

**Minutes of a Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council's
Tourism and Economy Working Group
on Monday 14 June 2021 at 6.30 pm**

(Due to the current COVID-19 situation, the Tourism and Economy Working Group met virtually)

Councillors present: Ian Barlow
Louise Cole
Charissa Evans
Deirdre Hounsom
Chris Lockyear
Hilary Nelson
Richard Thurlow

Invited Reps: Chamber of Commerce – David Cook, Sally Mynard
Ignyte Ltd – Tina Veater
TIC Manager – Jeff Bailey

Apologies: Steven Kendall-Torry
SW Tourism Alliance – Alistair Handyside

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.15pm

PART 'A'

1 Minutes

The Minutes of the Tourism & Economy Working Group meeting held on Monday 8 March 2021 were approved as a true and accurate record.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest received for items on this agenda.

3 East Devon District Council Public Toilets consultation

The Chair reported that the EDDC consultation process had not started yet and as a result, Nick Christo, Streetscene Operations Manager had advised he was unable to attend this meeting but had stated that he would be attending a future full Council meeting.

4 Tourism Advisory Group Update

Councillor Cole, Chair of the Tourism Advisory Group described the structure and purpose of the Tourism Advisory Group and gave an update of the work being carried out by the group, particularly the refurbishment of the Tourist Information Centre.

Some Members raised concerns regarding the front page of the Visit Sidmouth website which regularly advertised events elsewhere, eg. Lyme Regis. Members were advised that other area events were automatically drawn onto the page if no local events were happening on that day. It was agreed that a priority system would be looked at for Sidmouth events but also that organisers should contact Visit Sidmouth with details of as many major events as possible to populate the online diary.

Councillor Evans reported regarding the work being carried out by the Council's in house staff on the new Town Council website and Facebook page. These will carry more localised information for residents about Sidmouth and the Town Council's work rather than tourism promotion.

RESOLVED: That the Tourism Advisory Group reports be noted and Ignyte would ensure that Sidmouth events would take precedence on the website over those in other towns.

5 Information Centre Manager's Update

Jeff Bailey, Information Centre Manager, reported that the refurbished Information Centre had opened on Monday 24 May, and he presented the Information Centre's Finance Report for May 2021. He explained how the new surroundings had been welcomed by visitors and staff alike and how the new branding was reflected in the presentation. Improvement of signage around the town was being looked at to maximise visitor footfall. Members also discussed how to capitalise the use of the newly refurbished TIC and reach out to other Councils, especially as many nearby TICs had been closed.

RESOLVED: That the Sidmouth Information Centre Reports be noted.

6 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. 45,000 copies of the Town Map had been printed, had been well very received and the majority had already been distributed to Sidmouth businesses. It was probable that additional copies would be printed to ensure sufficient supplies were available throughout the year.

The online Guide had been produced and issued via online and social media newsletters and website traffic continued to increase ahead of what was expected to be a very busy season with one of the key performance indicators of 1 million views already achieved during the year. Ignyte staff were in daily contact with Sidmouth businesses making sure that the Visit Sidmouth website and social media were kept up to date.

The Chair reported that a digital visitor survey would be carried out during the summer season and would include a variety of questions that would enable the Beach Management Plan Committee to claim beach amenity funding from the Environment Agency.

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

7 Air Show Update

The Town Clerk gave an update on preparations for the Sidmouth Air Show and possible Firework Display taking place on 27 and 28 August 2021. The Red Arrows had already been booked along with the Battle of Britain flight of Dakota and in addition, two vintage Spitfires. The plans were all subject to large scale events being permitted to take place with the final decision being left until the end of July. The event was being organised to help keep major costs incurred to a minimum and as late into the timetable as possible.

The Town Clerk asked whether the Chamber of Commerce would be able to supply collectors during a possible firework display to help offset the costs.

RESOLVED: That the Air Show update report be noted.

8 Tourism & Promotion Budget Spend and Committed 2020/2021

The Chair presented the Tourism & Promotion Budget report as at the end of May 2021.

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

9 Matters Raised by Invited Representatives

Sally Mynard, Chamber of Commerce, reported that:

- Tina Veater from Ignyte had attended a recent Chamber of Commerce breakfast meeting and members had been impressed with the tourism promotion work being carried out for Sidmouth.
- It may be difficult to expect members to collect on both evenings when businesses were trying to recover from the difficulties experienced during the covid restrictions.

- Mike Lavers was making preparations for the Classic Car Show which it was hoped would take place in September.
- Sally had already started preparations for the 2021 Christmas Late Night shopping event.

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CHAIR OF THE TOURISM & ECONOMY WORKING GROUP