

# **Littlehampton Business Forum Meeting**

Notes of the Littlehampton Business Forum Meeting held in the New Millenium Chamber on Tuesday 25 November 2025.

## **1. Evacuation Procedures**

## **2. Introductions**

The group introduced themselves.

## **3. Guest Speaker – Brad Ainsworth from Cathedral Wealth Management LTD**

Brad Ainsworth is a financial advisor to businesses and not for profit organisations. Brad gave insights at the meeting on helping small businesses make the most of their finance.

Some useful tips for businesses on attracting customers:

- being personable
- finding a common ground
- knowing your target audience.

On the topic of attracting customers on social media it was suggested content is personal to the customer and not too generic as this will not resonate with people.

Brad suggested looking on local authority websites to see if there are grants and funding for local businesses. It was confirmed in the meeting that Arun District Council (ADC) currently do not have any available funding or grants for businesses but check the ADC website for any updates.

Brad introduced the MILLY effect, which uses five easy steps to ensure your finances are in order.

M – Monitor your bank statements, businesses are advised to regularly monitor bank statements to ensure awareness of all transactions and amounts as small expenses can accumulate over time.

I – Investigate your interest rates, compare different banks and accounts to see where you can get the best interest rates from.

L – Look for an accountant or financial advisor, research how this could benefit your business.

L – Leave it, businesses were advised to delay non-essential purchases to help prevent impulse buying. It was suggested that leaving items in an online basket for 24 hours can help determine whether they are still needed and may also result in a discount being offered.

Y – You know best, trust your judgement when making decisions and to have confidence that you will ultimately make the right choices for the organisation.

## **4. Business Guest Speaker - Tracey Harriman, Arcade Bookshop**

Tracey Harriman, owner of Arcade Bookshop on Littlehampton High Street, gave an inspirational talk about her journey opening a business in Littlehampton, the challenges faced, exciting plans for the future, and her positive outlook on embracing the journey.

Tracey was a funeral director for 10 years, a job which she really enjoyed and inspired her to start a bereavement group, which she still hosts and currently meet at Creative Heart. This also led her to be a guest on a successful podcast, talking about bereavement and the taboo behind death.

Tracey was also the vice president of the Littlehampton District Lions club, and tries to get involved with the community by running events, groups and fundraising for local causes.

After experiencing family circumstances that changed her outlook on life, and with encouragement from a friend who ran a bookshop, Tracey decided it was time for a change, opening a bookshop was one of those changes.

Her mission is clear: to bring people together through the enjoyment of reading.

One of the advantages of running her own business is the ability to adapt to local customer needs. For example, the shop has recently expanded its focus on Manga, responding to its growing popularity in the area.

However, online retailers remain a significant challenge, offering books at lower prices. To compete, Tracey has concentrated on building strong relationships with local customers, which has led to repeat business and the success of initiatives such as book clubs. The first club proved so popular that there are now three running.

Tracey is excited about the future and proud to share that she will be featured in Woman's Weekly at the beginning of December.

## **5. Review of Progress and Action Plan 2026**

It was noted that the Business Forum alongside the councils, will seek feedback from businesses on the performances of local businesses. This will be done using a simple high or lower than last month approach to help understand trends and economic impact on local businesses. A handful of businesses will need to volunteer to take part. It was suggested that this data is also taken after events in the town centre, to see if there is an impact on sales.

To increase footfall in the town centre, several events were proposed:

- Arts and crafts festival: From 27 March over the Easter half term
- Book festival – Potentially October
- Christmas, including Small Business Saturday 2026
- Illuminations – A type of lantern parade
- Light up Littlehampton – November.

Rich confirmed he will represent at the Littlehampton Events Forum on 28 January and encouraged event organisers to attend. The events will be a collaborative approach and organised by different businesses to increase participation.

The operator of the Friday market confirmed Santa's Grotto and other activities will be brought to the high street on 19 December.

