

Listening. Understanding. Acting.

STORRINGTON BUSINESS ACTION TEAM

JULY 2026

What We Heard — Business Feedback from the Inaugural Storrington Business Action Team Meeting

Executive Summary

The inaugural Storrington Business Action Team meeting brought together over 30 members of the business community to share honest feedback, identify priorities and begin building a collective agenda for practical action. In addition to this, several members of the business community shared thoughts and views via e-mail and in person. This report documents what was said, analyses the evidence and sets out the path ahead.

Participation Snapshot

50+

Participants

Business community members at the inaugural meeting

31

Live Responses

Per question via Mentimeter survey

Five Key Findings

- **Remarkable consensus**
Businesses agreed far more than they disagreed across every theme
- **Traffic is the defining challenge**
HGVs, congestion and road safety dominated concerns
- **Community is the defining strength**
"Community" and "friendly" were the most valued qualities
- **Ambition is clear**
Businesses want Storrington to be thriving, vibrant and a destination
- **Skills are ready**
The community already holds the expertise needed to deliver practical projects

📌 Overall tone across all responses: **constructive, optimistic and collaborative** — businesses are energised and ready to act.

Listening — Why the Business Action Team Was Created

Storrington's businesses identified a need for a structured, action-focused forum — not another talking shop. The Business Action Team (BAT) was established to bring businesses, Horsham District Council, the Parish Council and partners together around a shared agenda built on practical delivery, not endless deliberation.

The BAT Philosophy

Action over Meetings

Prioritising tangible outcomes above process

Working Together

Businesses, council and partners aligned around a shared agenda

Building Momentum

Early wins create confidence for longer-term ambitions

Practical Projects

Delivering measurable change for the village

The BAT Process



Each cycle builds on the last — generating evidence, delivering projects and demonstrating progress back to the business community at regular intervals.

Today's Storrington — How Businesses Describe It Now

Participants were asked to describe Storrington in a single word or short phrase. The resulting word cloud reveals a community of contrasts: genuine warmth and identity alongside real frustration with infrastructure and cohesion.



Strengths Surface Clearly

"Community," "friendly" and "village" reflect a place with genuine warmth and local identity that businesses value deeply and wish to protect as Storrington grows.

Cohesion Concerns

Words such as **"disjointed," "fractured"** and **"divided"** appear — signalling that businesses recognise a need for greater collaboration and a unifying sense of shared purpose.

Challenges Equally Visible

"Traffic" and "congested" ranked alongside "community" as the most common descriptions — a clear signal that infrastructure is damaging the lived experience of doing business here.

Character Valued

"Quiet," "rural" and "home" suggest businesses value Storrington's village character even as they seek improvement — growth must be managed carefully to preserve what makes the village special.

Tomorrow's Storrington — The Collective Aspiration

When asked how they would like people to describe Storrington in five years' time, participants painted a vivid and consistent picture. The gap between today's reality and tomorrow's aspiration defines the work ahead.



The Dominant Vision

"Thriving" (8 responses) and "vibrant" (5 responses) dominated the responses — businesses want energy, footfall and economic vitality. These are not abstract aspirations; they represent a clear mandate for action-oriented work.

"Peaceful," "welcoming" and "prosperous" reflect a desire to grow without losing Storrington's village character — a balance that will require careful stewardship.

Destination Ambition

"Must visit," "destination" and "tourist attractions" signal genuine ambition to attract visitors and position Storrington as a gateway to the South Downs National Park — an asset currently underused.

The contrast with today is striking: from "congested" and "disjointed" to "thriving" and "vibrant" — this is the journey the Business Action Team exists to support.

What Businesses Value Most — Storrington's Strengths

Participants were asked to identify what they believe Storrington does well and what makes it distinctive. The findings reveal a community with genuine assets — assets that provide the foundation for future growth and promotion.



Independent Businesses

The mix of independent traders is seen as Storrington's commercial identity and competitive advantage in an era of homogenised high streets.



South Downs Location

Proximity to the National Park is recognised as an underused asset for visitors and residents alike — Storrington's position as a gateway remains significantly underleveraged.



Village Identity

Businesses value the human scale, familiarity and character of a market village. This is not just sentiment — it is a commercial differentiator.

Understanding — What the Evidence Tells Us

Analysing the full body of feedback — across up to seven survey questions and numerous open-text and email responses — reveals a business community with a shared direction, genuine energy and a clear understanding of both its assets and its barriers.

“Consensus” is the headline finding

Across every question, businesses agreed far more than they disagreed. This is not a community divided by competing interests — it is a community with a shared direction that needs a structured mechanism to convert agreement into action.

Traffic is a strategic barrier, not just an inconvenience

HGVs and congestion affect footfall, visitor experience, business viability and quality of life simultaneously. This is not a single-issue concern — it is a systemic challenge that requires engagement with Highways England and West Sussex County Council.

Two tensions sit at the heart of the feedback

Storrington is valued for its quiet village character, yet businesses want it to be more vibrant and better visited. Managing this balance — growth that preserves character — will be central to BAT's work and requires ongoing dialogue with the community.

Where views differ, sequencing is the answer

Some businesses prioritise appearance and promotion; others focus on infrastructure and planning. Both are valid — BAT's role is to sequence priorities rather than choose between them, ensuring all voices feel heard and represented.

31-45 responses represents a high participation rate for a first survey, giving the findings genuine credibility as a platform for future funding applications and statutory engagement.

Priority Opportunities — What Businesses Told Us Needs Improving

Open comments and survey responses reveal clear clusters of priority. These are not hypothetical preferences — they represent areas where businesses have expressed both a desire for action and a willingness to contribute. Here's how the BAT can contribute:



Quick Wins — BAT Can Lead Now

01



Events and Activation

Seasonal events and market days to drive footfall and energy into the village centre

02



Village Marketing

A coordinated “Shop Local” and visitor welcome campaign, drawing on skills already offered

03



Appearance and Floral Displays

Visible, low-cost improvements to the high street environment that signal renewed ambition

04



Business Networking

Regular, structured opportunities for businesses to collaborate and share intelligence



Longer-Term — BAT Advocates and Influences

01



HGV Routing and Traffic

Engagement with West Sussex County Council Highways — requires evidence, patience and persistent advocacy

02



White Horse Hotel

Planning and regeneration of a key gateway site — requires partnership with Horsham District Council

03



Public Toilets

Provision and maintenance — BAT to build the case for Parish Council and funding partners to act

04



Public Transport

Improved connections to support residents and visitors — long-term engagement with transport authorities

This distinction matters: BAT should focus its energy on what it can deliver directly, whilst building the evidence base and relationships needed to influence the issues that require statutory partners. Conflating the two risks frustration and loss of momentum.

Skills Within the Business Community

Thirty-one businesses responded with offers of practical support. The depth and breadth of expertise available means the BAT already has many of the skills needed to deliver projects.



16

Ready to Support

Happy to be kept informed and support where they can — a broad base of goodwill

01



10

Offering Skills

Can offer skills, knowledge or professional advice — a significant pool of expertise ready to deploy

02



9

Active Deliverers

Happy to help deliver a project — committed, hands-on contributors to BAT's work

03



9

Communications Network

Would like to help promote BAT activities — a ready-made marketing and social media network

04



6

Connected

Have contacts or connections that may help projects succeed

05



2

Project Leaders

Willing to lead a project — and two further businesses can help identify funding opportunities

06



Skills already present in the room **include:**

marketing, events management, project management, design, photography, legal, social media, business development and community connections.

The talent to deliver is already here.





Representative Business Voices

The following quotations are drawn directly from Mentimeter survey responses and follow-up email submissions. They are reproduced verbatim and anonymously, and are representative of the broader themes raised across the engagement.



On the Meeting

- “This meeting was a breath of fresh air.”
- “You are completely on point with the need for the businesses to pull together and create an energy of oneness.”
- “Thanks for holding the meeting — I'm excited to get some stuff moving at last.”
- “Thank you for your efforts and attention in making Storrington a more vibrant economy.”



On the Challenges

- “The traffic is overwhelming. Lorries feel quite scary thundering past. It makes Storrington a less pleasant place to walk around.”
- “The road has divided the village in two by excessive amounts of HGVs and traffic.”
- “Lack of cohesion. Lots of groups but only limited joint activity and communication.”
- “Biggest challenge and opportunity. getting businesses to work together and put in effort as a team.”
- “Lack of good leisure facilities that would attract visitors — restaurants, gift shops, quality visitor centre for the village and local area including the adjacent National Park.”



On Storrington's Strengths

- “It's a hub village which can draw in customers from a wide radius.”

- “Brilliant businesses in an incredible location.”

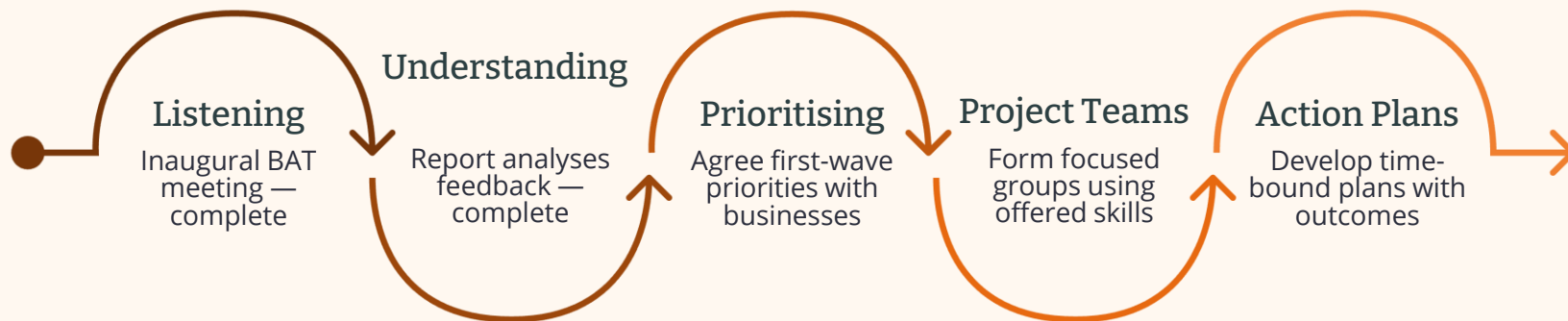
- “The resilience of the residents and the community essence in the village.”

- “Passionate business owners — we have to work very hard to keep our businesses open. A community that wants the village to thrive.”

- “Being a Gateway to the South Downs.”


Acting — The Road Ahead

Listening and understanding are complete. The next phase is action. This section sets out the structured pathway from the evidence gathered at the inaugural meeting to practical, measurable delivery on the ground in Storrington.



What Happens Next

- **Prioritising:** BAT will work with businesses to agree the first wave of practical priorities from the evidence base in this report
- **Project Teams:** Small, focused groups will form around specific projects — drawing on the skills already offered at the inaugural meeting
- **Action Plans:** Each project team will develop a clear, time-bound plan with defined outcomes and named leads

How Progress Will Be Shared

- **Delivery:** Projects will be delivered, communicated and celebrated — building confidence and momentum across the business community
- **Review:** Progress will be reported back to businesses at regular intervals, with clear metrics and honest assessment of what is working

A Strong Foundation

The Business Action Team has established a strong foundation at its very first meeting. What was demonstrated in that room and online — enthusiasm, openness, expertise and a genuine willingness to contribute — is the rarest and most valuable ingredient for change.

Genuine Enthusiasm

Businesses have demonstrated real energy and openness — this is not passive participation but active investment in Storrington's future.

Clear Appetite for Collaboration

There is a compelling and consistent appetite for working together across the business community — BAT provides the structure to channel it.

Credible Evidence Base

The feedback gathered provides a robust, evidence-based platform for future priorities, funding applications and statutory engagement.

Ideas Into Projects

The next step is to convert ideas into practical projects — projects that strengthen Storrington as a place to live, work, visit and do business.

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