

**SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council**  
**held on Monday 10 August 2020 at 6.30pm**

(Due to the current COVID-19 situation, the Town Council met virtually  
as authorised by the Regulations set out in Clause 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020.)

Ward	Councillors Present:
Sidmouth North	Stuart Hughes
	Jenny Ware
Sidmouth South	Denise Bickley
	Kelvin Dent
	Chris Lockyear
	Paul Wright (Vice-Chair)
Sidmouth West	Louise Cole
Primley	Deirdre Hounsom
	Emma Murdoch
	Jeff Turner
Sidford	Marianne Rixson
Sidbury	John Loudoun
Salcombe Regis	Ian Barlow (Chair)

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.05pm.

## **PART 'A'**

### **133 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 3 March 2020 were signed as a true and accurate record.

### **134 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received for items on this agenda.

### **135 Matter of Urgency or Report from the Chair**

- The Chair reported that David Barratt had resigned as Town Councillor for Salcombe Regis Ward with immediate effect.
- The Town Clerk reported that Western Power Distribution and the RSPB had been discussing explorative schemes for undergrounding the 33KVA at Fire Beacon Hill, Sidmouth. Members, as landowner, gave their 'in-principle' support for this proposal prior to the required planning applications and public consultation.

### **136 Public Open Question Time**

- Councillor Jenny Ware raised concerns about the condition of Sidmouth Cemetery and asked whether/when the District Council were intending to clear the area. District Councillor Denise Bickley replied that during furlough the grassed area became wilder and was now being considered to become part of the national policy for Nature Recovery Networks for rewilding to enable wildflowers and butterflies. In the meantime, it was thought that pathways should be cut through to graves that were regularly visited.

- Cllr Chris Lockyear asked why the building blocks had been removed from The Ham and not retained to be used around the Pennington Point area as a short-term protection measure prior to the introduction of the forthcoming Beach Management report. County Councillor Hughes replied that the District Council had been offered them by the County Council but had decided not to use them; the blocks had now been crushed and removed.

**137 Police Report**

a) Sgt Roy Hutter introduced himself as the new Neighbourhood Beat Manager and presented the police report for April to July 2020 which showed 172 crimes compared to 195 for the same period last year, although there had unfortunately been an increase in nonviolent domestic crime.

It was noted that Steve Lee had retired and would not be replaced; Steve Harrington was also on sick leave and therefore the Neighbourhood team was currently much reduced in numbers, although there would be additional access to Special Constables.

b) Sidmouth Town Council had been invited to nominate a representative of the Council to join the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Councillor Advocate Scheme.

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Dent would represent Sidmouth Town Council as representative for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Councillor Advocate Scheme; Councillor Loudoun would act as reserve.

*Councillor Loudoun left the meeting prior to the next agenda item.*

**138 Committee/Working Group Reports**

138.1 Planning Committee Reports

Councillor Dent, Chair of the Planning Committee, presented the reports of the Planning Committee meetings held on Wednesdays 4 March; 10 and 24 June; 8 and 22 July 2020.

**RESOLVED:** That the Planning Committee reports be noted.

138.2 Tourism & Economy Committee Reports

Councillor Cole, Chair of the Tourism & Economy Committee, presented the reports of the Tourism & Economy Committee meetings held on Mondays 9 March and 20 July 2020.

Members were shown a preview presentation of the layout and content of the new Visit Sidmouth website, which had a soft launch on 4 August, with a public launch planned for 7 September 2020 and already showed a large increase in views and visitors to the pages. Members thanked those involved with the working of the new site so far.

Councillor Cole asked Members to consider purchasing a replacement webcam at Hotel Elizabeth from general reserves at a cost of approx. £850.00; this would bring all three webcams up to the same standard.

**RESOLVED:** That:

- 1) The Tourism & Economy Committee reports be noted.
- 2) A replacement webcam be installed at the Hotel Elizabeth to be purchased from general reserves at an approx. cost of £850.00

138.3 Environment Committee Report

Councillor Bickley, Chair of the Environment Committee, presented the report of the Environment Committee meeting held on Monday 13 July 2020.

**RESOLVED:** That the Environment Committee reports be noted.

**139 Reports from Members with Special Responsibilities**

139.1 Finance Report

a) In accordance with section 2.2 of the Town Council's Financial Regulations Members are asked to note that the Member with Special Responsibility for Finance has verified the bank reconciliations, for all accounts, as at the end of March and June 2020.

**RESOLVED:** That in accordance with section 2.2 of the Town Council's Financial Regulations, Members noted that the Member with Special Responsibility for Finance had verified the bank reconciliations, for all accounts, as at the end of March and June 2020.

b) To receive the Finance Report for the year ending 31 March 2020 together with a breakdown of Earmarked Reserves, Holding/Working Accounts and Other Reserves as at 31 March 2020.

**RESOLVED:** That the Finance Report for the year ending 31 March 2020 together with a breakdown of Earmarked Reserves, Holding/Working Accounts and Other Reserves as at 31 March 2020 be noted and agreed.

c) To receive the Finance Report for the first quarter April to June 2020

**RESOLVED:** That the Finance Report for April to June 2020 be noted and agreed.

d) To ratify the 'In principle' decision made during Covid-19 Lockdown, to allocate up to £10,000 if required, from General Reserves for the 3-month town centre traffic scheme put in place to enable safe social distancing for pedestrians. It was hoped that this would be part funded out of existing County and District Council grants.

The scheme would run from 22 June to 30 September.

**RESOLVED:** That the 'In principle' decision made during Covid-19 Lockdown, to allocate up to £10,000 if required, from General Reserves for the 3-month town centre traffic scheme be confirmed.

e) To confirm the 'In principle' decision made during Covid-19 Lockdown, to allocate £1,728 from General Reserve for the unplanned maintenance and replacement of the Port Royal webcam.

**RESOLVED:** That the 'In principle' decision made during Covid-19 Lockdown, to allocate £1,728 from General Reserve for the unplanned maintenance and replacement of the Port Royal webcam be confirmed.

**140 Financial Regulations**

Members were asked to review and confirm the proposed changes to Sidmouth Town Council's Financial Regulations; changes were to replace Chairman/men with Chair and amendments to items 2.2, 4.1, 5.2 and 6.4 to enable appropriate financial controls throughout any circumstances that required working from home.

**RESOLVED:** That the revised Financial Regulations 2020 be noted and agreed.

**141 Internal Audit**

Members confirmed that there were no changes to the copy of Sidmouth Town Council's Internal Audit Schedule 2019 as issued to Members in May 2019.

**142 Risk Assessment**

Members confirmed that there were no changes to the copy of Sidmouth Town Council's Risk Assessment 2019 as issued to Members in May 2019.

**143 Annual Return – Internal Audit Report 2019/20**

The Council's Internal Auditor, Mr. Martin Cordy, had undertaken the audit of the Council's accounts. Attached with the agenda was a copy of Mr Cordy's letter and Internal Audit Report for Members consideration. The Chair of Council thanked the staff for their hard work and exemplary production and maintenance of the Council's accounts as highlighted by the Internal Auditor in his letter.

**RESOLVED:** That the Internal Auditor Report be noted and agreed.

**144 Annual Return – Governance Statement 2019/20**

Members were asked to consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement as this would require completion prior to signing.

**RESOLVED:** That the Annual Governance Statement be noted and agreed for signing by the Chair and Town Clerk.

**145 Annual Return – Accounting Statements 2019/20**

Members were asked to consider and approve the Accounting Statements which had been duly certified and signed by the Town Clerk/RFO. Following approval, the Accounting Statement would be signed by the Chair.

**RESOLVED:** That the Statement of Accounts be noted and agreed for signing by the Chair.

**146 Review of Council Resources**

The Chair confirmed the appointment of Councillors Barlow, Dent, Lockyear and Turner to the newly formed Council Resources Working Group which would examine, review and report to Council on all aspects of the Council's responsibilities, workings and resource levels.

**147 Council Meeting Dates**

Due to Government restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic all Council and Committee meetings would continue to be held via Zoom until further notice; a list for September 2020 to May 2021 had been issued for Members information.

**RESOLVED:** That the meeting dates list be noted.

**148 Ash Dieback Survey for Sidmouth Town Council**

Members were asked to consider the Sidmouth Arboretum report regarding a proposed Ash Dieback survey to be carried out on trees on Council land in Sidmouth.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the Sidmouth Arboretum report be noted and continued in its production.
- 2) That any trees at Long Park deemed to be suffering severely from Ash Die Back be removed and replanted with native tree species using the Long Park Earmarked Reserve with other work to be included in the budget for 2021/22.
- 3) That a letter of thanks be sent to Sidmouth Arboretum for all their hard work surveying trees throughout Sidmouth.

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CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL