

## End of year report February 2024

### Chairman's report

For us it has been a very special year being our centenary year. Brixham Chamber was founded In November 1923 when around 50 Brixham tradesmen met to agree actions aimed at improving the town of Brixham; a hundred years later that tradition continues. We decided to mark our centenary year by celebrating the individuals, organisations and businesses that work to make Brixham a fantastic place to live.

The centenary awards and gala ball were organised by Aaron Dowling, our treasurer. It was a huge amount of work and without the hours Aaron put in they would not have been the success that they were. A massive thankyou to Aaron. We would also like to thank our independent judging panel who gave up their time to review and select these worthy projects. I know it was a hard Job and we are very grateful. So a big thankyou to Elizabeth Devonport, Jim Parker, Jacqui Shaw, Elizabeth Pippett and Emily Pearson.

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 fifth full year as chair and each year has presented its own challenges. I feel very lucky to have been holding the reins during the chambers centenary year and it has been great to be able to support some of the fantastic groups that we have in our town. Brixham Chamber still has a very healthy membership standing at 116 members, at the time of writing this, which means we are still 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

This year has been another busy one. One of the main roles of any chamber is to be a voice for its members and I still believe that without working with the other organisations across Torbay our Lobbying power would be very much reduced. We have continued working together with the other Chambers, Torbay Council, The business forum, and Brixham town Council as much as we can. The need for greater collaboration was identified during the covid lockdowns and I am glad to say that 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. At these meetings we can share our views and highlight the difficulties that our members are having. We can then make representations to the council to try and inform policy or raise any issues with them. 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 also continue to work with Brixham Town Council to discuss the needs of our members and how Brixham Town Council could support them. Once again, these meeting have been 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.

The summer of 2023 was another busy one for Brixham. It was great to see so many visitors enjoying all that Brixham has to offer. The season also lasted will 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 continued to run our general meetings and were lucky to be able to welcome a range of interesting speakers who informed and entertained us all. Thankyou to all those who have contributed to these meetings. We are planning to carry on these meeting throughout this year.

At the time of last years AGM we still had the road closure because of the Inglewood development. We have continued to liaise with the developers on further planned roadworks and have been able to raise any concerns that business have. We will continue to do this for as long as the works are going on.

## **Tourism and marketing**

Tourism throughout the UK had a difficult season in 2023. The cost-of-living crisis and people still catching up on foreign travel re covid had effect on the English Riviera as a whole in terms of booking, bed nights and spend per head but from feed back to us is that Brixham did reasonably well under the circumstances.

### **Guides:**

Once again, all 30k of our Brixham Mini Guides have been distributed and were, once again, very well received. Distribution in places such as Bath, Bristol, and the M5 corridor continue to grow with more outlets appearing all the time.

Visitor information centres as far as Liverpool, Birmingham and Sheffield requested our guide so the word is very much being distributed nationwide.

Locally the guides are snapped up being very popular with holiday's parks especially in Dawlish Teignmouth. Both Plymouth and Exeter Areas are very buoyant via our supermarket stands and travel hubs.

And of cause local distribution on the English Riviera is very wide spread.

We are proceeding with a 2024 guide which is well in hand...

This year's guide will have a QR code on the front that will enable our visitors to connect straight to the Love Brixham web page where they can download a map, another copy of the guide check and follow our FB Feed and new events pages that highlight events from not just Brixham but around the area. People chose there holidays now not on an accommodation but on events and things to do and see so in spreading area event information we hope to encourage more people to Brixham through this method.

### **Social Media.**

Our social media accounts are growing at a steady rate and we are finding FB advertising is showing excellent results at highting items such as events and of cause our month long Christmas campaign which this year return the highest amount of views ever . I must thank Chris Slack Photography for his amazing images that we use, without this input our page would not be what it is.

### **Paper Maps.**

These have proved very popular with accommodation providers and visitors. We will therefore be distributing them again over the next few months. We have a stock ready to go for the 2024 season.

### **Coach Travel:**

The coach driver's information pack which we did use to subscribe to via a leaflet has ceased to operate. The owner of the company has retired, and no one wants to take on the business.

This type of advertising is very difficult to quantify as we may for example give out 50 leaflets to coach drives but there is no method of finding out who actually came to Brixham and did the leaflet influence their choice ...

We are trying to obtain the coaching data base so we can mail shot all the coach companies directly with information.

## Markets

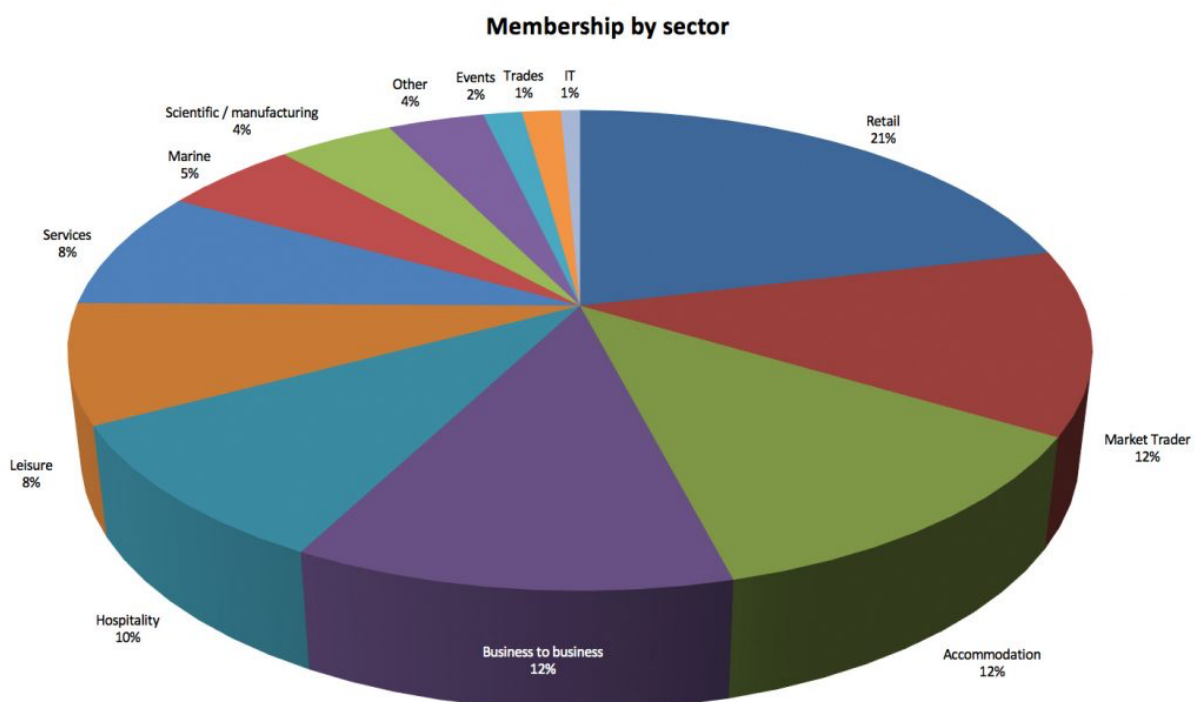
The arts and craft Market once again had a very successful year. We feel that the market achieve's several of our aims. Firstly, they act as a draw to Brixham increasing the number of people in the town. They also act as a platform for small start-up business to try out their products. We have had several 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

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

At the time of writing, we had 116 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 our members. 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**

If I am lucky enough to reach my Centenary Year (the year 2092 for those counting), I'll still be looking back proudly at what the Brixham Chamber of Commerce achieved in 2023, the Chamber's Centenary Year.

It started with an unlikely goal for a Treasurer, the promise of a significant accounts deficit the next time I stood in front of you all. I am pleased to report a deficit of £10,719 for the year ending 31/12/2023 and a belief that the money that has been awarded as part of our Centenary Awards scheme could not have gone to better use. Let me thank again our diligent independent judging panel: Liz Pippet, Jacqui Shaw, Jim Parker, Elizabeth Devonport, and Emily Pearson; they had the unenviable job of having to pick the winners out of a broad and consistently strong selection of applications.

One thing I have learnt from the process has been how lucky we are in Brixham to have so many people who care deeply about the town, dedicating time and effort to making it a better place; thank you to everyone who applied and for all you do for Brixham. For good measure, I include our £15,000 prize pool below:

**£1,765** to YES Brixham for the renovation of their building on Bolton Street.

**£1,765** to Shoalstone Pool for renovation of the Victorian shelters.

**£1,470** to Brixham Heritage Museum for school holiday activities.

**£2,000** to Brixham Theatre towards equipment to show live West End shows.

**£2,100** to Play Torbay to provide additional Forest School places for home schooled children.

**£1,215** to Brixham in Bloom towards their ongoing projects to keep the town looking fantastic.

**£1,315** to Brixham Library to host Saturday Brunches for the community.

**£1,895** to Brixham FC towards their project to construct changing facilities.

**£1,475** to the Brixham Town Band to help retain their venue to provide tuition for another year.

Thank you once again to all of those involved, having the opportunity to celebrate with you all at our Centenary Gala Ball in November was the highlight of my year.

So, one hundred years out of the way, let's get down to the brass tacks of this report. As mentioned previously, a deficit for 2023 of £10,719 with funds of remaining at the closing £20,790 – the Chamber remains in a strong financial position – there is enough dry powder in the keg for us to have ambitions for 2024.

The market continues to be the driver of our cash generation, we owe a lot to our superb market manager Theresa whose first-class management has continued to provide opportunities for fledgling businesses to trade. We have spent £5,857 on tourism promotion in 2023, that's all about promoting

Brixham as a destination, getting the visitors here to enjoy the town, and hopefully spend their money.

Our volunteer executive and low overheads has meant that inflation has not pounded the Chamber, though we take note of the effect on our members and the people of Brixham generally; monetary tightening and fiscal drag continue to take their toll on consumer sentiment. Economic strength in the United States and anaemic growth in Europe will increase currency risks and with it leave a resurgence of inflation lurking at the door.

In terms of where I see the Chamber going this year, now that the odometer is at zero again, 2024 seems a good year to get back to basics and do well what the Chamber was made to do: give a voice to Brixham traders, promote the town, and bring everyone along on the journey of meaningful progress. I am proud to be part of the Chamber Executive and I encourage all of you reading this to think what you can bring to the table and consider making a sacrifice of your time and effort by joining the Chamber Executive, I can guarantee you there a few better feelings in the world.

*Aaron Dowling, Treasurer*

**Brixham Chamber of Commerce**  
**Income and Expenditure Statement for the year to 31/12/2023**

	<b>2023</b>		<b>2022</b>	
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	£	£
<b>Income</b>				
Members Subscriptions	3,465.00		3,745.00	
Markets	15,938.56		15,388.83	
Social Events	<u>930.56</u>		<u>0.00</u>	
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>20,334.12</b>		<b>19,133.83</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Market Expenses	705.00		(2,980.00)	
Tourism Promotion	5856.83		5,655.75	
Website	3,986.24		2,941.92	
Donations	1,431.46		1,625.00	
Insurance	412.05		397.66	
Meetings	0.00		0.00	
Paypal Fees	68.22		70.26	
Social Events	1,712.45		0.00	
Centenary Awards*	16,528.57		0.00	
Chamber Promotion	352.50		294.00	
Postage & Stationery	0.00		63.14	
Other Expense	<u>0.00</u>		<u>0.00</u>	
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>31,053.32</b>		<b>8,067.73</b>
<b>Total Surplus/(Deficit)</b>		<u><u>(10,719.20)</u></u>		<u><u>11,066.10</u></u>



**Brixham Chamber of Commerce**  
**Movement of Funds for The Year Ended 31/12/2023**

**Opening Balances**

Lloyds Bank Account	21,962.24	
Barclays Bank Account	3,562.98	
Paypal	3,783.34	
Cash	2,200.30	
	<hr/>	
Total Funds At 01/01/2023		31,508.86

**Less:**

Deficit	(10,719.20)	
	<hr/>	
		(10,719.20)

Total Funds At 31/12/2023		<hr/> <b>20,789.66</b> <hr/>
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**Closing Balances**

Lloyds Bank Account	10,090.56	
Barclays Bank Account	3,562.98	
Paypal	3,500.12	
Cash	3,636.00	
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Total Funds At 31/12/2023		<hr/> <b>20,789.66</b> <hr/>

### **Current committee**

There were no two people going for the same role this year and so there were no elections. Pru Preston stepped down as secretary and we thank her for all she has done for us.

The serving committee are therefore:

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