



SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

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4 December 2017

To: All Members of the Tourism & Economy Committee
(Cllrs: Ian Barlow, David Barratt, Jack Brokenshire, Louise Cole, John Dyson, John Hollick, Stuart Hughes, Sheila Kerridge, Marc Kilsbie, Dawn Manley, Ian McKenzie-Edwards, Frances Newth, Simon Pollentine, John Rayson, Paul Wright)

Invited Representatives:

Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce Representatives (x2)

Sidmouth Information Manager
Clerk of the Council

For Information:

Other Members of the Council
EDDC Member Champion for Tourism

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council's Tourism & Economy Committee
Monday 11 December 2017 at 6.30pm**

You are hereby summoned to attend the above meeting to be held in the Council Chamber, Woolcombe House, Sidmouth. It is proposed that the matters set out on the agenda below will be considered at the meeting and resolution or resolutions passed as the Council considers appropriate.

Yours faithfully,

Christopher E Holland
Town Clerk

A G E N D A

1 **Apologies**

To receive any apologies for absence.

2 **Minutes**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Tourism & Economy Committee meeting held on Monday 11 September 2017.

3 – 4

3 **Declarations of Interest**

To receive any Members' declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.
Note: You must also declare the nature of any personal or prejudicial interests in an item whenever it becomes apparent that you have an interest in the business being considered.

- 4 **Matters of Urgency**
To consider any items that in the opinion of the Chairman should be dealt with as matters of urgency because of special circumstances. (Note: such circumstances need to be recorded in the minutes)
- 5 **Exclusion of the Public**
To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the press) have been excluded. There are no items which the Clerk recommends should be dealt with in this way.
- 6 **Information Centre Manager’s Report & Financial Report**
- a) To receive the attached report from the Information Centre Manager. 5
 - b) To receive the Finance Report for the period to October 2017 in respect of the Sidmouth Information Centre. 6
- 7 **Town Guide Finance and Distribution Figures**
- a) To note the Income and Expenditure Report for the period to October 2017. 7
 - b) To note the Guide Distribution figures for the period to November 2017. 8
- 8 **Guide Advertising**
To receive a presentation from the Town Council’s advertising agent, Paul Raybould
- 9 **Matters Raised by Invited Representatives**
- a) To consider the attached reports received from Richard Eley regarding the creation of: 9 – 11
 - i) A signed walk in and around Sidmouth.
 - ii) A linear park walk in Sidmouth.
 - b) To consider any other items or matters to be raised by the representatives of the Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce.

Forthcoming Council and Committee meetings:

- 13 December 2017 – Planning Committee
- 8 January 2018 – Council
- 10 January 2018 – Planning Committee
- 22 January 2018 – Estimates and Grants
- 24 January 2018 – Planning Committee

SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council's
Tourism and Economy Committee
held at the Council Chamber, Woolcombe House, Sidmouth,
on Monday 11 September 2017 at 6.30 pm

Councillors present: - Simon Pollentine (Chairman)
 Frances Newth (Vice-Chairman)
 Ian Barlow
 Jack Brokenshire
 Louise Cole
 John Dyson
 Stuart Hughes
 Marc Kilsbie
 John Rayson
 Paul Wright

Apologies: David Barratt, John Hollick, Sheila Kerridge, Dawn Manley,
 Ian McKenzie-Edwards

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 7.45pm

PART 'A'

13 Minutes

The Minutes of the Tourism & Economy Committee meeting held on Monday 19 June 2017 were signed as a true and accurate record.

14 Declarations of Interest

Name	Item Number	Type	Action Taken	Details
Cllr Marc Kilsbie	16 Information Centre Mgrs Report and Financial Report	Personal	Remained in the Chamber	Sidmouth retailer
Cllr Simon Pollentine	16 Information Centre Mgrs Report and Financial Report	Personal	Remained in the Chamber	Sidmouth retailer
Cllr Louise Cole	19 The Ham	Personal	Remained in the Chamber	Sidmouth Seafest organiser

15 Matters of Urgency and Report

- The Chairman reported that it was hoped that Making it Local funding may become available to support the creation of the Apple Trail.
- It was proposed that a TaFF be set up to investigate the observations taken from the festival/event organisers at the last Tourism & Economy meeting together with the Community Actions created from the Neighbourhood Plan feedback and discuss how best to maximise the potential of shared working and accessing funding available from outside bodies such as the Jurassic Coast team etc.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk email all the Members of the Tourism & Economy Committee to ascertain who wished to volunteer to serve on the Festivals and Events Shared Working TaFF.

16 Information Centre Manager's Report & Financial Report

1) Jeff Bailey, Sidmouth Information Centre Manager, presented his report.

RESOLVED: That the Information Centre Manager's report be noted.

- 2) Councillor Pollentine presented the Finance Report for the period to July 2017 in respect of the Sidmouth Information Centre.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) the Sidmouth Information Centre's Finance Report be noted and agreed.
- 2) the Town Clerk to review the layout of the Information Centre to maximise its marketing potential.
- 3) Members confirmed their previous policy that they did not want the Information Centre to directly compete with Sidmouth retailers by offering the same products.

17 Town Guide Finance and Distribution Figures

The Chairman presented the Income and Expenditure Report for the period to July 2017 and the latest Guide distribution figures for the period to August 2017.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Town Guide Income and Expenditure Report for the period to July 2017 be noted and agreed.
- 2) That the August 2017 Guide distribution figures be noted.
- 3) The email database would be used to send a Christmas e-card to encourage people to revisit Sidmouth as a holiday destination.

18 Red Arrows Display

The Town Clerk gave a brief update on the 2017 Red Arrows display which had been very successful with between 30-35,000 people attending. Approximately £14,500 had been collected which was anticipated would be sufficient to cover this year's expenditure. The Red Arrows display had now become a significant event and would require a fuller event management plan and traffic management plan for future years which would incur further event costs

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) The Town Clerk would write a letter of thanks to the Regatta Committee to thank them for all their hard work undertaking the collections for the Red Arrows display.
- 2) The Chamber of Commerce be asked to encourage more local retailers to remain open later whilst the town is so busy.
- 3) Members note the likely increased expenditure on the event due to increased event planning.

19 The Ham

At the August Trustee meeting it was resolved that a request to use The Ham should be deferred to the next Tourism & Economy meeting.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) permission be granted to Unique Boutique Markets to hold an evening street food market on a series of dates during the summer of 2018 and an event combining a street food market and an art and contemporary craft market on Saturday 18 November 2017.
- 2) The current fees and bond charge would apply with no reduction for these events.
- 3) It must be recognised that Sidmouth is a Fair-Trade town when choosing stall holders.
- 4) Local retailers should also be encouraged to become stall holders.
- 5) Dates of the market operating must fit within the existing usage of the Ham.
- 6) The permission to use The Ham would be confirmed at the next Trustee meeting.

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CHAIRMAN OF THE TOURISM & ECONOMY COMMITTEE



***Sidmouth Information Centre
Report to Tourism & Economy Committee
on Monday 11 December 2017***

Activity Levels

As previously reported, visitor numbers to the SIC were slightly down on previous years and this appears to have been the case with businesses across the town. Visitor numbers peaked at 2,454 during Folk Week (2,700 in 2016) whilst the next week remained high at 1,631. The next highest week for visitor numbers after Folk Week was the week culminating with the Red Arrows when 1,973 people visited the Centre.

Income streams

Folk week sales were slightly down on last year – due to the continuing migration to on-line bookings – by approx. 4%. With the loss of Sovereign Coaches our income from the only day-trip operator now serving Sidmouth (Hamilton-Gray). On the positive side, ticket sales for local events continue to hold up well. However, whilst we endeavour to maximise our income we must not lose sight of our primary function – to provide free information to residents and visitors to the town.

The Centre

The Information Centre opened at its present location in December 1991 and has received little maintenance or updating since then apart from new blinds inside and out. It is looking very tired and cluttered. An informal meeting has been held on-site with Cllr Mrs Cole, the Town Clerk and the SIC Manager and it was agreed that at the very least the interior should be redecorated. There is a hotchpotch of notice boards and carousels acquired over time and an overload of information which could be better categorised, displayed and perhaps reduced in quantity (i.e. less is more). It was felt that a small, comfortable seating area could be provided together with public access to a computer connected to the internet. There is large desk to the left when you enter the Centre which is only really used for a few weeks of the year for the issue of Folk week tickets. This could be removed to provide more display space – although alternative space for the issue of Folk Week tickets for those few weeks will need to be considered.

It is thought that though an outside design consultant could be used, initially two of the current staff may be able to take on the project in liaison with Cllr Mrs Cole and the Town Clerk.

No costings for any of these improvements has been obtained and there is no funding available from within the Information Centre Budget, so a separate budgetary item would need to be created for this purpose. Before embarking on what could be a redesign exercise with financial implications, the consent of the Tourism and Economy Committee is sought.

Recommended:

- 1) That the report of the Manager be noted.
- 2) That the upgrading of the interior of the Information Centre be considered with appropriate provision made during the Council's 2018/19 budgeting process.

**Sidmouth Tourist Information Centre - Income and Expenditure Report
Month 7 - October 2017**

	Actual Year to Date	Current Annual Budget	Budget Variance
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Salaries	23,500	33,800	10,300
Cleaning & Office Mtce	211	300	89
Office Postage	368	300	-68
Stationery	317	400	83
Telephone	717	1,200	483
Photocopier	82	200	118
Computer & Internet	0	500	500
Sundries, Provisions, Equipment	241	300	59
Credit Card Charges	1,023	1,200	177
Purchase of Stamps	1,593	1,000	-593
Purchase of Publications	3,598	4,000	402
Purchase of Goods	1,527	1,800	273
	£33,177	£45,000	£11,823

Income

Sale of Stamps	1,905	2,200	295
Sale of Publications	6,318	8,600	2,282
Sale of Goods	1,973	3,000	1,027
Accomodation Commission	1,094	2,000	906
Commission - Sidmouth Folk Week	4,080	4,900	820
Commission - Coaches	116	400	284
Commission - Car/Coach Park	645	1,100	455
Comm & Discount Vouchers	561	1,000	439
Sundry Income	137	200	63
STC Funding	21,600	21,600	0
	£38,429	£45,000	£6,571

Total Expenditure	£33,177	£45,000	£11,823
Total Income	£38,429	£45,000	£6,571
Net Expenditure over Income	-£5,252	£0	£5,252

Current/Deposit Bank Accounts £9,381

**Sidmouth Town Guide - Income and Expenditure Report
Month 7 - October 2017**

	Actual Year to Date	Current Annual Budget	Budget Variance
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Guide & Directory Printing	0	15,700	15,700
Promotion	0	6,400	6,400
Postage	1,786	13,000	11,214
Envelopes	0	0	0
Guide & Directory Administration	0	10,000	10,000
Website Hosting & Updates	90	200	110
Bank Charges	54	100	46
	£1,930	£45,400	£43,470
<u>Income</u>			
Guide Advertising Revenue	39,320	38,000	-1,320
Directory Advertising Revenue	6,665	7,600	935
Interest Received	0	0	0
	£45,985	£45,600	-£385
Total Expenditure	£1,930	£45,400	£43,470
Total Income	£45,985	£45,600	-£385
Net Expenditure over Income	-£44,055	-£200	£43,855

Current/Deposit Bank Accounts £45,955

Sidmouth Town Guide Distribution Figures - to the end of November

	2015	2016	2017
Holiday Guide Finder	754	624	596
Autumn Break	1,183	642	900
UKHOL	4,463	3,727	8,300
Bitesize	390	2,218	3,110
Plan a UK Holiday	1,613	1,979	
Where to go in Britain	1,929	1,984	
Heart of Devon	7	1	
TOTAL from advertisements/leaflets	10,339	11,175	12,906
Been before/Update previous guide	341	383	267
All advertisers (Guide & Town Directory)	93	83	92
Visitsidmouth website	840	707	693
TIC's Nationwide	5,450	5,221	3,546
Sidmouth Information Centre	418	364	329
Email/Phone to Town Council office	96	45	39
TOTAL from other sources	7,238	6,803	4,966
TOTAL GUIDES SENT	17,577	17,978	17,872
TOTAL WEBSITE HITS	178,988	199,077	195,510

Summary regarding the creation of two definitive signed walks in and around Sidmouth

Why should Sidmouth encourage more walking?

Firstly, there are the obvious health benefits to walking, including loss of weight.

Secondly, walking can bring significant economic benefits. Walking is by far the most popular activity for tourists to the West of England. Walkers are arguably in the age group Sidmouth should be seeking to attract: typically, 25 to 60.

Thirdly, walking is an activity that is inexpensive to deliver and encourage. No new building needs to be erected, no planning issues are involved, and the cost of promotion and delivery are very low.

Sidmouth as a Walking Destination

We are very well placed indeed to support walking activity.

First and foremost, we have a marvellous mix of coastal and inland scenery, and a fine built environment. Sidmouth is a visually interesting and diverse place. With plenty of accommodation. Secondly, we have an exceptional network of public footpaths, country lanes, and public open spaces.

Thirdly, we are at the epicentre of East Devon walking, sitting at the mid-points of both the East Devon Way and the Devon section of the Jurassic Coast and Coast Path. If the Apple Trail comes to fruition, we have the link between those two roughly parallel routes, and we are at the finish of another. We are the obvious accommodation choice for any walking holiday in our area.

Fourthly, we already have an established walking festival and Walkers Are Welcome status.

In short, we are on the national 'walking map' and tick all the obvious boxes.

Why do we need signed routes?

Signage is absolutely imperative. Visitors often have restricted time and tight schedules. They need to know where they are going, not to get lost in a place they do not know well, and have a clear idea of distances and times required. Nothing annoys walkers more than losing the path through no fault of their own!

Signage is also an unobtrusive, but very effective advertisement for the route. Signed routes will have a much stronger identity or 'brand'.

Signage also bestows reassurance. Walkers will know that the route is likely to be safe, attractive, and reasonably well maintained. It is also social: other walkers are likely to be using the same route. A signed definitive route will have an accompanying web presence.

Having two definitive signed routes will not detract from other ways that have been identified less strongly over the years. Many of these are mentioned on websites and/or have pamphlets available. These routes will not be undermined: on the contrary, the stronger 'brand' of signed routes and the boost to Sidmouth as a walking destination will increase overall walking activity, and bring new walkers to these established paths.

What do we want from our signed paths?

A personal view:

I think we need a good day's walk that reaches the perimeter of our jurisdiction, and showcases all that Sidmouth and its surroundings have to offer. A route that celebrates the variety of our landscape and the diversity of our built environment. So, I would recommend an itinerary that reaches out to Sidbury and Salcombe Regis, and visits all the principle architectural styles and landscape uses. A route that shows off Sidmouth to the maximum. This means a circular walk of about 13 miles. But it will not be a slog: the steepest slopes will generally be avoided, the various footpaths are all passable in winter, there are food and drink opportunities, and bus options available.

The key, it seems to me, is to maximise the enjoyment to the walker. So, I would not try to give the longer walk a theme, or a particular emphasis. Just make it as nice and interesting as possible. There should also be a shortish, highly accessible town centre walk that visits the principal tourist attractions, such as public gardens and The Esplanade, and some of the town's most important buildings and architecture. A walk that explains the history of Sidmouth and entertains the visitor.

Distinctiveness

There are many signed walks around the country, so Sidmouth is unusual in having none. It is important to make Sidmouth's offer distinctive so that it stands out from the crowd and attracts participation. Firstly, it must be high quality, in terms of the design and standard of its signage, web presence and pamphlets. The routes must be chosen with great care. The identities need to be strong.

Cost

The cost of signing the 13-mile route can be kept to a minimum by simply using the plastic discs that are commonly employed for that purpose. A surprisingly large number will be required: perhaps as many as 4 to 500, as they have to point in both directions. The cheaper versions are about £1 each, but they are not the most resilient material, so a more expensive choice might be more economical in the longer term. Finger posts are about £100 each, or more. But these might not be needed at all, as Sidmouth's network is well signed already. A survey of the chosen route will be required in due course. The town walk is much shorter, but will need much more frequent signage. It would be nice to have a very high quality 'badge', perhaps of metal. The shorter walk should probably be one-directional to avoid confusion.

With web-site work, and suitable pamphlets, a reasonable estimate of the total cost of properly implementing both walks would be £5,000 to £10,000. There are several potential funding sources. Generally speaking, it is better to do nothing than to do it badly, and 'cheapen the brand'.

Delivery

We have found, with the Apple Trail, that a team of three has worked well, so a large committee is probably best avoided, as there is a danger of getting 'bogged down'. The team needs to be independent and not representing sectional interests, otherwise the routes, in particular, will develop a 'slant' which will not be in the interests of the wider community. Broad principles should, of course, be determined by the Town Council as STC is the appropriate body for supervising the process. STC would be in charge of arranging permissions for signage, which should not be a problem.

The Concept of a Linear Park

The notion of linear parks has been around almost as long as the idea of parks themselves, and there are numerous examples around the world. They usually attach themselves to a specific feature like a lake, a highway or an abandoned railway line. They are also associated with footpaths. In a sense, the Jurassic Coast designation is a linear park.

There is a strong argument for allying the concept to a proposed long-distance walk for Sidmouth. It is really just a device for saying 'this walk is special' and we want to develop in a slightly more ambitious way than would otherwise be the case.

So, for example:

Planting

There could be all kinds of planting: trees, shrubs, bulbs, wild flowers, etc. Planting to record and commemorate events or people, but more especially planting to enhance the experience and support wildlife and nature. What we don't want is to try and create an artificial manufactured look in the rural parts of the Sid Valley. But ornamental trees might well be appropriate in the town centre or residential areas.

Example: To mark Remembrance Day 2018, the 100th anniversary of the Armistice, we could scatter poppy seeds along the route. Or a cherry tree could be planted for every name on the War Memorial.

Public Realm

It would be desirable to try and improve the public realm along the route. So, for example, repair stiles, make footbridges safer, repair steps. Volunteers on the Coast Path have done some beautiful stone walling around stiles for example. We are fortunate that our footpaths are in good condition, but we could possibly lift the bar. Signage could be upgraded in some circumstances, and made consistent along the route. The odd seat could be introduced where appropriate. Signs could be cleaned and/or repainted. Gates, when in need of replacement, could be upgraded. The Victorians made some very beautiful kissing gates: why shouldn't we?

Example: the finger posts along the route could have their corners slightly chamfered, and the chamfers slightly stained in green. Everyone would notice, but no-one would object.

Mileposts or milestones might be a nice idea. Every walker likes to know how far they have walked and how far there is to go. They can be quite understated and discreet: we don't want the route festooned with signs.

Often town centre routes are 'marked' with little brass plates inserted every hundred yards or so in the pavement.

Strategic Improvements

Linear park status might encourage a general upgrading of the route in all respects.

Example: crossing points over main roads might be upgraded to make them safer. Or sections on narrow lanes without pavements could be addressed.

Litter Picking

It is today unrealistic to expect this task to be performed by local authorities. But it is something that can be very easily undertaken by volunteers. There are many people in Sidmouth quietly performing this task already.

Art

No, we don't want sculptures, statues and murals everywhere on the route! But art can be subtle. Things like kissing gates, stiles and seats offer opportunity, without threatening the countryside.

Example: topiary could be encouraged in gardens along the route.

Or, in the town, every window along the shorter route should be encouraged to display a Father Christmas.