

**SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of a Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council's**  
**Environment Committee held on Monday 28 April 2021 at 6.30 pm**

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

Councillors present: Denise Bickley (Chair)  
Chris Lockyear (Vice Chair)  
Ian Barlow  
Marianne Rixson  
Dawn Manley  
Steven Kendall-Torry

Invited Reps: Jon Ball (Sidmouth Arboretum)  
Dave Bramley (Vision Group)  
Ed Dolphin(Sidmouth Arboretum)  
Diana East (Sidmouth Arboretum)  
Richard Eley, Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce  
Lynette Talbot  
Rachel Perram (Sidmouth Plastic Warriors)  
Jeremy Woodward(Vision Group of Sidmouth)

Apologies Stuart Hughes and Di Fuller (Sid Vale Association)

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.45pm

## **PART 'A'**

### **72 Minutes**

The minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on Monday 15 February 2021 were confirmed and agreed as a true record.

### **73 Declarations of Interest**

Name	Item Number	Type	Action Taken	Details
Cllr Denise Bickley	All items	Personal	Remained in the Meeting during discussion and voting	Member of Sidmouth Extinction Rebellion Member, Surfers Against Sewage SW Representative and Chair of Sidmouth Plastic Warriors and Sidmouth Biodiversity Group
Cllr Chris Lockyear	All items	Personal	Remained in the Meeting during discussion and voting	Member of Sidmouth Biodiversity Group

### **74 Matters of Urgency and Report**

There were no matters of urgency or report.

### **75 Exclusion of the Public**

There were no items required to be dealt with under Part B.

### **76 Natural Environment: Life on the Verge.**

Cllr Bickley updated the Committee on the new verge signs and managing the grasslands on the verges. Cllr Bickley asked for a vote on the recommendations by 'Managing Grassland Road Verges' from Plantlife regarding grass cutting regimes.

**Resolved;** 'The committee agreed the following cutting regime for areas identified for more environmentally sensitive management, where permitted by the Road Traffic Act and safety regulations' We need to ensure that the contractor is informed in writing what is expected.

- Cut the verge during February/March. This was before most verge plants flower and it would not disturb ground-nesting birds. Raising the cutter bar on the back cut would lower the risk to amphibians, reptiles and small mammals.
- Cut the verge again during September/October. This slightly later cutting allows plants that were cut earlier in the year time to grow and set seed. This cutting regime is particularly suited to areas with late-flowering species, which may not flower and set seed until September. It is also suited to areas with early flowering plants as it removes any shading vegetation prior to flowering.

Achieving low soil fertility was key to enhancing wildlife value. Most wild flowers were associated with lower fertility soils. Removing the arising at the point of cutting took biomass and the nutrients they contained away from the verge, which reduced the layer of dead grass and opened up the soil surface to allow seed germination.

**77 Natural Environment: Arboretum update on Ash dieback.**

Jon Ball gave an update detailing that so far there had been about 250 trees cut down due to Ash dieback throughout the area with about another 32,000 to come down over the next 10 year. Some of these trees were in private gardens but the majority in hedgerows. The Arboretum had been talking to the wildlife trust, saving Devon's trees about replacement trees.

**Resolved;** it was agreed that we would compile a list of local land owners and try to engage them in a more sensitive hedgerow management style. Richard Eley to start this.

**78 Natural Environment: Biodiversity Plan.**

Jeremy Woodward explained that the biodiversity group were carrying out a lot of background work and working on a full action plan for the next meeting which could then go forward to full council for discussion.

**79 Natural Environment: The Knowle**

Ed Dolphin explained they had an especially useful meeting at the Knowle where they discussed in detail the 3 main areas and were having a further meeting in the next few weeks to discuss what to do and at what time of the year.

**80 Engagement; Energy Usage**

Chris Lockyear presented data on the energy usage at all the Town Council buildings. For most buildings the usage was what was expected but Manstone Youth Centre had used far more gas and water than was expected so there would be an investigation into why.

**81 Natural Environment: Our Place Our Planet**

Denise Bickley explained that Our Place Our Planet was an Exmouth website designed to help people and businesses reduce their carbon footprint. Sidmouth Town Council could buy into this website and customise for Sidmouth. Local businesses could advertise on the site to promote their sustainable offers. The cost was Annual fees of £50 and £45 for 45 shops to advertise on the site. The committee agreed to support the idea up to a max of £250 and to review after 6 months.

- 82 Natural Environment: Carbon Footprint Awareness.**  
12 months ago, the campaign to raise awareness of people’s individual footprint was put on hold due to COVID. The committee was now happy for the campaign to restart and would be pushed through the Science Festival.  
**Resolved;** Dave Bramley is going to look at a potential project to understand Carbon footprint of Sidmouth in the context of the recent Government announcements on reducing carbon emissions.  
**Resolved;** Set up a working group to push forward the public engagement. Cllr Denise Bickley, Cllr Chris Lockyear, Dave Bramley, Jeremy Woodward, Cllr Marianne Rixson and Steven Kendall-Torry.
- 83 Natural Environment: How to engage with the wider community.**  
Discussion was held around how the wider community could be motivated to get more involved in saving the environment. It was agreed that Councillor Denise Bickley would design a newsletter which would be published on a regular basis. There would also be an email list put together with as many local peoples email as possible so the Council could send them the newsletter along with other avenues of distribution.
- 84 Low Carbon Town: eTrikes.**  
Discussion was held on this idea of eTrikes in the town. The latter was not possible as it is not permitted.
- 85 Natural Environment: Planters to demarcate the ‘Pedestrian Zoners’.**  
Lynette Talbot made a presentation on different planters for the town to outline the pedestrian priority area' Discussions are ongoing with DCC about the creation of a pedestrian priority area and the procurement of planters would be put on hold until the scheme had been agreed.
- 86 Natural Environment: Cycle racks.**  
This item was deferred to the next meeting.
- 87 AOB1:** Awards, The Vision Group for Sidmouth were making awards; there were 3 Champions awards Sustainability, Resilience and Community.  
**AOB2:** Glyphosate report due at EDDC soon so to be brought to next meeting.  
**Aob3:** Report on bus shelters compiled by Dave Rafferty, progress to be discussed at next meeting  
**AOB4:** Litter around youth club and skate park - to be discussed at next meeting, Chris Holland to discuss with EDDC bin collections and placements around the youth centre.

.....  
CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE