Notes from the 2025 AGM Meeting
3pm to 4:30 pm
Thursday 30th October 2025
Wollens Board Room, The Terrace, Torquay

Present:

ERBID: Chris Hart (CH) ERBID Chair, Chief Executive Wollens; Anthony Payne-Neale (APN) ERBID Vice-Chair, Owner of Court Prior Boutique B&B; Carolyn Custerson (CC) ERBID Chief Executive; Andy Banner-Price (ABP) Hotel Manager, Cary Arms & Spa; Martin Brook (MB) Owner of Pilgrims Rest; Richard Cuming (RC) Owner of Bygones; Claire Flower (CF) Director, Beverley Holidays; Tim Godfrey (TG) Partner, Bishop Fleming; Jim Parker (JP) Editor in Chief, Torbay Weekly; Kelly Widley (KW) Food and Drink Hospitality Consultant; Sheena Powe, Accountant for ERBID; Alison Bayliss (AB) ERBID – minutes

ERBID Board apologies: Alan Denby (AD) Director of Pride in Place, Torbay Council; Will Ford (WF) Manging Director of the Greenway Group (observer for Brixham)

Company members: Wendy Norris (WN) Owner of Berburry Hotel and Chair of Bridge Group; Jason Parry (JPa), Multi-Site General Manager, Mercure and Ibis Styles Paignton; Simeon Lewry (SL), Contract Manager, Riviera International Centre, and Chair of English Riviera Days Out Group (ERDO).

Welcome and Introductions - CH
CH opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. Introductions were carried out.

A few moments' silence were observed in memory of ERBID board director Pippa Craddock, who passed away in September.

CH thanked the ERBID Board and team for their work over the past year, and expressed appreciation to all ERBID levy-payers and the wider tourism sector for their support, feedback and encouragement.

Presentation of 2024 Accounts – TG
TG presented the accounts and advised that a filleted version had been submitted to Companies House. Copies of the accounts had previously been circulated to all Company members.

TG noted that the budget is kept to 20% admin, retaining 80% for destination marketing.

CC reported that additional commercial income, including from retail sales and voluntary contributions, has grown since the start of ERBID2.

MB proposed the approval of the 2024 annual accounts and JG seconded the proposal. The accounts were approved by the Company Members present, as well as by 10 proxy votes submitted by Members unable to attend the AGM in person.

Marketing Activity Summary 2025 – CC
CC provided a summary of this year's destination marketing activities.

It was confirmed recently that the English Riviera is the UK's largest resort in terms of bed space.

The English Riviera is looked upon as doing well compared to other areas, with the rest of the South West experiencing decline.

A key objective has been to extend the visitor season, supporting employment and long-term resilience, alongside attracting new visitors essential for the growth of the visitor economy. CC noted that no two years are the same, and the ability to remain agile and responsive to emerging challenges is essential.

This year, additional funding from South West Water - provided to support marketing recovery following the Cryptosporidium outbreak in 2024 - enabled the ERBID Company to deliver a seven-month TV campaign, supported by digital activity and delivered by Chalk & Ward Marketing Agency. The campaign targeted two core audiences: families and couples aged 50+. The videos have been viewed over 10 million times. Results indicate a positive impact, including improved performance through the South West Data Hub and the How's Business Survey. The area's promoter score has risen by nine points year-on-year.

CC highlighted the increasing need for more dog-friendly and accessible products and accommodation.

The ERBID has continued to invest in professional photography and videography, creating new assets for levy-payers—including new materials for Brixham and the Pirate Festival—available for use copyright-free.

Investment in professional PR services through Four Marketing Agency also continues, supporting the management of negative media, delivering press releases, media alerts and press visits, and working closely with ERBID Ambassadors.

Work continues to attract groups and new cruise ship operators.

The ERBID continues to invest in research, including through the South West Data Hub and the How's Business Survey, ensuring evidence-led decision-making.

The Visitor Information Service continues to operate year-round, offering face-to-face support at the Visitor Information Centre as well as assistance via email and phone. Retail sales continue to grow, particularly Agatha Christie merchandise.

Partnership links remain strong with organisations including the Devon & Partners LVEP, Visit Devon, Government, and Visit England. Remaining part of this wider network is essential to ensure access to future opportunities, including funding.

Proposals for ERBID3 – CH/CC

CH and CC outlined the proposals for ERBID3. These include increasing the levy rate from 1.95% to 2.5% of rateable value, and raising the minimum annual payment from £150 to £250. The ERBID levy has remained unchanged since 2017, despite rising marketing costs, and the proposed changes would allow national marketing campaigns - including some TV advertising - to continue, helping to keep the destination competitive.

Torbay Council has confirmed that it will not be able to fund destination marketing should the ERBID not continue. The Council is the ERBID's largest levy-payer and remains supportive of it.

CH highlighted that the strength of the BID lies in being private-sector driven rather than dependent on public funding - contrasting this with Visit Cornwall, which recently entered liquidation.

CH emphasised that these are proposals only, and are subject to consultation. Feedback from businesses, currently being gathered through consultation sessions in October and November, will inform the final five-year business plan, which businesses will vote on in summer 2026.

If ERBID3 proceeds, an election will be held to appoint directors for the new five-year term, creating opportunities for new members and fresh ideas.

Feedback and AOB

SL fed back via ERDO that this season had been positive for most attractions.

WN shared that a key message for accommodation providers is how to "make the extra £100 work for your business" by making full use of ERBID tools and assets. CH encouraged further ideas to help improve how the ERBID is presented. CC and WN have recently discussed holding additional workshops to support smaller businesses.

JPa commented that while no one likes to see increases, he can see the benefits and understands the reason for the proposals.

ABP noted that visitor communications should highlight the opportunities within the destination - for example, encouraging cruise passengers to return independently for longer stays, and inspiring business travellers, who may have stayed in corporate accommodation, to return and experience a wider range of options.

CC reiterated that the company will continue to consult with businesses before finalising the ERBID3 business plan.

CH closed the meeting at 4:30pm.