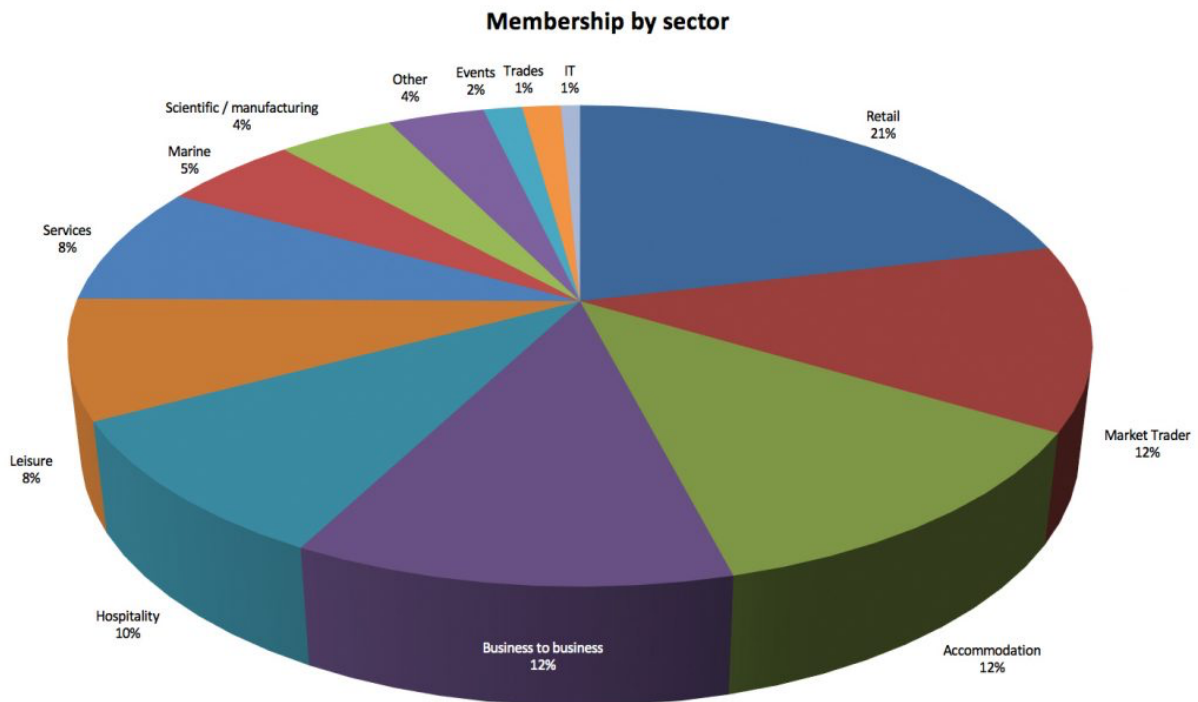
We feel that the markets achieve several of our aims. Firstly, they act as a draw to Brixham increasing the number of people in the town. They also act as a platform for small start-up business to try out their products. We have had several market traders over the years move from the market into their own shops. Finally, it acts 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 thankyou to Theresa Mann for all her hard work this year. Without her work the markets would simply not happen.

Membership

Denis Burke has done a great job as membership secretary again this year.

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



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 held up as an example to follow. Community spirit is still very much alive in Brixham and I hope the connections that we have made will continue as we face future challenges together.

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

The Chamber enters the centenary year in a strong financial position with a war chest ready to put to work. We ended 2022 with a surplus of £11,066 compared to a £8,517 surplus in 2021. The main reason for the difference was an increase market income as well as a reversal of a provision made for rental expenses in 2021 that did not materialise. The chamber ended the year with total funds of £31,508 compared to £20,443 at the end of 2021.

There is certainly enough dry powder in the keg and the focus will be ensuring that we use the funds we have built up to make a positive difference for Brixham in the Chamber's centenary year. We have been glad to significantly increase tourism promotion expenditure this year and make donations to community projects and events with more pencilled in for 2023.

Our Market continues to provide opportunities to fledgling businesses and our large and growing membership base has given the chamber a voice in the community. Both of those also contribute heavily to our finances and now that we do not have as large an outlay each spring, we will be looking to moderate the surpluses going forward by investing our funds in Brixham in a more routine fashion.

Zooming out and looking ahead to 2023, the main challenge that faces business is the increasing cost of borrowing and the cessation of stimulus programs that provided relief on inflation fueled overheads. We likely will not find out until the end of the year if the Bank of England has slammed too hard on the brakes with the hundred-proof monetary cocktail of interest rate rises and quantitative tightening, but in the meantime a stronger pound will provide some relief to energy and food prices, while on the other side of the coin increasing the attractiveness of overseas travel.

Thinking back to that first meeting of Brixham tradesmen in December 1923, the challenges will also have seemed daunting; a recovery from a recent pandemic and war in Europe. Though it may be tempting to feel a touch of déjà vu and declare pessimistically "Meet the new boss, Same as the old boss", Brixham has adapted, survived, and thrived in that time; to quote that same song "Change, it had to come, we knew it all along".

Aaron Dowling, Treasurer

Brixham Chamber of Commerce
Income and Expenditure Statement for the year to 31/12/2022

	2022		2021	
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Income				
Members Subscriptions	3,745.00		3,990.00	
Markets	15,388.83		13,032.66	
Social Events	<u>0.00</u>		<u>105.00</u>	
Total Income		19,133.83		17,127.66
Expenditure				
Market Expenses*	(2980.00)		3,147.07	
Tourism Promotion	5,655.75		840.60	
Website	2,941.92		2,722.56	
Donations	1,625.00		1,020.00	
Insurance	397.66		343.71	
Meetings	0.00		0.00	
Paypal Fees	70.26		82.74	
Social Events	0.00		160.00	
Gifts	0.00		0.00	
Chamber Promotion	294.00		294.00	
Postage & Stationery	63.14		0.00	
Other Expense	<u>0.00</u>		<u>0.00</u>	
Total Expenditure		8,067.73		8,610.68
Total Surplus/(Deficit)		<u><u>11,066.10</u></u>		<u><u>8,516.98</u></u>

Brixham Chamber of Commerce
Movement of Funds for The Year Ended 31/12/2022

Opening Balances

Lloyds Bank Account	13,131.18	
Barclays Bank Account	3,562.98	
Paypal	3,748.60	
Cash	-	
Total Funds At 01/01/2022	<hr/>	20,442.76

Add:

Surplus	11,066.10	
	<hr/>	11,066.10

Total Funds At 31/12/2022		<hr/> 31,508.86 <hr/>
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Closing Balances

Lloyds Bank Account	21,962.24	
Barclays Bank Account	3,562.98	
Paypal	3,783.34	
Cash	2,200.30	
Total Funds At 31/12/2022	<hr/>	<hr/> 31,508.86 <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)
Denis Burke	(Membership Secretary)
Liz Pippett	
Sally Pavely	
Sue Laurie	