



# SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

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VAT Reg. No. 142 3103 24

15 November 2022

To: All Members of the Tourism & Economy Working Group  
(Cllrs: Ian Barlow, Jack Brokenshire, 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 21 November 2022 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

Page/s

**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 12 September 2022.

4 – 7

- |    |  |         |
|----|--|---------|
| 3  | <p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>To receive any Members' declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.</p> <p>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.</p> |         |
| 4  | <p><b>Matters of Urgency and Report</b></p> <p>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)</p>   |         |
| 5  | <p><b>Exclusion of the Public</b></p> <p>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.</p>  |         |
| 6  | <p><b>Tourism &amp; Promotion Advisory Group Update</b></p> <p>To receive an update from the Chair of the Tourism &amp; Promotion Advisory Group, Councillor Louise Cole on their recent work.</p>   |         |
| 7  | <p><b>Information Centre Updates</b></p> <p>To note the Sidmouth Information Centre Finance Report and TIC Visit Sidmouth sales as at the end of October 2022.</p>   | 8 – 9   |
| 8  | <p><b>Tourism &amp; Promotion Contract Report</b></p> <p>Tina Veater, Ignyte Ltd, will present an update of recent promotional activity and its work with Sidmouth Town Council.</p>   | 10 – 12 |
| 9  | <p><b>Ignyte Tourism Promotion Contract Renewal</b></p> <p>To receive a recommendation from the Tourism &amp; Economy Working Group Chair.</p>   | 13 – 17 |
| 10 | <p><b>Tourism &amp; Promotion Finance Report</b></p> <p>To receive the Tourism &amp; Promotion Finance Report as at the end of October 2022.</p>   | 18      |
| 11 | <p><b>IRF Project Update</b></p> <p>To receive an update from the Chair of the Tourism &amp; Economy Working Group and note the IRF Finance Report as at the end of October 2022.</p>  | 19      |
| 12 | <p><b>East Devon District Council Local Plan Consultation</b></p> <p>To receive the link to the draft Local Plan:</p> <p><a href="https://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/commonplace-reg-18-final-071122.pdf">commonplace-reg-18-final-071122.pdf (eastdevon.gov.uk)</a></p>   |         |

**13 Chamber of Commerce Car Park Survey**

Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce fought against EDDC's increases to car park charges earlier this year with a petition, in which over 1,500 residents and businesses signed. Sadly, this didn't make a difference, but EDDC said they would review the increases after the peak season was over.

During the summer the Chamber has spoken to many businesses, who report that the charges are having a real impact on trade. We encouraged businesses to contact EDDC direct to provide evidence on how the charges are adversely affecting them. Over the last few weeks, the Chamber has asked businesses in Sidmouth to complete a short survey on the impact of these charges.

Attached is a copy of the summary report of the car park survey, including the many comments received. The Chamber will be presenting this to EDDC shortly.

20 – 26

**14 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 12 September 2022 at 6.30 pm  
(The Tourism and Economy Working Group met virtually)**

Councillors present: Ian Barlow

Louise Cole

Chris Lockyear

Hilary Nelson

Richard Thurlow

Invited Reps: South West Tourism Alliance – Alistair Handyside

Acting TIC Manager – Tim Shardlow

Apologies: Cllr Charissa Evans, Ignyte Ltd Tina Veater, Chamber of Commerce Sally Mynard

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.15pm

*A minute's silence was held as a mark of respect and remembrance  
following the death of HM Queen Elizabeth*

## **PART 'A'**

### **11 Minutes**

The Minutes of the Tourism & Economy Working Group meeting held on Monday 13 June 2022 were approved as a true and accurate record.

### **12 Declarations of Interest**

| Name             | Item Number                             | Type     | Action Taken                              | Details       |
|------------------|---|----------|---|---------------|
| Cllr Louise Cole | 19 Air Show Evaluation Working Subgroup | Personal | Remained in the meeting during discussion | SCCH Director |

### **13 Matters of Urgency and Report**

- Councillor Barlow presented a proposal to support a new event planned for April 2023. Sidmouth Running Club already organised an annual Exe to Axe Run and it had been suggested that this could be extended to include junior and senior fun runs on Saturday 1 April, followed by the Exe to Axe, a Golden Coast Marathon, coastal path long distance walk, Coleridge Trail walk and a cycling event on Sunday 2 April. The various events would be organised under the name 'East Devon Mighty Green Weekend' and would attract between 700/800 individuals from across the country.

**RESOLVED:** 1) That a provisional allocation of £2,500 be made from the Tourism Promotion EMR to support the East Devon Mighty Green Weekend  
2) That the Tourism Advisory Group would work with the organisers to take planning of the event forward and maximise promotion including acknowledgement of the financial support given by the Town Council.

