



# SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

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3 December 2018

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  
Town Clerk

For Information:

Other Members of the Council  
EDDC Member Champion for Tourism

Dear Sir/Madam,

## **Meeting of the Tourism & Economy Committee Monday 10 December 2018 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**

- |   | <u>Page/s</u> |
|---|---------------|
| 1 <b>Apologies</b><br>To receive any apologies for absence.   |               |
| 2 <b>Minutes</b><br>To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Tourism & Economy Committee meeting held on Monday 11 June 2018.   | 3 – 4         |
| 3 <b>Declarations of Interest</b><br>To receive any Members' declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.<br>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 and Report**

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 – 6 |
| b) To receive the Finance Report for the period to October 2018 in respect of the Sidmouth Information Centre. | 7     |

7 **Town Guide Finance and Distribution Figures**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| a) To note the Income and Expenditure Report for the period to October 2018. | 8 |
| b) To note the Guide Distribution figures for the period to November 2018.   | 9 |

8 **Large Scale Festivals and Events 2019**

To note the larger-scale events and festivals already planned for 2019:

- May 18 – Sidmouth Sea Fest
- June 15 to 17 – Sidmouth Literary Festival (dates to be confirmed)
- August 2 to 9 - Sidmouth Folk Week
- August 23 – Sidmouth Air Display
- August 24 & 25 - Sidmouth Regatta
- September 21 to 27 – Sidmouth Walking Festival
- October 4 to 13 – Sidmouth Science Festival

For a full list of events, see: [www.visitsidmouth.co.uk/sidmouth-events](http://www.visitsidmouth.co.uk/sidmouth-events)

9 **Signed Walks Project**

To receive an update from Richard Eley on the project to create additional signed walks in the town.

10 **Unregulated Online Hospitality Industry**

To consider the email and receive a report from Jo Watson, General Manager of Sidmouth Hotels regarding the challenges facing the hospitality industry from Online Hospitality companies such as Air B & B. 10 – 11

11 **Matters Raised by Invited Representatives**

To consider any other items or matters to be raised by the representatives of the Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce.

- a) Festival of Britain 2022
- b) Provision of free wifi in town

**Forthcoming Council and Committee meetings:**

12 December 2018 – Planning Committee

7 January 2019 - Council

9 January 2019 – Planning Committee

21 January 2019 – Estimates and Grants

23 January 2019 – Planning Committee

4 February 2019 – Council

**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 June 2018 at 6.30pm**

Councillors present: - Simon Pollentine (Chairman)  
 Frances Newth (Vice Chairman)  
 Ian Barlow  
 David Barratt  
 Jack Brokenshire  
 Louise Cole  
 John Dyson  
 Stuart Hughes  
 Sheila Kerridge  
 Marc Kilsbie  
 Dawn Manley  
 Ian McKenzie-Edwards  
 John Rayson  
 Paul Wright

There were no apologies received for this meeting.

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.20pm

**PART 'A'**

**1 Minutes**

The Minutes of the Tourism & Economy Committee meeting held on Monday 12 March 2018 were signed as a true and accurate record.

**2 Declarations of Interest**

Name	Item Number	Type	Action Taken	Details
Cllr Marc Kilsbie	10 Advertising Rates	Disclosable Pecuniary	Left the Chamber during discussion and voting	Town Guide Advertiser

**3 Exclusion of the Public**

**RESOLVED:** that the classification given to the documents to be submitted to the Council, be confirmed, and that the reports relating to exempt information, be dealt with under Part B.

**4 Information Centre Manager's Report & Financial Report**

a) Jeff Bailey, Information Centre Manager, presented the Information Centre's report.

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

b) The Chairman presented the Finance Report for the Financial Year End to March 2018 in respect of the Sidmouth Information Centre.

**RESOLVED:** That the Sidmouth Information Centre's Finance Report be noted and agreed.

**5 Town Guide Finance and Distribution Figures**

The Chairman presented the Income and Expenditure Report for the Financial Year End to March 2018 and the latest Guide distribution figures for the period to May 2018.

**RESOLVED:** That:

- 1) the Town Guide Income and Expenditure Report for the Financial Year End to March 2018 be noted and agreed.
- 2) the May 2018 Guide distribution figures be noted.

**6 Voyage Travel Marketing Sidmouth Video**

The Town Clerk showed the Sidmouth video which was available on Visit Sidmouth’s Facebook page and YouTube as well as being shared by other tourism partners.

**RESOLVED:** That Members welcomed the inclusion of videos on the Visit Sidmouth Facebook page and encouraged its use and further videos.

**7 Red Arrows and Battle of Britain Memorial Flight**

The Town Clerk gave an update on the forthcoming Red Arrows and Battle of Britain Memorial Flight display in Sidmouth on Friday 24 August 2018 which would involve increased parking and traffic management processes.

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Clerk’s Red Arrows report be noted.

**8 Town Centre Viability**

Councillor Pollentine, Chairman of Tourism & Economy Committee with David Wheaton and Sally Mynard, Chamber of Commerce reported on the recent meeting convened by Hugo Swire MP which discussed town centre viability.

**RESOLVED:** That:

- 1) Hugo Swire MP be asked what will be done with the information gathered from the Independent Traders questionnaire that had been circulated.
- 2) Hugo Swire MP to be sent a copy of the draft Sid Valley Neighbourhood Plan along with the Business and Special Interest Group analysis report.
- 3) Hugo Swire MP be invited to meet with Town, District and County Council representatives, Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce and invited representatives of the Sidmouth hotels and guest houses.

**9 Exclusion of the Public and Press**

**RESOLVED:** That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting due to the confidential nature of its contents.

**PART ‘B’**

**10 Advertising Rates**

Members were asked to consider the advertising rates for the 2019 Guide and Directory as recommended by the Town Clerk.

**RESOLVED:** That the recommended rates be agreed.

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CHAIRMAN OF THE TOURISM & ECONOMY COMMITTEE



**Sidmouth Information Centre  
Manager's Report  
for the meeting of the  
Tourism & Publicity Committee on 10 December 2018**

**ACTIVITY LEVELS**

As reported to the last meeting, business was very slow in starting early in the year - probably due to the poor spring weather, but levels picked up with the good summer weather. Several Hotel and Guest House owners experienced a similar slow start. There is a definite change in people's accommodation requirements and booking habits. It seems to us at the Information Centre that visitors are not booking the weekly/two weekly slots as in the past but are looking at weather forecasts before deciding to book shorter two or three day breaks.

**REFURBISHMENT**

The refurbishment of the Information centre was completed in time for the opening of the Summer Season. The redecoration, lighting and display carousels have been very favourably received and have improved the ambience for both customers and staff alike and enhanced the customer experience. Members are encouraged to visit the Centre either during opening hours or at other times by arrangement with the Manager.

**SIDMOUTH FOLK WEEK**

Sales of telephone and postal bookings made at the Information Centre are significantly down on 2017 (approximately 10%) with the continuing migration to direct on-line sales. It must be emphasised, that this is not an indication that overall sales were down, indeed, Folk Week was very well attended this year. A large proportion of Information Centre Folk Week bookings are now local residents buying and collecting their tickets with the "Residents Discount". These tickets cannot be bought on-line. This decrease in sales at the Information Centre obviously has an impact on the commission earned.

**HAMILTON-GRAY COACHES**

The sole remaining company operating day trips from Sidmouth through the Centre, Hamilton-Gray, had their Operator's Licence revoked by the Traffic Commissioner at the end of October. They appear to have been reformed into another company and we are attempting to clarify how the new company will operate. This again may have a longer term negative effect on our income.

**PAYMENT CARD INDUSTRY DATA SECURITY STANDARDS**

Appropriate action has again been taken to ensure that the Information Centre continues to comply with these standards.

**OPENING HOURS / STAFFING**

We now have 3 summer seasonal staff bringing the "pool" of staff, including the Manager, up to 6 for the Summer months. We commenced the summer opening hours (Monday – Saturday 10.00 to 17.00, Sundays and Bank Holidays 10.00 to 16.00) on 1<sup>st</sup> May and changed to Winter hours (Monday to Saturday 10.00 to 13.30) on 1<sup>st</sup> October.

## **JURASSIC COAST INFORMATION CENTRE**

The Information Centre staff also open and close the Jurassic Coast Interpretation Centre and check it for any problems at the start and end of their working day. It has been discussed recently that it is time to refresh and renew the display. The Town Clerk took the opportunity of speaking with Sam Rose, Chief Executive of the Dorset and East Devon Jurassic Coast who made a recent presentation to the Council. He has agreed to look at what support he can give to the Council including finance available to help promote the World Heritage site.

## **RECOMMENDED**

That the Committee note the report of the Manager of the Information Centre

**Sidmouth Tourist Information Centre - Income and Expenditure Report  
Month 7 - October 2018**

	Actual Year to Date	Current Annual Budget	Budget Variance
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>			
Salaries	25,823	33,500	7,677
Cleaning & Office Mtce	12	300	288
TIC Refurbishment	4,068	5,000	932
Office Postage	4	400	396
Stationery	97	400	303
Telephone	990	900	-90
Photocopier	97	150	53
Computer & Internet	0	100	100
Sundries, Provisions, Equipment	99	250	151
Credit Card Charges	760	1,400	640
Purchase of Stamps	2,953	1,500	-1,453
Purchase of Publications	3,046	4,300	1,254
Purchase of Goods	402	1,500	1,098
	<b>£38,351</b>	<b>£49,700</b>	<b>£11,349</b>
<b><u>Income</u></b>			
Sale of Stamps	1,961	2,400	439
Sale of Publications	5,975	7,400	1,425
Sale of Goods	1,618	2,300	682
Accomodation Commission	815	1,200	385
Commission - Sidmouth Folk Week	2,402	5,700	3,298
Commission - Coaches	136	200	64
Commission - Car/Coach Park	630	700	70
Comm & Discount Vouchers	450	600	150
Sundry Income	149	200	51
STC Funding	26,600	26,600	0
	<b>£40,736</b>	<b>£47,300</b>	<b>£6,564</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£38,351</b>	<b>£49,700</b>	<b>£11,349</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£40,736</b>	<b>£47,300</b>	<b>£6,564</b>
<b>Net Expenditure over Income</b>	<b>-£2,385</b>	<b>£2,400</b>	<b>£4,785</b>
 <b>Current/Deposit Bank Accounts</b>	 £7,145		

**Sidmouth Town Guide - Income and Expenditure Report  
Month 7 - October 2018**

	Actual Year to Date	Current Annual Budget	Budget Variance
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>			
Guide & Directory Printing	0	15,700	15,700
Promotion	0	6,400	6,400
Postage	4,064	13,000	8,936
Envelopes	0	0	0
Guide & Directory Administration	0	10,000	10,000
Website Hosting & Updates	0	200	200
Bank Charges	47	100	53
	<b>£4,111</b>	<b>£45,400</b>	<b>£41,289</b>
<b><u>Income</u></b>			
Guide Advertising Revenue	32,025	38,000	5,975
Directory Advertising Revenue	6,300	7,600	1,300
Interest Received	8	0	-8
	<b>£38,333</b>	<b>£45,600</b>	<b>£7,267</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£4,111</b>	<b>£45,400</b>	<b>£41,289</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£38,333</b>	<b>£45,600</b>	<b>£7,267</b>
<b>Net Expenditure over Income</b>	<b>-£34,222</b>	<b>-£200</b>	<b>£34,022</b>

**Current/Deposit Bank Accounts** £41,542

**Sidmouth Town Guide Distribution Figures - to the end of November**

	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
UKHOL	3,727	8,186	6,239
Bitesize	2,218	3,110	3,894
Holiday Directory			1,809
Holiday Brochure		114	98
Plan a UK Holiday	1,979		
Where to go in Britain	1,984		
Holiday Guide Finder	624	596	269
Heart of Devon & Autumn Break	643	900	
TOTAL from advertisements/leaflets	11,175	12,906	12,309
Been before/Update previous guide	382	264	244
All advertisers (Guide & Town Directory)	83	92	95
Visitsidmouth website	707	693	703
TIC's Nationwide	5,222	3,549	3,578
Sidmouth Information Centre	364	329	402
Email/Phone to Town Council office	45	39	55
TOTAL from other sources	6,803	4,966	5,077
<b>TOTAL GUIDES SENT</b>	<b>17,978</b>	<b>17,872</b>	<b>17,386</b>
<b>TOTAL WEBSITE HITS</b>	<b>199,077</b>	<b>195,510</b>	<b>211,121</b>

