

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 10 December 2018 at 6.30 pm

Councillors present: - Simon Pollentine (Chairman)
 Frances Newth (Vice Chairman)

 Ian Barlow
 David Barratt
 Jack Brokenshire
 Sheila Kerridge
 Ian McKenzie-Edwards
 John Rayson
 Paul Wright

Apologies:- Louise Cole, Stuart Hughes, Marc Kilsbie, Dawn Manley

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.10pm

PART 'A'

11 Minutes

The Minutes of the Tourism & Economy Committee meeting held on Monday 11 June 2018 were signed as a true and accurate record.

12 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

13 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 period to October 2018 in respect of the Sidmouth Information Centre.

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

14 Town Guide Finance and Distribution Figures

The Chairman presented the Income and Expenditure Report for the period to October 2018 and the latest Guide distribution figures for the period to November 2018.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) the Town Guide Income and Expenditure Report be noted and agreed.
- 2) the November 2018 Guide distribution figures be noted.

15 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 17 – Sidmouth Food Festival (to be confirmed)
- August 23 – Sidmouth Air Display
- August 24 & 25 - Sidmouth Regatta
- September 21 – Sidmouth Carnival (date to be confirmed)
- 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.

- RESOLVED:**
- 1) That the list of large scale festivals and events 2019 be noted.
 - 2) That Councillors Ian Barlow and Sheila Kerridge and Ian be appointed to work with the Chamber of Commerce to investigate the feasibility of a large-scale hospitality-based food and drink type festival.
 - 3) That the Town Clerk investigates the possibility of the Council displaying a board on the entrances to Sidmouth showing the major Festivals and events in the year.

16 Signed Walks Project

Richard Eley updated Members on the project to create additional signed walks in the town. He circulated a map to Members showing the 13 mile long route and explained that there were choices available to walkers to do 7, 9 or all 13 miles.

RESOLVED: That the walks project team be thanked for their work to date on the project.

17 Unregulated Online Hospitality Industry

Members were asked to consider the email and report received from Jo Watson, General Manager of Sidmouth Hotels and Alastair Handyside regarding the challenges facing the hospitality industry from online hospitality companies such as Air B&B.

It was emphasised how online accommodation providers did not have to adhere to any rules or standards regarding health and safety. Customers were not guaranteed the standard, sustainability, safety or even existence of the accommodation once booked online and the online companies used disclaimers to absolve themselves of any responsibility. An All Party Parliamentary Group had begun to look at the issue and it was hoped that the Government would soon be acting. In the meantime, the Council's help and support was asked for to continue to lobby both Government and East Devon District Council to see what could be done to create a more level playing field with existing accommodation providers.

- RESOLVED:**
- 1) That the Council supports in any way it can, moves to provide assurances and regulate online accommodation providers in the same way as Hotels and Guest Houses.
 - 2) That the Town Clerk contact Sir Hugo Swire, Member of Parliament, to emphasise the Council's position on the issue and ask if he can lobby for changes at Government level.

18 Matters Raised by Invited Representatives

Representatives of Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce, raised the following issues:

- Provision of free Wi-Fi in town – Members continued to support the idea of free Wi-Fi provision in the town centre which had been discussed at the Tourism and Economy Committee once before with a view to linking in with a CCTV system for the town which the Police were continuing to work on developing.
- Festival of Britain 2022 – There was a £20 million fund which would be allocated to ‘host’ towns. It was suggested that Sidmouth might wish to put itself forward.
- Historic England Fund – It was noted that there was a significant fund of £675 million available for projects to help regenerate and develop towns in the country. It was agreed that any project would need to be reasonably simple and focussed. Match funding, such as S106 Tourism monies could help secure any funding bid. It was suggested that the fund should be applied to as soon as possible and that various projects as suggested by the Chamber of Commerce and the Neighbourhood Plan Community Actions should be considered.

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CHAIRMAN OF THE TOURISM & ECONOMY COMMITTEE