

Littlehampton Business Forum Meeting

Notes of the Littlehampton Business Forum Meeting held in the New Millenium Chamber on Tuesday 24 February 2026.

1. Evacuation Procedures

2. Introductions

The group introduced themselves, 13 businesses were in attendance.

3. Business Guest Speaker – Susana, Birds of Paradise

Susana, owner of Birds of Paradise on Beach Road, gave an inspirational talk about her journey opening a business in Littlehampton. Susanna explained the reasons for opening her business, to honour her late husband Pedro. She has always worked in hospitality and wanted to make a dream into a reality. Once finding the perfect location for her business on Beach Road she was excited to open a shop with all the products from Portugal.

Susana, is open to collaboration and working with different communities in Littlehampton. She has hosted evenings in her shops, including the Macedonian community. She is currently working with Mama's Kitchen, they are looking at collaborating on the space in her shop. They are looking at expanding the kitchen and coming together to create Portuguese and Caribbean food.

Susana is excited about the future and her business in Littlehampton.

4. Review of progress and action plan 2026

The business forum is celebrating being over a year old now. The success of the business forum was celebrated but also the recognition that momentum is still needed in the action plan.

The business forum is looking for someone to help organise the events planned in the town centre. There are several events and activities planned for the year and the LBF is seeking someone who would like to coordinate this.

Events planned currently:

- Arts and crafts festival –over the Easter Holidays

Sam, owner of Magpie and Butterflies is organising a two week arts and crafts festival in the town centre. This involves businesses and organisations running workshops and activities throughout the two weeks with businesses being highlighted each day for what they have to offer.

Sam is also working closely with the operator of the Friday market to have stalls present at three Fridays over the Easter holidays.

- Holistic festival

A local business is looking into running a holistic festival, this is still in the planning stages but hoping to happen around Spring time.

- Book festival – October half term

Tracey, owner of Arcade Bookshop is currently organising a book festival in October. There will be activities throughout the half term for children and adults to get involved in. She is currently organising an author panel for 24 October.

It was updated that the Bonfire night has been moved to the 24 October this year instead of its usual last Saturday in October. This was due to concerns from Arun District Council (ADC) events team with the bonfire and Halloween happening on the same day.

The ambassadors asked for feedback from the group on the newsletters. People said they are finding the e-newsletter useful, it was suggested to send a newsletter once a month and ask people to submit information by a certain time so it can be included in the newsletter.

A physical newsletter will now be distributed a week before the LBF meeting. This will have key updates from the Town Centre Action Group (TCAG), as well as updates from the LBF and information for the next meeting.

Love and Visit Littlehampton websites are built, and nearly ready to launch. The two websites would cover tourism and local information, highlighting businesses, activities and many other things going on in the town. The town council would be reaching out to local businesses soon to get the sites populated.

District Council officers have bid for more retail start up grants as well as other grants available for businesses. This initiative would be Arun wide and will be announced once bids have been confirmed. The one-to-one business support is still available, if people are interested, they should contact ADCs economic team.

Business rates were discussed in the meeting. ADC economic department have put some money aside to support businesses if their business rates have risen astronomically.

Businesses can challenge their rates if they do not agree with the increase. One local business is currently going through this process with ADCs support to understand the process and see how it could help other businesses.

One business expressed concern over finding out what their rates would be. They are able to find this on the VOA website and can get an evaluation.

LBF will try and communicate with the local MP and raise their concerns.

Businesses then highlighted concerns over recent flooding in Littlehampton. Businesses on Beach Road had water coming up to their shop fronts due to blocked drains. These have been reported to West Sussex County Council (WSCC) but it still seems to be an issue. Town and District officers will follow up with this.

The LBF are going to be investigating if they can assist with a young chamber of commerce. Seeing how they can inspire and integrate more young people into their businesses. Officers suggested they contacted The Littlehampton Academy, as they might be able to assist with getting young people involved.

The LBF ambassadors highlighted the importance of reporting any anti-social behaviour or crime in the town centre. Most of the crime in the town centre is shop lifting and through DISC and shop watch radio this can hopefully be reported better. There is concern that if reporting continues to drop or not happen that anti-social behaviour and crime will rise.

5. Update from the Town and District Councils

Wayfinding

The group heard about the Wayfinding Project that was being installed. Arun District Council (ADC) officers explained the monoliths around the town had been installed throughout January, the Wayfinding project should be fully installed by the end of February. The launch would be on 27 March, which coincides with V2 radio station broadcasting live from Littlehampton high street during the Friday market.

It was explained that three notice boards highlighting the Wayfinding Project would be installed around the town. Artsworld were organising to display information on a notice board in the train station, and another along the seafront by the splash park on West Green. An additional board was to be installed in St Martin's carpark along the side of the toilet block.

Pavement Tarmac

ADC officers had recently conducted a site survey of the high street with WSCC officers to highlight the ongoing issues with contractors not repairing the paving after works. Contractors have up to a year to put the paving back as it should be to allow for ground settlement; this was why sometimes tarmac had been left. However, there were procedures in place to ensure that the paving was put back.

Festoon Lighting

ADC officers explained the festoon lighting would operate by astronomical timers, turning on at dusk and turning off at 23:00. The installation was due to be completed by the end of March.

Specialist markets

LTC officers explained that they were working with an external operator to bring a food and drink festival to the high street on 11 and 12 April 2026. The operator had submitted a license application with ADC and WSCC and were waiting for approval.

The event would see a two day food and drink festival take place on the high street offering a variety of stalls, entertainment and fun for everyone.

LTC had been liaising with the Friday market operator to ensure the event complements the general market.

Easter High Street events

LTC will be delivering two Easter High Street events; on Wednesday 1 and Thursday 9 April. Due to feedback from businesses on what days they would like events, they have been split across different days. The first event was an Easter Eggstravaganza bringing entertainment and activities for families before Easter. The second event would be an Easter community day, highlighting all the wonderful groups and organisation that make up Littlehampton.

V2 Radio campaign

ADC was running a campaign across Arun under the Sussex by the Sea umbrella which would see V2 Radio broadcasting from Littlehampton town centre on Friday 27 March. This would coincide with the general market and would serve to promote the town centre. LTC have provided additional activities for the day and were working closely with the market operator to deliver the initiative.

6. Date of next meeting:

26th May

25th August

24th November

7. Nominations for next Guest Business Speaker – Jason

8. AOB

A business mentioned that the Arcade is currently being refurbished and there is a piece of artwork inside that could do with a refresh. It is believed to be the town councils. LTC officers will investigate this.

Finish 19:38