



# SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

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VAT Reg. No. 142 3103 24

8 March 2023

To: All Members of the Tourism & Economy Working Group  
(Cllrs: Ian Barlow, Louise Cole, Charissa Evans, Deirdre Hounsom, Steven Kendall-Torry, Chris Lockyear, Dawn Manley, Hilary Nelson, Richard Thurlow)

Invited Representatives:

Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce Representatives (x2)

South West Tourism Alliance

Sidmouth Information Manager

For Information:

Other Members of the Council

Town Clerk

Dear Sir/Madam,

## **Virtual Meeting of the Tourism & Economy Working Group Monday 13 March 2023 at 6.30pm**

You are called upon to attend the above meeting where it is proposed that the matters set out on the agenda below will be considered and resolution or resolutions passed as the Town Council considers appropriate. The Working Group will meet virtually via the Zoom software platform.

Those members of the public wishing to view the meeting or speak on an agenda item are required to register by emailing [towncouncil@sidmouth.gov.uk](mailto:towncouncil@sidmouth.gov.uk) at least 24 hours before the start time of the meeting, after which virtual meeting details will be sent out to speakers/attendees.

The Chair of the Working Group has the right and discretion to control questions to avoid disruption, repetition and to make best use of the meeting time. Individual contributions will be limited to a maximum period of three minutes.

Yours faithfully,

**Christopher E Holland**  
Town Clerk

## **A G E N D A**

1 **Apologies**

To receive any apologies for absence.

2 **Minutes**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Tourism & Economy Committee meeting held on Monday 21 November 2022.

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- 3     **Declarations of Interest**  
To receive any Members’ declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.  
Note: You must also declare the nature of any personal or prejudicial interests in an item whenever it becomes apparent that you have an interest in the business being considered.
- 4     **Matters of Urgency and Report**  
To consider any items that in the opinion of the Chair should be dealt with as matters of urgency because of special circumstances. (Note: such circumstances need to be recorded in the minutes)
- 5     **Exclusion of the Public**  
To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the press) have been excluded. There are no items which the Clerk recommends should be dealt with in this way.
- 6     **Tourism & Promotion Advisory Group Update**  
To receive an update from the Chair of the Tourism & Promotion Advisory Group, Councillor Louise Cole on their recent work.
- 7     **Information Centre Updates**  
To note the Sidmouth Information Centre Finance Report and TIC Visit Sidmouth sales as at the end of February 2023.     6 – 7
- 8     **Tourism & Promotion Contract Report**  
Tina Veater, Ignyte Ltd, will present an update of recent promotional activity and its work with Sidmouth Town Council.     8 – 9
- 9     **Tourism & Promotion Finance Report**  
To receive the Tourism & Promotion Finance Report as at the end of February 2023.     10
- 10    **IRF Project Update**  
To receive an update from the Chair of the Tourism & Economy Working Group and note the IRF Finance Report as at the end of February 2023.     11
- 11    **Sidmouth Regatta**  
To discuss how best to support and develop this event.
- 12    **Matters Raised by Invited Representatives**  
To consider any other items or matters to be raised by the representatives of  
a) South West Tourism Alliance.  
b) Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce.

**Minutes of a Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council's  
Tourism and Economy Working Group  
on Monday 21 November 2022 at 6.30 pm  
(The Tourism and Economy Working Group met virtually)**

Councillors present: Ian Barlow  
Louise Cole  
Chris Lockyear  
Hilary Nelson

Invited Reps: Chamber of Commerce – Richard Eley  
TIC Manager – Tim Shardlow  
TAG members – Jo Watson, Louise Thompson

Apologies: Cllr Richard Thurlow  
Ignyte Ltd – Tina Veater  
South West Tourism Alliance – Alistair Handyside  
Chamber of Commerce – Sally Mynard

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.10pm

**PART 'A'**

**22 Minutes**

The Minutes of the Tourism & Economy Working Group meeting held on Monday 12 September 2022 were approved as a true and accurate record.