Following the cancellation of the Christmas Lights Switch-On due to high winds. The discount booklets will be distributed at Small Business Saturday (SBS) instead. It

was suggested that booklets also be handed out at the Friday Market. Looking ahead, the group discussed extending SBS activities into the evening next year to allow for late-night shopping, as this was considered beneficial by businesses.

The group agreed to produce a monthly physical newsletter for local businesses, providing updates on Town Centre activities and key developments. Volunteers were confirmed for distribution across various streets, including Beach Road, Arcade Road, The Arcade, Anchor Springs, Arundel Road, High Street, and Surrey Street.

The LBF welcome pack is in the final stages of design and will be sent to businesses once completed. The group discussed whether the pack should be printed or digital. It was agreed that the pack will primarily be digital, with printed copies provided to new businesses. A suggestion was made to distribute a poster with a QR code to new businesses, allowing them to access a longer digital version online.

## **6. Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP)**

Arun District Council (ADC) officers provided an update on the Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP), which is a formal structure for business crime reduction initiatives, including the DISC app for recording and reporting incidents. Membership is free for businesses with physical premises in Littlehampton and Bognor Regis town centres, and the app ensures compliance with data protection laws. Businesses were reminded of the importance of reporting incidents to help build cases and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. Community Protection Officers (CPOs) have now launched across Arun and will patrol areas experiencing high levels of anti-social behaviour based on reports.

## **7. Update from the Littlehampton Town Council**

Littlehampton Town Council (LTC) thanked all businesses involved in the organising and lead up to the Christmas Lights Switch on. It was noted that most activities have been moved to Small Business Saturday (SBS). LTC confirmed that SBS is being further developed, with additional activities and performances planned for the High Street. Businesses are encouraged to participate by offering workshops, activities, or discounts to celebrate SBS.

As part of the Town Centre Action Group, the Town Council has been exploring options for additional markets in the High Street. The group was informed that a Food and Drink Festival is likely to take place on 11 and 12 April subject to licenses. It was suggested that the Friday Market be included in this initiative, with additional food stalls attending to enhance the overall experience.

## **8. Update from Economic Development Team at Arun District Council.**

Arun District Council (ADC) provided an update on several ongoing projects. The Wayfinding project will begin installation from 15 December, replacing existing columns and monoliths in the town. The tops of the columns have already been removed, and the new Wayfinding signs will be installed throughout December and into January.

The festoon lighting project delivered by ADC will commence once the Christmas lights are taken down. The catenary wires will be replaced with more robust wires,

and the lights will be installed in January. It was noted that current funding only covers festoon lighting for the High Street.

ADC officers have been working with West Sussex County Council (WSCC) to improve lighting in the alleyway next to Peacocks, which connects the High Street to St Martin's car park. WSCC will replace the existing lamppost head with LED lighting and add an additional head to enhance illumination in the alleyway.

The group was reminded that one-to-one business consultations remain available, offering up to three hours of support for businesses across Arun.

ADC officers also confirmed discussions with WSCC regarding areas of the High Street that have been repaved with tarmac instead of stone. An agreement has been established for utility companies to follow when conducting works, ensuring that paving is restored with stones rather than tarmac to maintain the High Street's appearance.

The group commented positively on the improved cleansing of the High Street and the impact of the new machine being used by Biffa. It was confirmed that The Arcade is included in the High Street cleaning schedule.

The phone boxes outside Arcade Bookshop were discussed. ADC officers advised that a planning application for a new advertisement screen was rejected as it was not in keeping with the local area. ADC had previously been quoted £20,000 by BT for removal of the boxes, and councils are continuing to encourage BT to either replace or remove them.

Concerns were raised about blocked drains on East Street and Beach Road, with business owners expressing worries about flooding and water pooling near pavements. LTC officer reported a blocked drain recently on East Street, which is currently being investigated. Businesses were advised to report any blocked drains directly to WSCC.

[Make an enquiry or report a problem with a road or pavement - West Sussex County Council](#)

**Dates of 2026 Business Forum meetings:**

Tuesday 24 February

Tuesday 26 May

Tuesday 25 August

Tuesday 24 November