

**From:** Somerville Hotel  
**Sent:** 18 August 2014 14:05  
**To:** Scrutiny  
**Subject:** Funding of The ERTC

To The Scrutiny Committee,

The continual attacks on the ERTC by Mayor Gordon Oliver have become as much a part of the Torbay year as The Agatha Christie Festival.

Year after year the ERTC has had to accept budget cuts. It has had to fend off attempts to interfere in its running. Despite this it has worked effectively to promote The English Riviera. It has won many national awards but more importantly can point to independent data that proves its work has been effective. In a normal World the local authority would be highlighting the work of the ERTC as an example of the very best private / public partnership working. Local authorities across the UK should be queuing up to see how effective management and collaborative working can produce miracles in extremely difficult financial circumstances.

**This is not a normal World.**

Gordon Oliver's association with Linda Hill and the Torbay Tourism Association means that there is a serious conflict of interest. In a recent BBC Devon interview he sought to give the impression that he had had nothing to do with this organization after he became Mayor. This was completely disingenuous apart from being the partner of the person who runs it, he was the landlord of the organization up until January of this year.

In the most recent edition of The Herald Express, Theresa Butto who is the Chairman of the Torbay Tourism Association sought to spread misinformation and fear about the possible Tourism and Retail Bid. She mentioned that businesses might have to pay £2000 or £3000. It was quite clear from the article that this organization had set its face against the Bid even before the process had produced any firm proposals.

The Mayor is spending £100,000 of public money on the bid process when his partner's own organization is clearly going to do everything it can to ensure the Bid fails. It is inconceivable that the Mayor and his partner should have divergent views as they have shared the same ambitions to control tourism for quite a number of years.

If the Bid fails there will be no ERTC left to carry on with marketing the Bay. Mrs Butto in her interview mentioned that businesses would have to do things for themselves in future. This seems to be the strongest hint yet that they see their organization as the one that will take the lead in tourism post ERTC and Bid.

The Torbay Tourism Association is the only organization in the Bay that will benefit from the demise of the ERTC and it is the only organization that will benefit from the failure of the Bid Process. It is immoral that the mayor should be squandering this money when he has a secret agenda and when we are seriously discussing the end of street lighting across the Bay

Mr Oliver needs to give a clear and unequivocal statement in support of the principle of the Bid. He needs to make clear that he disagrees with attempts by his partner's Association to spread misinformation about it.

Mr Oliver needs to say who he sold the TTA's office to and how much it was sold for.

The ERTC should be allowed to continue in existence to work on behalf of the people of Torbay. The Bid process should be allowed to continue so that an alternative model of funding might become available which would build upon the successes of the ERTC.

Yours faithfully,

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Winner of Devon Bed and Breakfast, Guest Accommodation of the year award 2012/13  
Winner SouthWest B&B of the year 2013 - Silver Award - South West Tourism Excellence Awards  
Voted Number Two B&B for Devon by Tripadvisor 2014  
Voted Number 1 Hotel in Devon by Trivago 2013  
Winner - Top Top 10 B&B in the UK by Tripadvisor Traveler Choice Awards 2012  
Winner of the South West Tourism Excellence Award - B&B, Guest Accommodation of the Year 2011  
Winner of Devon Bed and Breakfast, Guest Accommodation of the year award 2010  
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