

Economy Working Group MINUTES

15th September 2026 1pm – 2.30pm

Guildhall

Working Group: Cllr Roberts (Chair), Cllr Peters (Apols) , Cllr Auletta, Cllr Beavis, Cllr Chinnock (Apols), Cllr Price

Officer: Economic Support Officer (KOB) Town Clerk (CM) (Apols)

1. Notes from last meeting

2. Heritage festival and road closure

Discussion about the upcoming Heritage Festival and members participation in gathering feedback from visitors. Survey for visitors to take part in will be distributed via leaflet by all of the Heritage sites.

ACTION – KOB to design, print and distribute surveys to Heritage Sites for the festival.

ACTION – KOB to send out businesses survey following on from the Festival via email and on socials

ACTION – KOB to collate all data following on from the festival and distribute to Heritage partners and members.

3. Bridge feasibility update

Two tenders are now being assessed by Devon County Council for the Safety Audit, which is looking to take place in April. Everything has been paused for now due to LGR.

Safety of the bridge is part of the CEP, so some funding could come from SHDC.

ACTION – Further update from Luisa at next EWG

4. Tourism meeting update to all members

KOB informed members that the officer roles will be changing from the 21st September, when she will begin taking on the Visit Totnes work. This means that Visit Totnes will have less of a focus that previous capacity has allowed and will be following a maintenance model as opposed to a growth model.

Leftbridge Design agency have been instructed to take on the work of the Visit Totnes Map and Guide for 2027, being overseen by KOB.

5. Community Economic Plan (CEP) and Business Expo

Laura Eames (South Hams District Council (SHDC)) has now finished the draft of the CEP and has sent to NR, KOB and CM for review. Discussions were held around the CEP document and it

was agreed that an executive summary needs to be created in order to allow the general public an easy insight to the projects.

Business Expo is still pencilled in for the 12th November with a possible venue of the Seven Stars. NR to meet with [REDACTED] from Totnes Caring, and [REDACTED] to discuss the event. Totnes Business Forum are holding a soft launch for the forum on the 7th October which has been publicised via their emailing list.

Discussions surrounding the name of the Business Expo were held with members with some saying that the word Expo is not longer the right fit.

ACTION – KOB, NR and CM to hold separate meeting to discuss the executive summary to share with Laura and NR to write a covering letter for the CEP

ACTION – NR to feedback from meeting with Jasmine

ACTION – KOB to book Seven Stars 5.30 – 8.30pm on the 12th November.

ACTION – KO to contact Amazen ([REDACTED]) and Reconomy Centre ([REDACTED]) to invite them along once a date has been finalised.

6. River utilisation

NR and KOB reported to members a discussion held with Chris Shears and Matt Hill from SHDC regarding the utilisation of the River and potential for new business. SHDC own all of the land in the area so are looking at ways to increase visitors to that part of Totnes. Potential ideas in the meeting included coffee and ice cream trailers, shipping containers or mini festivals. Some members raised concerns that traders in town may not agree with these plans. It was also noted that members would like the Heritage of Totnes to be considered when these plans are made to ensure anything new is of high quality and in keeping with the rest of the town.

ACTION – KOB to email Chris and Matt asking to be kept involved with future updates.

7. Cycling event

NR and KOB attended a meeting with Andrew from British Cycling as they are keen to develop a new race as part of the Twinners society from the bottom of Fore Street to the top of High Street. This event is proposed for a Saturday evening once the market has gone and most of the retail businesses are closed. Ideas included also inviting children to attempt to cycle up the hill, as well as music and workshops in the Civic Square.

British Cycling have been informed about the Community Grants available through the Economy Working Group, and have advised for an application to be made to KOB by the end of October for it to be discussed at the next EWG.

ACTION – KOB to send Andrew the application form and criteria for the Community Grants.

8. Let's celebrate towns competition

KOB informed members of Lets Celebrate Towns which is a national competition from VISA and Nationwide, where winning towns will each receive a £20,000 grant towards community-led

projects or new initiatives that give small businesses a boost.

The group went through the criteria for each category and agreed that the most relevant would be the “Community Pride” award. This award “Recognises towns where councils, community groups, businesses and residents have worked together to deliver projects and events that build pride and belonging.”

ACTION – KOB to work on the application form and send to all members. Closing date for application is Sunday 25th October.

9. ADDITIONAL ITEM – Dates for SHDC Christmas free parking initiative

South Hams District Council have requested suggestions for the preferred dates that town councils would like parking to be free in their towns over the Christmas period. Members agreed that last years approach worked well where parking in Totnes was free for four Thursdays in December between 1pm – 6pm. This ensured the free parking was on days when town was not usually busy and would encourage visitors on them days.

ACTION – RECOMMENDATION that Totnes requests free parking on the 3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th December from 1pm – 6pm

NEXT MEETING BOOKED: 3rd November 2pm – 3.30pm