

**Minutes of a Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council's
Tourism and Economy Working Group
on Monday 14 March 2022 at 6.30 pm
(The Tourism and Economy Working Group met virtually)**

Councillors present: Ian Barlow
Louise Cole
Deirdre Housom
Steven Kendall-Torry
Chris Lockyear
Hilary Nelson
Richard Thurlow
Jeff Turner

Invited Reps: Chamber of Commerce – Sally Mynard
Ignyte Ltd – Tina Veater
Acting TIC Manager – Tim Shardlow
T&P Advisory Group – Jo Watson

Apologies: Alistair Handyside – South West Tourism Alliance,

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.35pm

PART 'A'

28 Minutes

The Minutes of the Tourism & Economy Working Group meeting held on Monday 13 December 2021 were approved as a true and accurate record.

29 Declarations of Interest

Name	Item Number	Type	Action Taken	Details
Cllr Louise Cole	34 Sidmouth Air Show & Regatta Weekend	Personal	Remained in the meeting during discussion and voting	SCCH Director
Cllr Louise Cole	35 Street Trading	Personal	Remained in the meeting during discussion and voting	SCCH Director

30 Tourism Advisory Group Update

Councillor Cole, Chair of the Tourism Advisory Group, gave an update of the work that had been carried out by the Tourism Advisory Group since the last meeting and reported that:

- The TAG was now meeting every 5 weeks with Tim Shardlow continuing to act as administrator for the group.
- A review of all town signage was underway especially the fingerposts owned by the Town Council. Others, including the town entrance signs, were being considered for redesign to bring them in line with the Visit Sidmouth brand and other signs owned by both EDDC and DCC were being examined to try and consolidate to try and reduce signage 'clutter'.
- A branding package had been drawn up to issue to all Town Council grant recipients to supply the Visit Sidmouth brand information that was expected to be included in all the recipients marketing and social media output.
- Louise Thompson was working separately with Sidmouth Folk Festival organisers as there was a need to maximise the Visit Sidmouth branding prior to and throughout

the Folk Festival in order to recognise that Sidmouth Town Council provided the largest sponsorship to the event.

- The TAG was also working on Public Relations, more campaigns for 2022, highlighting the off-peak shoulder seasons and, if the IRF funding application was successful, additional focus on Sustainable Tourism.
- The TAG had been working in collaboration with the District Council to endeavour to make the EDDC's 'EastDevonly' marketing campaign more successful and appropriate for the Sid Valley.
- The IRF funding application had been delayed until the next panel meeting to be held at the end of April. Cllrs Cole and Nelson were clarifying what additional information would be required so that the application would be successful.
- Nigel Jones, a member of the public present, asked a number of questions during this and the following items relating to the Town Council's Tourism and Economy strategy, Tourist Information Centre and Tourism and Promotion contract. In view of the large number of points and questions made, the Chair and Working Group agreed to answer Mr Jones' queries by email after the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Tourism Advisory Group report be noted.

31 Information Centre Updates

Tim Shardlow, acting Information Centre Manager, reported that:

- Ian Bowden, Sidmouth Jazz and Blues Festival, had visited the TIC to supply information so that the TIC staff would be able to support visitors wishing to purchase tickets for the various events.
- Ticket sales for the 2022 Folk Week had commenced and there was a lot of interest from attendees who had missed the event during the covid pandemic. As there was a large number of ticket holders who had rolled their tickets over from 2019 and 2020, the overall income and commission was likely to be lower than in previous years.
- It was anticipated that TIC opening hours could be extended after Easter although it was unlikely that the normal full summer schedule of opening including Sundays would start until May.
- Visit Sidmouth merchandise was available directly from the TIC and via Visit Sidmouth website; it was anticipated that sales would increase during the summer season.

RESOLVED: That the Sidmouth Information Centre report be noted.

32 Tourism & Promotion Contract Update

Tina Veater of Ignyte, presented the report of the promotional activity work carried out with and on behalf of the Town Council, highlighting that:

- Comparing 2021 Visit Sidmouth website statistics with 2019: Users had increased by 73.9%, Sessions by 131.8% and Pageviews by 207.6% and there had been over 1.5 million page views.
- The 2021 Town Map had been very successful and extremely popular with visitors to the town, advertising had been sold to 83 Sidmouth businesses for 2022. The new map would include the large fold out map and sit inside a 16-page booklet which also contained maps for dog walks, Sid Valley Ring, SWCP, accessible tree walk and Blue Plaque trail.
- The Ignyte team along with other individuals would be carrying out a review of the Visit Sidmouth website to look at updates, new functionality and user journeys.

RESOLVED: That the Tourism & Promotion contract update report be noted.

33 Tourism & Promotion Budget Spend and Committed 2020/2021

The Chair presented the Tourism & Promotion Budget report as at the end of February 2022 and reported that the Chair and Tina Veater were working on supplying additional information to complete the Year End position.

RESOLVED: That the Tourism & Promotion Budget report be noted.

34 Sidmouth Air Show & Regatta Weekend

34.1 Impact Assessment

Cllr Nelson, Chair of the Air Show Working Subgroup presented the report and recommendations from the Air Show Working Subgroup.

RESOLVED: That the Air Show Working Subgroup would use the event IMPACTS Tool Kit to evaluate the Economic, Social, Environmental and Media related impacts associated with the Air Show. A draft report would be submitted to the Autumn Tourism & Economy Working Group meeting and would include estimated event attendance and the volume of car traffic associated with the Air Show in order to properly assess these impacts. The full report would then be submitted to a full Council meeting for a decision before the end of 2022.

34.2 Expanded Associated Events

Councillors Thurlow and Barlow reported that they had held another meeting with interested parties to discuss whether additional activities could be included over the Bank Holiday weekend. There had been a very positive response and the Sidmouth Gig, Sidmouth Lifesaving and Sidmouth Sailing Clubs had committed to work together and hold events over the Bank Holiday weekend. The Rotary Club were also hoping to organise a couple of land-based events to complement the water events. It was anticipated that there would be a fireworks display on the Saturday night and hoped that the fun fair would also be able to attend on The Ham. The Town Council would produce a program and supply prizes for the various 2022 events, with the hope that this would continue in future and lead to an annual Regatta weekend.

RESOLVED: That the Expanded Associated Events report be noted and agreed.

35 Street Trading

The Chair of the Working Group gave an update and reported on the additional information received from a meeting held with the East Devon District Council Licensing Manager which would allow a far more appropriate Street Trading Policy than had previously been suggested, based on date and types of organisations. Members were asked to consider whether wanted the District Council's Licensing committee to develop criteria in conjunction with the Town Council so that Sidmouth would be able to have some strictly controlled street trading which would be site specific and use a seasonally determined approach.

RECOMMENDED: That the Town Council request that Sidmouth be included for consideration for a new Street Trading Policy and be included on the next District Council Licensing committee agenda for the July meeting.

This would start the collaboration process and would be followed by public consultation.

36 Jurassic Coast Interpretation

Councillor Cole reported on a recent meeting held with the Jurassic Coast Trust to discuss the lack of Jurassic Coast Interpretation information in Sidmouth. It was hoped that funding may be available from organisations such as the East Devon AONB, East Devon District Council and National Lottery Heritage to further this project.

RESOLVED: That the Chair and Town Clerk would continue discussions with Jurassic Coast Trust to design and instal appropriate Interpretation panels and posts along the Esplanade and Riverside Walkway.

37 Queen's Platinum Jubilee Commemorative Beacon Lights

Members were asked to consider the installation of searchlight beacons on the Esplanade during the Queen's Platinum Jubilee long weekend. This item was deferred from the March Council meeting for discussion by the Tourism and Economy Working Group.

Members asked the Town Clerk to investigate the possibility of an alternative to Fireworks to help mark the Platinum Jubilee. It was agreed that photographs of the same lighting units proposed to mark the Jubilee, would be circulated to and considered by the Tourism and Economy Working Group for a recommendation. The photographs showed the units which would be used as for four 'searchlights' (actually called Space Cannons) to scan the sky and esplanade with varying movements and colours. It predicted that these could create a unique 'Beacon' and way of marking the unique Platinum Jubilee using Rayson Bequest funding. Costs for 2 evenings (Thurs 2 and Fri 3 June) would total £9,800 reducing to one evening which would be just over £9,000.

RECOMMENDED: That Beacon Lights were not considered suitable to be used during the summer months when they would not be seen until very late and for a short time; it would be more appropriate to be considered as an event during the October Science Festival week.

38 Matters Raised by Invited Representatives

Sally Mynard, Chamber of Commerce, reported that:

- The tickets for the Jubilee Street Party were going on sale at The Anchor Inn on Saturday 23 April.
- A petition in response to the District Council's increase in car parking charges had been submitted to East Devon District Council.
- The Chamber of Commerce would encourage promotion of seasonal/weekly car parking tickets in order to minimise the overall cost for residents, especially targeted to the elderly and lower income individuals.

Jo Watson, Chamber of Commerce, reported that:

- The hotel bookings for Spring were becoming stronger although people still seem to be leaving bookings until the last minute.
- People were now more confident about eating indoors.
- Staffing was still a major issue across all the sites and other hotels, e.g., occasionally Dukes cannot open due to lack of staff.

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CHAIR OF THE TOURISM & ECONOMY WORKING GROUP