

# Crunch time to save air show

It would appear that some people have grabbed the wrong end of the stick as they see millions of pounds coming into the Bay.

More than £200million from the private and public sector will help deliver a new future for the English Riviera which it, and we, need so badly.

But some people mistakenly believe that this money is going straight into the Town Hall coffers for Torbay Council to have a jolly good spending spree.

Absolutely not the case. The investment is being, and has to be, spent on game-changing projects that will deliver that new future with the regeneration of our ailing town centres at the very top of the priority list.

Money to actually run the local authority is still tight and an on-going challenge. That is why there is a need to increase council tax just to provide basic services.

And when it comes to events like the English Riviera Air Show, the Town Hall still desperately needs the support of the private sector with sponsorship etc. Without it, the air show itself may be in doubt.

Time is running out to find cash backers. In just a few weeks' time what may be a tough decision will have to be taken if the support is

## Jim Parker

Founder and editor of the Torbay Weekly



not there and that could mean reducing the show from two days to one - or even pulling the plug on it all together.

The English Riviera BID Company recognises the importance of events, especially those which boost tourism and attract holidaymakers outside the main summer season.

Chief executive Carolyn Custerson says: "We put in £20,000 as direct cash sponsorship plus significant 'time in kind' for marketing and promotion including the setting up of the new website working with Bigwave and ensuring that the air show is promoted very prominently on the official ER visitor website, plus we will be investing in a targeted digital marketing campaign to specifically attract new visitors to the event.

"Signature events like the air show are hugely important in raising the profile of the area and



We must ensure the Red Arrows visit the Bay. Picture: English Riviera Air Show

attracting new visitors to the resort. Our aim is to encourage more people to 'Make a Weekend of It' and to stay over and explore all the great things there are to do here for all the family. For these reasons we are pleased to continue being one of the main sponsors of the air show and would encourage local businesses and residents to also show their financial support to ensure that the 2024 Air Show goes ahead."

The show has been the Bay's flagship event since 2016. Historically a council event, this year the local authority is working with community partners to make it happen.

Adam Billings, the councillor in charge of Pride in Place, says: "The council's new approach reflects the success of community

organised air shows such as Teignmouth and the ever increasing need to deliver value for money by working in collaboration with the businesses and the wider community. The ERBID Company, Bigwave Marketing, Torbay Communities and the team behind Children's Week have already pledged their support and are committed to bringing a two-day flying and on the ground spectacular. But the cost of the flying display teams, which include some of the RAFs most loved aircraft (including the Red Arrows), costs in the region of £120,000. Meeting that financial target isn't easy, and that's where business can help."

Cllr Billing said the show delivers regional and national exposure, reaching social media

audiences of over 24,000 followers with, 65,000-plus visitors. It also has a positive community impact: and attracts visitors from all over the UK.

He adds: "Business sponsorship packages are available. Or perhaps a business might not be able to provide financial support in the form of sponsorship but could provide essential services or support.

"For those of us in the local community who simply enjoy attending the air show and wants to ensure it does go ahead, they can become a 'Friend of the English Riviera Airshow' or a 'Patron'."

All the details are on the English Riviera Airshow website: <https://englishrivieraairshow.co.uk/>

Cllr Billings warned: "Time is running out to show support.

"If the cost of the event isn't covered through sponsorship and donations it could mean the scale of the event may have to be reduced, so let's all try and all work together in the spirit of our community to make this the brilliant event we all want it to be."

Yep, the air show does cost a lot of money to stage, especially when council budgets are tight.

But the importance of putting the English Riviera on the map cannot be over-stated.

It also generates millions of pounds for the local economy. Now is the time for those who may just sit back and reap all the rewards to put their hands in their pockets and save the air show before it's too late.

# 'New' surgical hubs also worked well in 70s

When I worked as a junior doctor in Plymouth all emergency gynaecology cases were admitted to the main hospital, Freedom Fields, and routine "cold surgery" to Devonport Hospital.

As no emergencies went to Devonport, routine non-emergency surgery would never be postponed when we were snowed under with emergencies. The waiting lists were predictable.

This was a challenge to us junior doctors as the patients were admitted to Devonport on Sunday afternoon and one of us had to drive across the city to "clerk" them in. This meant taking a medical history, checking their general health before surgery and writing up any medication.

There were two "SHOs", the most junior members of the team, meaning that one of us was left alone in the main hospital on Sunday afternoons, hoping that there were not too many emergencies. When Derriford Hospital was opened in 1980 all the other hospitals in Plymouth were closed and routine waiting list cases were again admitted to the main ward. In a crisis they might be postponed, increasing the waiting list.

## Peter Moore

The former Torbay GP sees old ideas finding new value



There is now a new idea being introduced to the NHS called "surgical hubs". Someone has come up with an amazing new idea. Why not separate routine surgery from emergency care? This means that the waiting lists could be reduced without the risk of having to postpone routine cases when there were too many emergencies. The plan is to set up 129 "mini hospitals" across England which could carry our routine operations such as joint replacements and cataract surgery. Even under intense winter pressure the operations would not need to be cancelled.

The chief executive of the NHS, Amanda Pritchard, has said that these hubs are a vital way to bring down the NHS waiting lists. Apparently 94 surgical hubs are now up and running, carrying out 650,000 operations a year. Over the next two years there are plans to open another 35. They could



Surgeons tackle long waiting lists. Picture: Olga Guryanova/Unsplash

then offer one million operations a year and three million outpatient appointments by 2025-26.

There are plans to use the nightingale hospital in Exeter, which was set up during the covid pandemic, as one of the new surgical hubs.

In Torbay this has been happening for several years with the use of the private Mount Stuart Hospital in Torquay. Many routine NHS operations are now carried out at Mount Stuart, including my

cataract surgery last year. From personal experience I can say that it works well.

The new surgical hubs, or even Mount Stuart Hospital, do not have all the emergency facilities available at Torbay Hospital and so cases need to be vetted. It would not be sensible to carry out high risk surgery in a hub but for routine operations in otherwise healthy people it will work well.

It is also sensible to keep the hubs on a different site to the main

hospital. Anyone who has tried to park in Torbay Hospital will understand the problem. If routine outpatient appointments and surgery which does not need highly specialist equipment were carried out away from the main hospital space could be freed up for emergencies and the seriously ill.

In the Torbay area we are lucky enough to have several community hospitals such as Paignton, Brixham, Teignmouth and Newton Abbot. Could these be developed into surgical hubs rather than expanding the Torbay Hospital site even further or finding new sites? Staff would have to travel away from Torbay Hospital but why not offer the staff free parking and a more relaxed working environment?

Since I worked at Devonport Hospital in my junior doctor days there have been incredible improvements in surgery and medicine. Most of our patients would now be day cases and not admitted on a Sunday.

It is easy for my generation to argue that it was different in my day but not everything needs to change. I would recommend this wonderful "new" idea. It worked well in the 1970s.