

SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council's
Environment Working Group held on
Monday 17 January 2022 at 6.30pm
(Due to the current COVID-19 situation, the Committee met virtually)

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

Invited Reps: Ed Dolphin (Sidmouth Arboretum)
Jon Ball (Sidmouth Arboretum)
Diana East (Sidmouth Arboretum)
Jeremy Woodward (Vision Group of Sidmouth)
Jan Metcalf (Sid Valley Biodiversity Group - rivers group)
Catherine Causley (EDDC Climate Officer)
Peter Endersby (Sidmouth in Bloom)
Angie Carney (Repair Café)
Richard Eley

Apologies Cllr Emma Murdoch, Dave Bramley (Sidmouth Science Festival), Cllr Charissa Evans

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.25pm

PART 'A'

1 Minutes

The minutes of the Environment Working Group meeting held on Monday 26 October 2021 were confirmed and agreed as a true record. Also, an update was given for each resolved from these minutes.

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, Chair of Sidmouth Plastic Warriors Member of Sidmouth Biodiversity Group

Cllr Chris Lockyear, Ed Dolphin.	All items	Personal	Remained in the Meeting during discussion and voting	Member of Sidmouth Biodiversity Group
Cllr Rachel Perram	All items	Personal	Remained in the Meeting during discussion and voting.	Member of Sidmouth Plastic Warriors
Richard Eley, Cllr Marianne Rixson, Jeremy Woodward	All items	Personal	Remained in the Meeting during discussion and voting.	Member of River Sid Fish Pass project 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 Environment Working Group - operational business

Catherine Causley reported on East Devon Sustainability month actions, which would take place across the district in June. She was looking to build engagement with groups and councils and asked anyone with events already planned during June, or those who came up with ideas for events they would like to run, to contact her to pull them all together. Examples in Exmouth were an environmental film festival, beach cleans, information stalls, carbon awareness events etc. Biodiversity week was in June (w/c 20th June). She also explained that she had some funding for new bike racks and asks for ideas for where these could be best placed. Catherine can be contacted on ccaudlry@eastdevon.gov.uk

Environment Committee (now a Working Group) Terms of Reference states:

- The Committee is formed 'to coordinate and improve the natural and built environment of the Sid Valley'.
- The Committee to meet 4 times a year, reporting minutes to full Council
- Any spending by the Committee shall be authorised by full Council
- Membership to consist of the Chair of Council and 7 other Councillors
- Group Representatives (Non-voting) to be invited to each meeting to include: Sidmouth Arboretum, Sidmouth in Bloom, Sidmouth Plastic Warriors, Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce, Sid Vale Association, Friends of the Byes and others as required for specific meetings
- The Committee to help with the coordination of the Town Centre Task Force days.

It was agreed that these were all still relevant for the workings of the Working Group.

7 Questions on Environment Newsletter

The group said the newsletter was very good and they were happy with the way it is progressing. If you would like to have an input into the next addition, contact denisebickley@hotmail.com. deadline for submissions of articles, calendar dates, photographs and new logos to Councillor Bickley by 8th April to allow time to complete it for it to go out with the agenda (18th April)

8 Natural Environment

Youth Centre area upgrade (in partnership with the Youth Resources group)

The group was looking to improve the environment around the youth centre for everyone who wished to use it. This included making the hedgerows more secure using 150 trees, and new fencing to the side of the building t. Cllr Jeff Turner (Youth Resources Committee) would be co-ordinating this, with Cllr Bickley and Graham Hutchinson arranging the clearing of the site and planting event.

A report on Market Square improvements (Ideas for Market Square improvements.docx) was presented. In previous years Sidmouth in Bloom (SiB) had cleaned the area around the Market in preparation for the season but following the winter, the general feel was that the market square looked very tired and needed a deep clean. In order to assist SiB, it was agreed that a working group of volunteers would be set up with the help of some professional cleaners to clean the area up. Cllr Bickley to liaise with EDDC Streetscene and Estates to encourage them to clean the building and site.

RESOLVED: Cllr Bickley, Cllr Barlow and Cllr Lockyear to examine putting an application together for a grant for funding for help with the cleaning.

Life on the Verge

The Working Group discussed how to prepare for the new season following up from last year using lessons learnt on community engagement.

The end of the season was very busy and there was a lot of hard work by volunteers which was hampered by not having the correct tools. Cllr Bickley to work with Stefan Drew of the Biodiversity Group to compile a brief report and summary of actions for the coming year. Budget should be used for assistance with cutting and bailing in September as volunteers raking large areas was not sustainable.

River Sid Fish Pass

This was a proposed project to allow fish to travel up the River Sid, passing School Weir. The River Sid Fish Pass group were requesting the support of Sidmouth Town Council's Environment Working Group so that they could move forward with the project. The Working Group were very happy to give their support.

RECOMMENDED: that council gives this project their support.

9 Low Carbon Town

Carbon Footprint Project

Sidmouth Town Council's Environment Working Group were working with Exeter university on ways to get unengaged members of the community to be more engaged in the Environmental agenda. They were attempting to get people to look at their carbon footprint individually possibly using incentives and peer pressure to do this. Such a bottom-up approach across Sidmouth would be different to

elsewhere and could allow a more accurate estimation of the impact of any interventions made. An update would be given at the next meeting.

Infrared Camera Project

Sidmouth Town Council had purchased an infrared camera and would be offering residents in the Sidmouth area the chance to have infrared photos of their homes so they can see where they are losing heat. No specific advice would be given but residents could independently look at improving their homes saving money and reducing their carbon footprint.

10 Sustainability

Telephone Boxes (as part of Market Place improvement) – A firm decision was needed as to what to do with the 2 in the market square. After discussion it was felt that planting them with flowers would be a good short term solution.

RESOLVED: a working group to be put together by Cllr Bickley with the help of Sidmouth in Bloom, to make them good for the new season. The Town Clerk would be asked to arrange for Sid Vale Metalcraft or other local specialists to quote on bringing the boxes back to life with fixing door, sand down, repaint. Window glazing would not be replaced as they would be shelved and planted with mixed trailing flowering plants with assistance from Sidmouth In Bloom.

11 Engagement

The possibility of creating a 'Menu' of all the expertise/knowledge within the Working Group, or wider groups within the town (with agreement from participants) was discussed. This could be sent out to local landowners/farmers to engage them in conversation. These 'experts' could perhaps hold a meeting with them, visit the site, offer informal tips and advice to help them maximise their biodiversity/environmental benefits.

A discussion was held, and it was felt there was no need for such a menu of all expertise/knowledge and it would be better for people to contact the individual groups for help. There was at the moment a project working with farmers and the biodiversity group. It was also suggested that information on the good work being carried out be put in the newsletter.

12 Any other business

Preparation for the annual review at Town Assembly on 11 April

The meeting was there to look back at what has been achieved over the past year so. The following work would be mentioned at the meeting: Life on the verge, the Newsletter, the offer of infrared photos of people's homes, the wildflower report, and the water surveys.

Resources: what resources do groups need to support their activity that the Environment Working Group might be able to help supply.
Just to remind people that they have got access to resources.

13 Items raised by invited representatives

To consider any matters raised by the invited representatives.

SPW monthly clean ups now second Sunday of every month 10-12, starting Sunday 9th (alternating beach and town – this week is hosted by The Balfour and cleaning the Woolbrook area).

Update: The group picked up 18 bags of rubbish at the January event. The next meeting will be 13 Feb. on the beach in front of the Arches. See sidmouthplasticwarriors.org for full schedule.

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CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE