

**SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of a Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council's**  
**Environment Working Group held on**  
**Monday 26 October 2021 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  
Jeff Turner  
Kelvin Dent

Invited Reps: Ed Dolphin (Sidmouth Arboretum)  
Dave Bramley (Sidmouth Science Festival)  
Diana East (Sidmouth Arboretum)  
Lynette Talbot (Sidmouth in Bloom)  
Jeremy Woodward (Vision Group of Sidmouth)  
Jan Metcalf (Sid Valley Biodiversity Group - rivers group)  
Catherine Causley (EDDC Climate Officer)

Apologies Cllr Emma Murdoch.

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.36pm

**PART 'A'**

**1 Minutes**

The minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on Monday 12 July 2021 were confirmed and agreed as a true record subject to the following amendments:

- Correction made to the item regarding the Ham to include Sidmouth in Bloom and the Friday group.

**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	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

### **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.

#### **Natural Environment:**

### **5 Life on the Verge - Current status, including update on the cutting in the Byes.**

Councillor Denise Bickley explained how staff shortages and sickness at EDDC' Streetscene, had resulted in a greatly delayed grass cutting in the town and particularly in the Byes which had resulted in an increase in complaints - which had led to confusion with the areas left for more sensitive treatment. Lessons had been learned this year regarding neatening edges and cutting paths through longer areas to maintain a feeling of 'care'.

### **6 Arboretum and visit from Keith Dacre**

Manor Road car park had been visited and it was agreed that it could do with more trees but not at the previously suggested £6k a tree, so the team are looking at how they can provide more trees without losing parking spaces and within budget. The team are also looking at solar lighting, but they need to be added at the appropriate time. The tree walk also went throughout the town visiting the Marketplace and the Ham and Roxborough carparks.

On the second day the group further around the valley accompanied by Catherine Causley from EDDC. A strategy to develop greening within the valley is being compiled. It was suggested that more shrub and tree planters were required.

**RESOLVED;** Lynette Talbot to send shrub and tree planters costings to Cllr Denise Bickley

### **7 Tree Strategy**

Cllr Chris Lockyear suggested that The Council needs a tree strategy. Key elements of the draft strategy are: selection of species to plant, broadening of the canopy cover, interconnectivity to promote wildlife corridors, managed replacement of the existing stock, and integration of the strategy into the Planning process. Discussions have been held with EDDC officers to ensure alignment between the District and Town Councils.

**RESOLVED:** Cllr Chris Lockyear to draft appendices to the draft strategy prior to submission to the full Council for endorsement.

### **8 Sidmouth in Bloom**

Everyone involved in Sidmouth in Bloom had worked very hard all year which had paid off with winning a Gold award at the Chelsea Flower Show which was the top award overall and also winning the Seargent Trophy clearly acknowledging all the hard work that went into the displays by everyone. It was hopeful that the competition would be back to normal next year.

### **9 + 10 Sidmouth Biodiversity Group**

The group was looking at 2 areas the first being a wildflowers survey. At the moment there were 396 species found within the Sidmouth Area. The second area was rivers and water quality, Jan Metcalf was part of the team of 9 volunteers monitoring water quality across 14 areas and working with the west country rivers

trust. They are measuring ; Phosphates and dissolved and suspended solids. It was reported that our rivers are full of clean water species.

**RESOLVED;** that the Biodiversity group send a direct request to the Environment Working Group for equipment to the amount of £600.

**RESOLVED;** that a coordinated plan with EDDC, DCC, STC, SidBashers (SiB) to remove Knotweed in the area be created.

**11 P3 Parish Path Partnership Group**

Councillor Jeff Turner gave a very informative overview of what P3 did, explaining that they work with Devon County maintaining over 100k of paths and bridal ways in the Sidmouth Area. P3 survey the areas then discuss with Devon County regarding materials for mending or replacing paths, signs, steps and styles. They received around £3000 per year to carry out the work and there were 10 members of the team, some paid and some volunteers, working ¾hrs per week.

**Low Carbon Town**

**12 COP26 Event.**

An event was held in the Parish church with about 20 stalls and it was felt it could have been better attended but had been useful for networking. The evening was very interesting with talks about e-bikes, heat pumps etc.

**13 Progress at EDDC/DCC in regard to carbon/climate emergency**

Catherine Causley, EDDC Climate Officer, gave the group an update explaining how EDDC/DCC are in the middle of running training for employees and elected members on understanding what they can do to support climate change and also the positives of using local people and companies. They are looking to use social media events to spread the message.

**Carbon Reduction Plan**

Dave Bramley reported that the data available to map Sidmouth's carbon usage was insufficiently detailed to produce a useful map for action.

**RESOLVED:** Dave Bramley, Cllr Ian Barlow and Cllr Chris Lockyear to meet to discuss ways to promote individual carbon reduction activity.

**Sustainability**

**14 VGS Awards**

The awards for the first Sustainable Sidmouth Champions Awards 2021 had been very successful and the group were looking at carrying on next year with similar awards and extra schemes. The Chair thanked everyone for all their hard work.

**Engagement**

**15 Warden Scheme for Sidmouth**

Discussion was held and it was agreed that what was needed was a list on the council website giving information of who to contact if anyone had a local environment issue.

**RESOLVED:** Cllr Bickley to continue compiling a list and highlighting vacant areas.

**16 Budget**

Chris Lockyear gave an overview of the groups budget situation with only £465 spent out of the £10,000 allocation given to the group from Sidmouth Town Council. If anyone needed money to do something to help the environment, benefiting the whole town, they could put in a request to the group. If this money was not used this year, it will be held in an earmarked reserve for use at a later date. The proposed budget for 2022/23 had been reduced to £4000.

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CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE