

SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council's
Environment Working Group held on
Monday 12 July 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
Emma Murdoch
Marianne Rixson
Rachel Perram

Invited Reps: Jon Ball (Sidmouth Arboretum)
Ed Dolphin(Sidmouth Arboretum)
Stefan Drew (Sidmouth Biodiversity Group)
Diana East (Sidmouth Arboretum)
Richard Eley (Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce)
Val Huntingdon (Sid Vale Association)
Jeremy Woodward (Vision Group of Sidmouth)

Presenting: Keith Sacre (Arboricultural Consultant for Barcham Trees Plc)

Also present: Stephen Blakeway (Salters Meadow resident)

Apologies Cllr Charissa Evans,
Dave Bramley (Vision Group)
Lynette Talbot (Sidmouth in Bloom)

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.20pm

PART 'A'

1 Minutes

The minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on Monday 26 April 2021 were confirmed and agreed as a true record subject to the following amendments:

- Addition of Cllr Murdoch's apologies
- Richard Eley had suggested that a list of local land owners be compiled to try engage with them to encourage a more sensitive hedgerow management style but would not be carrying this out himself
- Correction of the date in the header

2 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 Extinction Rebellion, Member of Friends of the Earth, Member of Greenpeace, Member of Surfers Against Sewage and SW Representative, Chair of Sidmouth Plastic Warriors Member of Sidmouth Biodiversity Group
Cllr Chris Lockyear	All items	Personal	Remained in the Meeting during discussion and voting	Member of Sidmouth Biodiversity Group

3 Matters of Urgency and Report

There were no matters of urgency or report.

4 Exclusion of the Public

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

5 Natural Environment: Life on the Verge - Current status, including update on the cutting in the Byes

Councillor Denise Bickely explained how staff shortages and sickness at EDDC' Streetscene, had resulted in a greatly delayed spring grass cutting in the town and particularly in the Byes which had resulted in an increase in complaints itself largely down to poor communication from the District Council. It was noted that since staff had returned to work and sickness reduced, work from Streetscene had resumed and the Byes and other areas had been cut in line with the agreed schemes which maintained large closely cut areas of parkland for all to enjoy whilst also encouraging edges and under tree spaces to be left more wild to encourage wildlife.

It was agreed that many areas had to be cut shorter to allow enjoyment by families and young people wishing to picnic and play sports safely and also to encourage biodiversity itself. It was also suggested that the wilder areas should be cut in the autumn by farmers in conjunction with EDDC who were better placed to take away the cuttings rather than leave them.

6 Natural Environment: Ham renovation update

In the absence of Councillor Louise Cole, Councillor Denise Bickley gave a brief update on the successful work being carried out at the Ham including the planting of flower beds, inclusion of fish painted at schools and the installation of new wave and pebble seating. It was noted that the work involved a large number of local groups and residents and had been receiving much praise from other residents and visitors alike.

7 Natural Environment: Biodiversity Plan Development

Jeremy Woodward gave an update on the plan and announced that it had developed and evolved into the Nature Recovery Plan which would widen the appeal and work of the initiative and was being introduced and encouraged by the Government.

He reported how the first Biodiversity week consisting of a number of events had helped commemorate the first anniversary of the Biodiversity group and plans were already underway for the following year. The group would be continuing to work with other events in the year such as the Science Festival in October.

8 Natural Environment: Urban Trees

Guest speaker Keith Sacre, an Arboricultural Consultant for Barcham Trees Plc. gave a presentation on growing trees in urban environments. He spoke of how choosing the best species for the site was of course vital but also described a matrix developed in conjunction with the University of Leeds which gave a carbon credit over time 'rating' to each species in the form of a colour coded indicator similar to domestic white good energy efficiency ratings. It was agreed that if this data could be shared and developed into an easily applicable chart, the possibility of incorporating it into the work of the Planning Working Group when deciding on tree replacements could be achieved.

RESOLVED: that Keith would be invited back for a meeting in September to answer questions and look around the town.

- 9 Natural Environment: Replanting of Connaught Gardens**
Jon Ball of Sidmouth Arboretum gave an update on the work to create a Jurassic themed bed in Connaught Gardens which was nearing completion.
- 10 Low Carbon Town: Litter around youth centre**
The issue of continued litter and debris towards the rear of the Youth Centre by the Multi Use Games Area was discussed.
RECOMMENDED: that an additional litter bin be purchased and installed near the rear of the Youth Centre which could be emptied in conjunction with the other bin in the area by EDDC's Street scene.
- 11 Low Carbon Town: Feedback of Pedestrian priority idea update**
It was noted that the Town Council had supported the consultation being carried out by Devon County Council Highways to introduce a pedestrian area into the town centre as a continuation of the temporary Covid-19 temporary scheme. The Council had however criticised the reintroduction of traffic into what would be perceived as a safe and traffic free zone and which was likely to cause conflict and accidents through the reintroducing Taxis and the numerous Blue Badge holders in the zone.
- 12 Bucket and spade lending box**
It was noted that this was due to be introduced shortly and would be located on the beach in front of the Arches and managed in conjunction with the new business there.
- 13 Sustainability; Glyphosate update from EDDC**
Councillor Denise Bickley agreed that the action from the last meeting that a list of local land owners should be compiled to try engage with them to encourage a more sensitive hedgerow management style where possible, should be done by letter and that a letter would also be drawn up from the Working Group to Simon Jupp, MP regarding this and reducing the use of chemicals.
RESOLVED: that a letter encouraging the use of alternatives to Glyphosate and other chemicals where possible be drafted and sent from the Working Group to Simon Jupp MP.
- 14 Sustainability; Beach clean board update**
It was noted that the new Beach Clean board was in place outside the Sidmouth Lifeboat boathouse and was being used and working well.
- 15 Sustainability; Bus Shelters**
The Working Group noted that Devon County Council Transport and Highways were working to replace many bus shelters and that some in Sidmouth would be replaced using a pilot scheme of environmentally friendly sedum rooved type shelters.
- 16 Engagement; VGS Awards**
Jeremy Woodward reported that the nominations for the first Sustainable Sidmouth Champions Awards 2021 were open and thanked the Town Council for helping to publicise the scheme on its website and through social media. The awards aimed to help celebrate the role local people have played in our community by going out of their way to offer help or support in the past difficult year.

17 Engagement Environment newsletter sign off

It was agreed that the draft newsletter previously circulated would be approved for circulation via the Council website and social media channels and that future editions would be produced quarterly.

RESOLVED: that the first edition newsletter be finalised and published quarterly.

18 Engagement Our place our planet – Exmouth

Councillor Bickley explained that she was working her way through the template for this initiative and would report again at a future meeting.

19 Items raised by invited representatives

Councillor Bickley reminded the Working Group of a forthcoming event:

Thelma Hulbert Gallery and Sidmouth Coastal Community Hub(SCCH) would co-host the first in a series of Climate Conversations from 11am - 4pm at The Ham and Shed 4 in the Fisherman's Yard where families could enjoy art activities from the Creative Cabin, craft activities including a pot making demo with Dave French from East Devon Withy Pots and story-telling from the Coral garden. The fun-packed event would offer music, bar and great food including Vanilli Bean ice-cream, Angel Chops cakes and fish baps from Sidmouth Trawlers.

The idea of promoting Sidmouth as an environmentally aware and friendly town was discussed and it was suggested that marketing and a video working with the Tourism and Economy Working Group should be explored.

RESOLVED: That the Chair and Vice Chair of the Working Group liaise with the Chair and Vice Chairs of the Tourism and Economy Working Group to discuss ways of including the environmental initiatives and positives of the town in future promotions.

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CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE