

Ilfracombe & District Business & Tourism Association

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

8 December 2025 @ The Wellington Arms

PRESENT: In the Chair: Eliot Seabourn-Wren – Carlton Hotel

Barbara Clarke, Retired – Paul Batemen, Marine court - Mark Heather, The Dinki Deli –Andrew White & Nicholas McKenzie, Grosvenor House – Alison Sanders, Avoncourt Lodge – Fiona & Jason Simmons, Little Mamas – Kirsty Oldland, The Wellington Arms – Rod & Helen Chatfield, Varley House – Mel Turnbull, hand:plant - Marnie Quy

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Philip Dennis Ltd, Clovelly Estates, Trimstone Manor, Ilfracombe Aquarium, The Collingdale - Ilfracombe Chocolate Emporium, Slice of Devon & Cllr. June Williams.

MINUTES OF THE LAST GENERAL MEETING: It was proposed by AW and seconded by PB that the minutes of the General Meeting held on 25 November 2024, having been circulated, be approved. This was unanimously agreed and the Chair duly signed the minutes.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: There were no matters arising.

CHAIR'S UPDATE: ESW summarised his report saying that 2025 was a pivotal year for the IBTA. Membership rose significantly, financial reserves remained stable, marketing activities expanded, and the organisation strengthened its role as a core business voice for the town. Key achievements were the successful website rebuild, improved tourist information visibility at the Landmark, stronger coordination of social events, networking, and member engagement, progress on strategy development and governance realignment and securing a £12k grant from North Devon Council for business tourism, training and marketing consultancy. There are also challenges such as limited engagement and unclear direction from Ilfracombe Town Council (ITC) around tourism marketing, volunteer fatigue, particularly around social media and event posting. Clarity is needed on a long-term TIC strategy and IBTA's role in physical visitor services and High Street concerns, including scaffolding, ASB and weak visitor flow.

For 2026 the recommendations are to finalise and publish the IBTA 2026–27 strategy with clear KPIs, to establish a hybrid TIC model, Landmark + pop-up + rotating High Street hubs, to invest NDC grant in business tourism product development, marketing consultancy and digital training for members, to strengthen partnership structure with ITC, outlining mutual commitments, to introduce a part-time digital support contractor for event posting and social media, create a High Street Visitor Flow Action Plan (signage, digital maps, shuttle options), evaluate ROI on major shows before committing to future years, expand the mailing list with seasonal lead magnets (competitions, guides, develop a commercial model for the Landmark TV screen (ads + town info) and build data dashboards using Place Informatics + Google Analytics to inform planning.

Attached is the full report which distils cross-cutting issues, identifies risks and opportunities, and outlines recommendations heading into 2026.

IBTA Strategy: ESW said that a vote was need on the proposed draft IBTA Strategy which has been circulated. RC proposed that it be accepted as circulated to members without any amendments, seconded by MH and all present agreed.

MARKETING: PB reported that the website rebuild had been completed and traffic to the site had increased. Social media activity was continuing. He said that we had created a visitor leaflet for 2025 which was distributed by Publicity South West and we were looking at probably doing the same for 2026 but there was a discussion to be had as to whether we have any advertising or not - if we do it is hoped that there will be more small advertisers. We are running out of printed copies of our current street map so we are looking at possibly changing it.

There will be a new event under the auspices of the IBTA - Ilfracombe Coastal Week - at the beginning of June.

MEMBERSHIP & SOCIAL EVENTS: SF reported by email that we have had an increase in members this year, due to us now offering our advertisers membership of the IBTA. We currently have 106 signed up and 6 still to renew.

We struggled this year with some of our gather and chats, both the quiz night at Score Valley in March and the Wine Tasting at Number 11 The Quay in October sadly were cancelled due to not enough interest to make the event worthwhile. We did hold two very good get togethers in April, Keypitts hosted a try-out of their quad biking and axe throwing which was tremendous fun and we then enjoyed a 'Paint and Sip' workshop at the Art School Studio, where several members came along and created masterpieces. In October Watermouth Castle invited us to their Descend into Darkness Event and several members went along and had a great spooky time. Then in November Kin Wellness invited us to network and try out some mini treatments, which was lovely and I would thoroughly recommend this experience for yourselves and your guests/customers. The Truffles and Bubbles workshop at the Chocolate Emporium will be on Thursday 18 December.

We are looking to organise a couple of fun gather and chats in the New Year, so we hope that members come along and support them. It is an ideal opportunity to meet up with other like-minded businesses in an informal atmosphere.

FINANCIAL REPORT: BC proposed that the accounts for the 12 months to 31 December 2024, having been circulated, be adopted, seconded by PB and all present agreed.

Membership Fees for 2026/27 to be discussed at the next AGM to be held in April/May 2026

Election of Officers/Committee Members: The officers are Eliot Seabourn-Wren (Chair), Paul Batemen (Vice Chair) Barbara Clarke (Secretary) Steven Rudge (Treasurer).

The committee members are Marnie Quy, Andrew White, Jeanette Cann, Mark Heather & Mel Turnbull.

Nomination from the floor for committee was Kirsty Oldfield and she was invited to join the committee.

AOB:

- 1: ESB said that there was some interest in the local DMOs working together to promote North Devon.
- 2: PB said that with AI the way that people search for information is changing and we need to make sure that the website etc. work with this. Hoping to hold some training sessions on how you get seen.
- 3: AS said that the IBTA would be taking part in the town clean up in March.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.45pm.