



Saltash and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry



CHAIRMAN PETER RYLAND

CHAMBER REPORT

At the last meeting of 2023 the members had much to discuss. Obviously, with the Christmas Festival having been only two days before it was very much on everybody's mind, and in particular it was noted how well it was supported not only by the Saltash community but also many people from elsewhere in Devon and Cornwall. It was estimated that 5,000 people attended in total throughout the afternoon although with so many access points and the fact that many come twice (early on to see the Santas on Bikes and then later for the main event), it is difficult to obtain an accurate figure. Fore Street was certainly as busy as Pre-Covid levels. The Chairman thanked the members who had been involved in the organisation of the event including raising the funds to pay for the event which this year cost circa £9000. The Chairman also thanked many others for their support including Scrapstore who not only sponsored the Lantern Parade but also contributed the net proceeds from their Christmas shop in the Courtyard. In addition, thanks went to the Town Council for a grant from the Festival fund. The total from these two organisations provided over half of the cost.

Others involved were the China Fleet Club (sponsors of the Santa Fun Run), Eclectic Interiors (sponsors of the raffle), Tamar Trotters (who organised the Santa Fun Run), Redeemer Church (for the Treasure Hunt and leading the carols), Saltash Air Cadets (for allowing the Drill Hall to be the Lantern Parade HQ) and SEA (for picking up all the litter afterwards).

However, two questions were raised:-

1. How will it be funded next year? The Chairman agreed to set up a meeting of interested Parties early in the New Year to start the ball rolling and find a way to give a long term Solution.
2. As 2024 Christmas Festival will be on the 7th December it was felt that this was too late for the switch on of the Christmas lights and the Chairman was asked to contact Saltash Town Council to ask whether the light switch on, of the festoon lights, could be in November but with the feature lights being switched on at the Festival. If such were possible then a small event, including late night opening, could take place at the same time as the early switch on.

Members also noted that the, much acclaimed, speaker system was not working consistently and therefore only people at the bottom end of Fore Street could hear what was happening on the stage. The Chairman was asked to write to STC to ask them to find out the cause.

The members then went on to consider the outcome of the consultation that Tamar Crossings had carried out re. tolls and hear that, according to 3 members present, the result of the

consultation was being ignored when related to the recommendation that would be considered at the meeting of the forthcoming meeting of the Joint Management Board. The question was asked “why have a consultation if you ignore the outcome?” Finding a solution to ever increasing toll costs, particularly for the bridge, was regarded as the main priority as the cost of the bridge toll does affect the decision of where businesses locate.

Four of the members in attendance were also members of Town Team and were all able to lead the discussion with the other members on the progress of the proposals for a market in the centre of Fore Street but without having to direct traffic. Although no formal vote was taken, all members acknowledged that the benefit to footfall that this should bring and hoped that retailers would support the idea. The Chairman stated that analysis would be carried out by the use of a consultant as to the benefit by way of research before and after with the traders. Members also noted that an application was to be made re. a further £21,000 from the accelerator fund which would help the market to come to fruition and that an application was being prepared for a Town Delivery Fund Grant which could be used to take proposals even further.

The accounts for 2022/2023 were approved and signed.