

Seaton Chamber CIC – Public Meeting Minutes

Date: 26 March 2026

Time: 6:30pm

Location: The Old Picture House, Seaton

1. Welcome

The meeting was opened and attendees were welcomed.

2. East Devon Soul Festival (Presented by Simon Strange)

- The **East Devon Soul Festival** aims to bring inclusive, multi-generational music to Seaton, addressing a lack of provision for young people.
 - Scheduled for **3rd–4th July 2026:**
 - **3rd July:** Opening night at The Old Picture House.
 - **4th July:** Events across Seaton, including the Tramway Amphitheatre and The Gateway.
 - Planned activities include:
 - Performances by local artists, including school students and B Sharp.
 - Street performances (samba, acapella, brass bands).
 - DJs at Tide and Hideaway venues.
 - Jazz performances featuring emerging artists.
 - No external food vendors – local businesses encouraged to participate.
 - Focus on long-term growth of the festival.
 - Businesses encouraged to promote via themed shop windows and local advertising.
 - Arts Council funding application submitted; decision pending.
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3. 100 Club Draw

- Due to internet issues, the March draw can't be made tonight but this will be drawn over the coming weekend. Winners will be informed by email and via social media.
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4. Actions & Updates from Business Owners Meeting

- **Organisation Identity**
 - Removal of “Chamber of Commerce” from bank account and official documents is ongoing.
 - No name change planned; branding updated to include “*working for the community*”.
 - Commitment to represent the wider community clearly communicated.
- **Town Centre & Parking**
 - Pedestrianisation reversal deemed unachievable due to regulatory constraints.

- Parking fees cannot be broadly influenced; reductions possible only for specific events.
- **Town Signage**
 - Current signage is inconsistent and in poor condition.
 - Ownership split between multiple authorities (EDDC/DCC/STC).
 - Further consultation needed with businesses on signage preferences.
 - Next step: engagement with Seaton Town Council (STC).
- **MP Engagement**
 - Need clear, evidence-based input from businesses on town priorities.
 - Potential independent-town positioning discussed.
 - A formal survey or market research project is needed.
 - Simon Strange may lead this following the festival.
- **Seafront / Flowerbeds**
 - Responsibility clarified after prolonged dispute; EDDC to manage repairs and maintenance.
 - Chamber continues to push for progress and offers community support.
- **Town Appearance & Cleanliness**
 - Improvements noted:
 - Increased street cleaning (twice weekly).
 - Replanting in Jubilee Gardens.
 - Planned initiatives:
 - Volunteer projects (e.g., Axmouth bridge area).
 - Exploration of sea wall cleaning.
 - Private property owners beginning to improve premises.
- **Arts & Community Projects**
 - Seasonal infrastructure (Christmas tree holders, bunting, flags).
 - Artwork collaboration with local schools and artists (including Ian Flynn).
 - Community competition for repurposing a tree stump installation.
 - Five mural locations identified (permissions requested).
- **Business Support**
 - Continued encouragement for property improvements.
 - Chamber-funded gutter cleaning initiative ongoing.

5. Upcoming Events

Markets

- Average of 20 stalls (indoor and outdoor).
- Successfully reinstated following battles with EDDC.
- March market relocated due to weather; April returns to Windsor Gardens.
- Additional plans:
 - Food festival (2 May) alongside Gateway Cider Festival (primarily local vendors).

- Positive economic impact noted for local businesses.
 - All profits reinvested into the town.
 - Ongoing initiatives include Small Business Saturdays.
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Pirate Festival (22–23 May 2026)

- **22 May:** Quiz night at The Gateway.
 - **23 May:** Full-day programme including:
 - Pirate-themed park run.
 - Parade along the promenade.
 - Community shanty singing (Seaton Acapella).
 - Live music at Eyre Court.
 - Storytelling at Owl and Pyramid.
 - Family activities at Windsor Gardens (workshops, Punch & Judy, stalls).
 - Street theatre and buskers.
 - Evening band at The Gateway.
 - Future growth dependent on volunteer support.
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6. Public Q&A / Any Other Business

- **Gutter Cleaning Funding:** Primarily grant-funded; some contributions from businesses (including non-members). Work contracted out by the Chamber to a local business who has their own public liability insurance and risk assessments. Chamber has also done risk assessments. Informed by an attendee that a group of businesses in the town who ‘aren’t and will never be members’ were against the gutter cleaning. Acknowledged people may take advantage of our good nature. Perhaps we won’t offer this service in the future if people are against it.
- **Town Improvements:** Positive feedback on cleanliness, collaboration, and increased communication.
- **Local Developments:**
 - Hook and Parrot: New planning application submitted; ownership situation uncertain. Nothing confirmed.
 - Fosseyway Court: Still in negotiations with the bank.
 - Seaton Quay: Phase 2 dependent on sales progress.
 - Seaton Heights: Site clearance underway; planning status pending.
- **Seafront Seating:**
 - Proposal for seasonal (April–October) external seating at four premises.
- **Footfall:**
 - Reports indicate increased visitor numbers and longer stays.
- **Community Initiatives:**
 - Poppy display to return and expand across town.
 - Volunteers needed for creation.

- Tourist Information Centre reopening over Easter; promotional materials welcomed.

7. Next Meeting

Date: 22 June 2026

Venue: The Old Picture House

Time: Doors 6pm for 6.30pm start