**23 Declarations of Interest**

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

**24 Tourism Advisory Group Update**

Councillor Cole 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 meets every 6 weeks, with Tim Shardlow taking notes of the meetings.
- The TAG was busy working on the Coast Meets Country IRF project.
- The TAG had developed a Christmas marketing campaign to advertise the many Christmas events occurring in Sidmouth.
- Full Council had accepted the Air Show final report and had resolved to organise an Air Show in 2023.

**RESOLVED:** That the Tourism Advisory Group report be noted.

**25 Information Centre Updates**

Tim Shardlow, Information Centre Manager, reported that:

- The TIC had now moved to the Winter opening hours of 10am to 1.30pm.
- The second half of September had been busy with many events and festivals being held throughout and around the town.
- The shows held at the Manor Pavilion were a real attraction for visitors to Sidmouth.
- TIC staff were giving assistance to members of the public who wished to attend the Connaught @ Christmas event and were looking forward to receiving pre-ticket marketing information for the 2023 Jazz & Blues and Sidmouth Folk Week Festivals.

- TIC staff were attending Visit England free online webinars and were obtaining very useful information regarding supporting international visitors.
- Many visitors were asking about the availability of public use EV charging points so the installation of points in The Ham East and Roxborough car parks were eagerly anticipated. Jo Watson reported that many hotel visitors booked Sidmouth Hotels purely because they had EV charging points available for hotel residents.
- The TIC would close at the end of the day on 23 December and would reopen on 3 January 2023 after the New Year bank holiday.
- The Chair thanked Tim Shardlow for acting as the TIC manager since Jeff Bailey had retired and was pleased to report that Tim had been confirmed as the TIC Manager.

**RESOLVED:** That the Sidmouth Information Centre report be noted.

## **26 Tourism & Promotion Contract Update**

In the absence of Tina Veater of Ignyte, the Chair presented the report of the promotional activity work carried out with and on behalf of the Town Council.

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

## **27 Ignyte Tourism Promotion Contract Renewal**

The Chair presented the Ignyte Tourism Promotion Contract renewal report and asked Members to confirm the report's recommendation. The purpose of the recommendation was to allow the appointment of a preferred contractor and the timely progression of Sidmouth Town Council's tourism promotion strategy and services.

**RESOLVED:** That:

- 1) The Town Council would renew its agreement with Ignyte Ltd and its licence with Visit Devon for an additional 3 years using the updated and renewed purpose and objectives, as listed in the report.
- 2) In line with financial Regulation 18.2, Members agreed to the suspension of Standing Order 18(c) and Financial Regulation 11.1(b) to allow the appointment of Ignyte Ltd as the preferred contractor to deliver tourism promotion services for our Visit Sidmouth brand.

## **28 Tourism & Promotion Finance Report**

The Chair presented the Tourism & Promotion Finance report for the period ending October 2022.

**RESOLVED:** That the Tourism & Promotion Finance report be noted.

## **29 IRF Project Update**

The Chair presented the IRF (Coast Meets Country project) Finance report for the period ending October 2022 and Cllr Hilary Nelson gave an update on the progress of the IRF Project:

- The sub regional identity with partner towns had been developed by Voyage Marketing and the individual web pages were under development. The full web pages were slightly delayed due to modifications to the Visit Devon platform, but they would be live before the end of December to enable their use by prospective 2023 visitors.
- The Travel Foundation, the IRF sustainability partner, would be holding a Strategic Stakeholder meeting in mid-December, Simon Jupp MP would be in attendance along with over 20 other local attendees and stakeholders.
- The IRF would be advertising shortly for an additional consultant to work with the IRF Project Team specifically on the development of sustainable tourism in the IRF area.

**RESOLVED:** That the IRF Project report be noted.

**30 East Devon District Council Local Plan Consultation**

The Chair asked Members to note the copy of the draft Local Plan as distributed with the agenda and Cllr Ian Barlow reported on the response that the Planning Working Group had sent to EDDC.

**RESOLVED:** 1) that the Working Group felt that the Local Plan should include more affordable housing provision as the Sidmouth economy was highly dependent on the tourism and service sectors and staff were needed in these businesses.

2) That the draft Local Plan link would be sent again to the Tourism & Economy Working Group members with a request to send bullet point comments to the Town Clerk that could be incorporated into any future consultation response.

**31 Chamber of Commerce Car Park Survey**

Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce had fought against the EDDC's increases to car park charges earlier in the year with a petition, in which over 1,500 residents and businesses signed.

Richard Eley gave an update on the car park survey that the Chamber of Commerce had conducted and which would be presented to EDDC, he would forward a copy of his report to Members when it was finalised.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the Car Park Survey report be noted.

**32 Matters Raised by Invited Representatives**

Richard Eley, Chamber of Commerce, reported that:

- The Chamber of Commerce would be holding a Coronation Street Party on Sunday 7 May 2023 in a similar format to previous events with space for 900 people to attend.
- It was anticipated that there should be a significant Public Works project carried out to mark the occasion of the coronation. Cllr Lockyear reported that Council had discussed this and had brought forward two proposals: naming the steps at The Arches as Coronation Steps and planting a number of significant specimen trees incorporating trees from the four nations of the UK.

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CHAIR OF THE TOURISM & ECONOMY WORKING GROUP

**Sidmouth Tourist Information Centre - Income and Expenditure Report  
Month 11 - February 2023**

	Actual Year to Date	Current Annual Budget	Budget Balance
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>			
Salaries	30,329	33,000	2,671
Cleaning & Office Mtce	886	300	-586
Business Rates	2,545	2,600	55
Photocopier	169	200	31
Stationery	58	200	142
Telephone	1,663	1,200	-463
Postage & Packing	36	200	164
Sundries, Provisions, Equipment	93	300	207
Bank/Credit Card/Shopify Charges	1,284	1,400	116
Purchase of Stamps	118	1,000	882
Purchase of Publications	1,844	2,000	156
Purchase of Goods/Souvenirs	25	500	475
	<b>£39,050</b>	<b>£42,900</b>	<b>£3,850</b>
<b><u>Income</u></b>			
Sale of Stamps	590	1,000	410
Sale of Publications	3,899	4,000	101
Sale of Souvenirs	1,036	1,000	-36
Sale of Adult Merchandise	808	1,000	192
Sale of Children's Merchandise	48	100	52
Commission - Sidmouth Folk Festival	3,600	3,000	-600
Commission - Coaches	84	0	-84
Commission - Car/Coach Park	0	100	100
Sundry Income	219	100	-119
STC Funding	32,600	32,600	0
	<b>£42,884</b>	<b>£42,900</b>	<b>£16</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£39,050</b>	<b>£42,900</b>	<b>£3,850</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£42,884</b>	<b>£42,900</b>	<b>£16</b>
<b>Net Expenditure over Income</b>	<b>-£3,834</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£3,834</b>

**Current/Deposit Bank Accounts** £29,882

Visit Sidmouth Merchandise - Sales 2022-23

Product - Sales	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	2022-23 Sales to date	2022-23 Sales Income	Total 2021-22 Sales
Coffee Cup			2	3	3	4							12	£84.96	12
Vacuum Flask	3	3	1	1	2								10	£125.00	18
Plastic drinks bottle		1	3	2	2	1							9	£61.83	14
Jute bags	5	3	4	8	10	5	1	3	1				39	£211.38	31
Umbrella					1	1							2	£25.00	6
Adults cap	2	2	2	4	3		1						14	£140.00	18
Children's cap	2		1		3								6	£48.00	3
Polo Shirts		1	1	3	2	1							8	£160.00	
	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>£856.17</b>	<b>102</b>



## **Visit Sidmouth February 2023**

A full report of stats is supplied to the Town Clerk, this report is a synopsis of information for the previous quarter.