**Email from:** Jo Watson, Sidmouth Hotels

**Sent:** 30 November 2018

We have been to a few tourism conferences lately and I have spoken to a few of the Sidmouth chamber members regarding the prevalence of Air B&B and the negative impact on our accommodation businesses in the town. I have been told there is a tourism meeting in December and wondered if this was something the town council would be interested in discussing, I am happy to be involved or maybe someone from the Chamber?

With the growing prevalence of Air B&B accommodation in the town we have seen a significant negative impact on the number of visitors staying with us across our businesses. We have spoken to other accommodation providers in the town and surrounding areas who have had similar experiences. We feel this sector is providing a completely unsafe, unregulated provision of accommodation within the town.

To give you an idea Air B&B and the accommodation sharing economy now makes up ½ of Torbay's accommodation stock.

There are 188 Air B&B properties in the Sidmouth area which are in direct competition with our hotels, B&B's and accommodation providers in the town, although competition is always good, Air B&B provides an unlevel playing field in the accommodation sector. There are no requirements for any regulation, taxation, health and safety requirements and ultimately this has a significant impact on the safety of the accommodation and of the ability to offer accommodation at a reduced rate compared to many accommodation providers in the town which have to abide by all these regulations to trade and pay taxes and businesses rates.

Clause 2 of Air B&B terms state the following:

*While we may help facilitate the resolution of disputes, Airbnb has no control over and does not guarantee (i) the existence, quality, safety, suitability, or legality of any Listings or Host Services, (ii) the truth or accuracy of any Listing descriptions, Ratings, Reviews, or other Member Content (as defined below), or (iii) the performance or conduct of any Member or third party. Airbnb does not endorse any Member, Listing or Host Services. Any references to a Member being "verified" (or similar language) only indicate that the Member has completed a relevant verification or identification process and nothing else. Any such description is not an endorsement, certification or guarantee by Airbnb about any Member, including of the Member's identity or background or whether the Member is trustworthy, safe or suitable. You should always exercise due diligence and care when deciding whether to stay in an Accommodation, participate in an Experience or Event or use other Host Services, accept a booking request from a Guest, or communicate and interact with other Members, whether online or in person. Verified Images (as defined below) are intended only to indicate a photographic representation of a Listing at the time the photograph was taken and are therefore not an endorsement by Airbnb of any Host or Listing.*

The sector is an accident waiting to happen, the concern is acting now before a 'Grenfell type' disaster occurs in an Air B&B property.

There is clearly a demand for this sector and it does generate tourism in an area which is great. However, as a town we feel we must push for a safe and legal system for the sharing economy and to ensure a level playing field for all sectors of the market. How can we address this on a local level?

All-party parliamentary group has published a report, which recognises there is an issue.

*'The report recognises that sharing economy accommodation businesses can enhance tourism industry growth by providing increased capacity, enhancing customer choice, and providing visitors with the opportunity for new experiences during their stay.*

*However, it also highlights the need to protect customer safety, maintain a level regulatory playing field across the tourism industry, take into account the needs of local communities, and ensure that all operators of tourism accommodation are paying the appropriate level of tax.*

*The report finds that sharing economy platforms continue to be poor at ensuring properties listed on their sites comply with regulations, especially in relation to mandatory fire and health and safety requirements. The report also concludes that, while sharing economy websites began with homeowners making additional income from renting out a spare room, there is significant evidence that people are using these platforms to run tourism accommodation businesses. For example, in London, the owner is not present at around 50% of the 64,000 properties listed on Airbnb, while over 40% of properties are listed by someone who is listing multiple properties'*

We are looking for support and action we can take on a local level, to call for a safe, regulated level playing field within the accommodation market.