### Website

The team at Ignyte have been working hard since November on writing content, creating itineraries, sourcing new imagery and migrating all content to enable the new website to launch in Q1 2023. We have created a new interactive map which will showcase all of the towns on the Coast Meets Country project and the new website will give us much more flexibility around page layouts, content display, brand colouring, easier navigation and more enhanced content on display.

We anticipate that the new site will be live by the end of March.

### Stats on the existing website

2022 website stats have held firm and we are very pleased with this. In comparison to other destinations where they have seen a significant drop in stats year on year due to 2021 being 'the year of the staycation' Visit Sidmouth have held their own.

Users – 203,947 + 6.53% on 2021

Sessions – 549,994 – 6.28% on 2021

Pageviews – 1,402,461 – 10.4% on 2021

Pages per session – 2.55

Av session duration – 2.07

New session - +14.7% on 2021

The first 2 months of 2023 have been more challenging as the cost of living crisis hit and visitors are unable to spend on holidays we have seen a slight downturn on the previous year.

On 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022 we had huge storms in Sidmouth and the webcam traffic was off of the scale, due to this not happening this year this has affected the year on year comparison.

Users – 22,684 -29% on 2022

Sessions – 62,605 -26% on 2022

Pageviews – 150,128 – 34% on 2022.

This downturn is in line with all other coastal destinations across the South West.

### Town Map 2023

The 2023 Town Map is with the printers as we speak and will be delivered to the Town Council next week. The advertising revenue covered the costs of the printing and distributing of the maps again this year which was a huge success considering the increased costs to business on fuel, energy costs and staff issues.

### The Visit Sidmouth Digital Guide

The digital guide for 2023 will be live on the website by the end of March.

The digital guide in 2022 was read by 6237 people and the businesses that were showcased in the guide saw 697 clicks to their website from this means.

### Social media

The social media platforms continue to perform well with over 10,000 followers across Facebook and Instagram.

We launched a Visit Sidmouth Tik Tok profile before Xmas and have been posting videos to promote Sidmouth bi-weekly. Tik Tok has become a popular new platform for the under 30 market and we felt that Sidmouth should have a presence here too.

### Christmas in Sidmouth Campaign

Visit Sidmouth worked in collaboration with the Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce and Connaught at Christmas to create a Christmas campaign.

The campaign ran from October to December encouraging visitors to come to Sidmouth for festive events and for Xmas shopping.

The campaign ran across Google Display advertising and Facebook paid advertising and generated a reach of 99,847 with 5365 click to the Visit Sidmouth Christmas in Sidmouth pages.

### Press and PR

Sidmouth has been mentioned over several high-profile publications in the last quarter of 2023. The Ignyte team also instigated a visit from a photographer for Made in England Magazine through Visit England and he visited the town in November.

The Herald assisted in supporting the Christmas in Sidmouth campaign and Devon live included Sidmouth in its top 10 best places in Devon in January.

### Other

The Ignyte team worked with Visit Devon to ensure that Sidmouth was showcased at the Caravan and Camping Show in the NEC in February. We have designed new adverts for appearance in both the Visit Devon guide for 2023 and the Devon cricket Club programme.

Ignyte were instrumental in creating the new agreement for the new website with Visit Devon and the team have been working tirelessly on creating the pages for Coast Meets Country on the existing website and building all pages for the new website too.

It is important to note that businesses in Sidmouth are suffering from the cost-of-living crisis and the increase in the running costs of their businesses. We have seen several accommodation providers close their doors at the end of 2022 as well as shops closing in the High Street. We continue to communicate with all members and open the doors for new members too, but I feel that 2023 could be a tough year for all.

### Tourism Promotion Budget & Spend 2022/2023

Item	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Spend to date	Original Budget	% Spent
Ignyte Service Agreement				5,655			5,655			5,655			£16,965	£22,620	75%
Ignyte Sales Income			-603	-1,325	-600	-393	-870	-5,646	-1,811	-4,406	-1,601		-£17,255	-£22,000	78%
Visit Sidmouth Website Development costs/updates		127											£127	£1,500	8%
Social Media Advertising									1,650				£1,650	£2,000	83%
Video Production		380		700			180	250					£1,510	£4,000	38%
Visit Sidmouth products													£0	£1,000	0%
Town Map													£0	£9,380	0%
Promotional Material: e.g. Ad Spend, Signs, Editorial	200			500	3,018	150	450						£4,318	£4,500	96%
Training & Events				173	-379	3,722							£3,516	£4,000	88%
Visitor Survey/Evidence Base Research													£0	£1,000	0%
<b>Net Council Budget</b>	200	507	-603	5,703	2,039	3,479	5,415	-5,396	-161	1,249	-1,601	0	£10,831	£28,000	39%
<b>Budget remaining</b>														-£17,169	

### Earmarked Reserve brought forward

Sidmouth Jazz & Blues Festival	3,000													£33,945	
STC contribution to IRF				22,000										£3,000	
Sidmouth Running Club - Sidmouth Celebrates									2,500					£22,000	
<b>EMR remaining</b>														£2,500	£6,445

### Tourism Information Centre 2022/2023

Item	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Spend to date	Original Budget	% Spent
TIC Salaries	1,267	1,885	3,551	3,609	3,741	4,093	2,644	4,406	1,557	1,846	1,730		£30,329	£33,000	92%
Other Expenditure	1,461	491	217	404	671	103	1,825	67	196	113	1,186		£6,734	£6,400	105%
Purchase of stock			318	625	196	167	352	153	176				£1,987	£3,500	57%
Sales Visit Sidmouth merch		-101	-100	-117	-191	-221	-95	-16	-15				-£856	-£1,100	78%
Sales stamps, publications, etc	-480	-736	-854	-823	-663	-910	-472	-297	-122	-153	-234		-£5,744	-£6,100	94%
Commission on ticket sales		-451	-877	-750	-699	-51	-10	-44			-802		-£3,684	-£3,100	119%
STC Funding	-7,600		-5,000		-5,000			-15,000					-£32,600	-£32,600	100%
<b>Total</b>	-5,352	1,088	-2,745	2,948	-1,945	3,181	4,244	-10,731	1,792	1,806	1,880	0	-£3,834	£0	

**Innovation & Resilience Fund Budget & Spend 2022/2023**

Item	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Spend to date	Original Budget	% Spent
Branding Support							19,000						£19,000	£19,000	100%
Bespoke Video Content						6,000	5,412			7,084			£18,496	£18,000	103%
Webpage Development							9,245	9,245	9,245	9,245			£27,735	£55,471	50%
Creation of Linked Content							10,570						£10,570	£10,570	100%
Website Accessibility							1,830						£1,830	£1,830	100%
Sustainable Tourism Area Webpage Development													£0	£22,260	0%
Sustainability Video Content													£0	£2,000	0%
Sustainability Training													£0	£15,000	0%
Project Manager Consultancy Fee				110			2,224	1,578	1,898	1,226			£7,036	£22,000	32%
Additional Linked Content - Honiton and OSM							5,750						£5,750	£8,000	72%
Equipment for Sustainability Training							1,822						£1,822	£2,078	88%
<b>Net Council Budget</b>	0	0	0	0	110	6,000	55,853	1,578	11,143	17,555	0	0	£92,239	£176,209	52%
<b>Budget remaining</b>														-£83,970	

**Innovation & Resilience Fund Income 2022/2023**

Item	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Income to date	Budget	% Spent
EDDC I&R Fund			146,209										£146,209	£146,209	100%
Sidmouth TC				22,000									£22,000	£22,000	100%
Ottery TC								5,000					£5,000	£5,000	100%
Honiton TC							3,000						£3,000	£3,000	100%
Seaton TC													£0	£0	
Budleigh TC													£0	£0	
<b>Total</b>	0	0	146,209	22,000	0	0	3,000	5,000	0	0	0	0	£176,209	£176,209	100%