### **14 Tourism Advisory Group Update**

Councillor Cole, Chair of the Tourism Advisory Group, asked Members to acknowledge all the voluntary work, time and skills given by various individuals to the TAG on a regular basis.

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 Town Entrance Signs had been installed and included Visit Sidmouth branding.

- The TAG was currently in discussions with Connaught @ Christmas and the Chamber of Commerce to create a seasonal marketing campaign to include all events due to be held in the town over the Christmas period; it would be an itinerary based marketing campaign to promote all events.
- The TAG was working with East Devon District Council's Licensing Service and the Chamber of Commerce regarding the Prohibitive Street Trading issue and had discussed a temporary summer season lifting of restrictions to enable more control by EDDC and the Town Council. The Town Clerk would follow up with Steve Saunders, EDDC Licensing Officer.

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

## **15 Information Centre Updates**

Tim Shardlow, acting Information Centre Manager, reported that:

- Folk Festival tickets had been very successful and the TIC had received a higher commission than expected.
- The TIC opening hours would be moving to the shoulder season opening times of 10am to 4pm and then to winter season of 10am to 1.30pm. Next year there would be a need for additional staff to cover the Easter to summer season.
- Footfall had slightly reduced in September with more frequent visitors coming to the town many of whom already had a planned itinerary and therefore didn't need the TIC services as much as new visitors in the summer months.
- Many events may be affected by the Queen's mourning period and the funeral, including the Walking Festival and Sidbury Village Fair week.
- The TIC would have a table at the Classic Car Show including sales of Visit Sidmouth merchandise which had been well received at previous events.
- Marketing photographs were due to be taken of the TIC staff beside the new Town Entrance signs.

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

## **16 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.

## **17 Tourism & Promotion Finance Report**

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

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

## **18 IRF Project Update**

The Chair presented the IRF Finance report for the period ending August 2022, gave an update on the progress of the IRF Project and reported that:

- Voyage Marketing had prepared copy and brand packages for the partner towns.
- Filming of new videos for partner towns was underway, although it was unfortunate that the original schedule had been delayed by six months.
- Bridget McCombe had been appointed as Project Manager.
- The Travel Foundation, the IRF sustainability partner, would be holding a Strategic Stakeholder meeting on 13 October and Simon Jupp MP would be in attendance along with over 20 other local attendees.
- New web pages for the partner towns were currently under development.

Hilary Nelson reported that she had attended the Proclamation at EDDC and had received positive feedback from leaders of the other partner towns for the work being carried out by the IRF team.

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

## **19 Air Show Evaluation Working Subgroup**

Cllr Nelson, Chair of the Air Show Working Group reported:

- The Red Arrows had been unable to perform and this had to be communicated at very short notice; Cllr Nelson thanked both the Town Clerk and the Ignyte team in their quick and efficient response.
- There had been between 18 to 21,000 attendees but unfortunately due to the last-minute display changes on the day, the visitor survey had not been responded to in the way it had been hoped, therefore it was unlikely that this would give any meaningful data.
- Approx. £7,000 had been collected in buckets with around £2,000 expected from the various car parks run by organisations around the town.
- Ignyte were working on an equivalence calculation to estimate how much it would cost in marketing to obtain the same number of visitors to the town.
- The company employed to run the traffic survey were unfortunately experiencing significant operational difficulties and it may be that useful data will not be available from this company.
- It was anticipated that a report would be made to the November Council meeting.

Cllr Thurlow gave an update of the Regatta Weekend Events:

- A variety of events had been held along the seafront and around the town by many organisations including the Surf Lifesaving, Gig, Sailing, Rotary Clubs and Sidmouth Lifeboat displays. Prizes had been sponsored by the Town Council.
- In addition to these, the Regatta Weekend had included giants on The Esplanade, the Air Show, Fun Fair and Saturday night firework display.
- Each club had covered their own insurance as it had not been possible to cover it all under one event policy.
- It was anticipated that the event would expand over the next few years to become a town wide weekend and a follow up meeting would be held with all the groups, with a written report to follow.

**RESOLVED:** That the Air Show Evaluation Working Group report be noted.

## **20 Meeting Date Change**

Members were asked to note that the final 2022 Tourism & Economy Working Group meeting would be brought forward from 12 December to 21 November 2022.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the date change of the final 2022 Tourism & Economy Working Group meeting be noted and agreed.

## **21 Matters Raised by Invited Representatives**

Alistair Handyside, South West Tourism Alliance, reported that:

- The Regatta Weekend and Air Show had been very successful events.
- Accommodation booking levels were generally down from the 2021 levels and there was currently an oversupply of short-term accommodation available in the South West.
- There was a short period of time to respond online to the consultation 'Call for Evidence on Statutory Registration in England'. It was a complicated process, so he

had prepared a paper of suggested responses to assist individuals to complete the document. This would be forwarded to Members following the meeting.

- South West Water sewage outflows had been very bad for the South West especially the Blue Flag beaches. Cllr Lockyear gave a short update on his work endeavouring to obtain outflow data and trying to keep SWW to account.

Sally Mynard, Chamber of Commerce, had been unable to attend the meeting but had sent the following statement:

**Statement from Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce**

“As we mourn the loss of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. Our sincere thanks to the Town Clerk for his kind email reminding the officers that the union flags flying in Sidmouth needed to be taken down, as they couldn’t be flown at half-mast. Thank you for bearing with us, as we attempted to get these down as soon as possible. Whilst I believe now that only one flag remains due to access issues, I am reassured that this will be down in the morning. As a mark of respect, we have removed all bunting too.

After careful consideration, we have decided that the Sidmouth Classic Car Show will take place on Saturday. There will be a minute’s silence at 1pm followed by the national anthem. The event first started in 2012 to mark the Queens Jubilee, so felt it would be fitting for this to go ahead.”

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CHAIR OF THE TOURISM & ECONOMY WORKING GROUP

## Sidmouth Tourist Information Centre - Income and Expenditure Report

### Month 7 - October 2022

|                                  | Actual         | Current        | Budget         |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                  | Year to Date   | Annual Budget  | Balance        |
| <b><u>Expenditure</u></b>        |                |                |                |
| Salaries                         | 20,790         | 33,000         | 12,210         |
| Cleaning & Office Mtce           | 264            | 300            | 36             |
| Business Rates                   | 2,545          | 2,600          | 55             |
| Photocopier                      | 24             | 200            | 176            |
| Stationery                       | 55             | 200            | 145            |
| Telephone                        | 1,292          | 1,200          | -92            |
| Postage & Packing                | 36             | 200            | 164            |
| Sundries, Provisions, Equipment  | 77             | 300            | 223            |
| Bank/Credit Card/Shopify Charges | 879            | 1,400          | 521            |
| Purchase of Stamps               | 118            | 1,000          | 882            |
| Purchase of Publications         | 1,515          | 2,000          | 485            |
| Purchase of Goods/Souvenirs      | 25             | 500            | 475            |
|                                  | <b>£27,620</b> | <b>£42,900</b> | <b>£15,280</b> |

## Income

|                                     |                |                |                |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Sale of Stamps                      | 502            | 1,000          | 498            |
| Sale of Publications                | 3,377          | 4,000          | 623            |
| Sale of Souvenirs                   | 851            | 1,000          | 149            |
| Sale of Adult Merchandise           | 777            | 1,000          | 223            |
| Sale of Children's Merchandise      | 48             | 100            | 52             |
| Commission - Sidmouth Folk Festival | 2,769          | 3,000          | 231            |
| Commission - Coaches                | 69             | 0              | -69            |
| Commission - Car/Coach Park         | 0              | 100            | 100            |
| Sundry Income                       | 208            | 100            | -108           |
| STC Funding                         | 17,600         | 32,600         | 15,000         |
|                                     | <b>£26,201</b> | <b>£42,900</b> | <b>£16,699</b> |

|                                    |               |           |                |
|------------------------------------|---------------|-----------|----------------|
| <b>Total Expenditure</b>           | £27,620       | £42,900   | £15,280        |
| <b>Total Income</b>                | £26,201       | £42,900   | £16,699        |
| <b>Net Expenditure over Income</b> | <b>£1,419</b> | <b>£0</b> | <b>£-1,419</b> |

|                                      |               |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Current/Deposit Bank Accounts</b> | <b>£6.492</b> |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|



# Visit Sidmouth Merchandise - Sales 2022-23

| Product - Sales       | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | 2022-23<br>Sales to<br>date | 2022-23<br>Sales<br>Income |
|-----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Coffee Cup            |     |     |     | 2   | 3   | 3   | 4   |     |     |     |     |     | 12                          | £84.96                     |
| Vacuum Flask          |     | 3   | 3   | 1   | 1   | 2   |     |     |     |     |     |     | 10                          | £125.00                    |
| Plastic drinks bottle |     |     | 1   | 3   | 2   | 2   | 1   |     |     |     |     |     | 9                           | £61.83                     |
| Jute bags             |     | 5   | 3   | 4   | 8   | 10  | 5   |     |     |     |     |     | 35                          | £189.70                    |
| Umbrella              |     |     |     |     |     | 1   | 1   |     |     |     |     |     | 2                           | £25.00                     |
| Adults cap            |     | 2   | 2   | 2   | 4   | 3   |     |     |     |     |     |     | 13                          | £130.00                    |
| Children's cap        |     | 2   |     | 1   |     | 3   |     |     |     |     |     |     | 6                           | £48.00                     |
| Polo Shirts           |     |     | 1   | 1   | 3   | 2   | 1   |     |     |     |     |     | 8                           | £160.00                    |
|                       | 0   | 12  | 10  | 14  | 21  | 26  | 12  | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 95                          | £824.49                    |

| Product<br>Information | Bfwd<br>Stock | Break Even<br>Units | 2021-22<br>Sales | 2022-23<br>Sales to<br>date | Net Cost<br>per unit | RRP<br>(incl VAT) | Net Sales<br>Price | Total Net<br>Cost incl<br>setup<br>charges |
|------------------------|---------------|---------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--|
| Coffee Cup             | 85            | 60                  | 12               | 12                          | £3.80                | £8.50             | £7.08              | £424.95                                    |
| Vacuum Flask           | 78            | 72                  | 18               | 10                          | £9.00                | £15.00            | £12.50             | £900.00                                    |
| Plastic drinks bottle  | 85            | 64                  | 14               | 9                           | £4.00                | £8.25             | £6.87              | £440.95                                    |
| Jute bags              | 67            | 69                  | 31               | 35                          | £3.40                | £6.50             | £5.42              | £375.00                                    |
| Umbrella               | 89            | 69                  | 6                | 2                           | £9.00                | £15.00            | £12.50             | £864.00                                    |
| Adults cap             | 70            | 62                  | 18               | 13                          | £5.50                | £12.00            | £10.00             | £621.50                                    |
| Children's cap         | 101           | 43                  | 3                | 6                           | £2.50                | £8.00             | £8.00              | £346.50                                    |
| Polo Shirts            | 63            | 35                  |                  | 8                           | £11.00               | £24.00            | £20.00             | £700.00                                    |
|                        |               |                     | 102              | 95                          |                      |                   |                    | £4,672.90                                  |

## Visit Sidmouth November 2022

### Visit Sidmouth website stats 2021

**Users – 191,451 +73.9% on 2019**

**Sessions – 586,872 + 131.8% on 2019**

**Pageviews – 1,566,629 + 207.6% on 2019**

| <b>YTD 2022</b>       | <b>Visit Sidmouth</b> | <b>+/- on LY</b> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Users                 | 177,800               | +4%              |
| Sessions              | 471,994               | -10.1%           |
| Pageviews             | 1,211,184             | -14%             |
| Ave. Session Duration | 2.10                  | -2.8%            |
|                       |                       |                  |
| <b>Q3</b>             | <b>Visit Sidmouth</b> | <b>+/- on LY</b> |
| Users                 | 74,243                | -3.5%            |
| Sessions              | 179,266               | -6.3%            |
| Pageviews             | 459,414               | -10.6%           |
| Ave. Session Duration | 2.10                  | -1.8%            |
|                       |                       |                  |
| <b>Q2 2022</b>        | <b>Visit Sidmouth</b> | <b>+/- on LY</b> |
| Users                 | 51,434                | -5.6%            |
| Sessions              | 127,941               | -18.6%           |
| Pageviews             | 324,123               | -23.6%           |
| Ave. Session Duration | 2.00                  | -4.3%            |
|                       |                       |                  |
| <b>Q1 2022</b>        | <b>Visit Sidmouth</b> | <b>+/- on LY</b> |
| Users                 | 45,397                | +33.3%           |
| Sessions              | 124,014               | -8.2%            |
| Pageviews             | 326,717               | -11.8%           |
| Ave. Session Duration | 2.17                  | -4%              |
|                       |                       |                  |

Unfortunately we had a issue with the [www.visitsidouth.co.uk](http://www.visitsidouth.co.uk) url in the summer, where the url is hosted externally and the DNS licence has expired so the redirect module failed. Once we have finally managed to discover where the hosting is held we were able to rectify the issue and the redirects were put back into place. This affected traffic in June and July.

We have seen more Sidmouth users to the site and these are predominantly looking at the webcams and the what's on section.

Visit Sidmouth enjoys 64.6% repeat visitors with 4% of these coming from Sidmouth.

The primary landing pages ytd were:

- 1 Webcams
- 2 Home page
- 3 Whats On
- 4 Shopping and Services
- 5 Competitions
- 6 Things to do

The acquisition of traffic to Visit Sidmouth in 2022 so far has been driven by:

Organic search – 67.7%

Direct – 25.3%

Referral – 4.1%

Social media – 2.8%

Users on the website are coming from:

1<sup>st</sup> London – 10.8%

2<sup>nd</sup> Edinburgh – 9%

3<sup>rd</sup> Exeter – 4.4%

4<sup>th</sup> Sidmouth – 4%

5<sup>th</sup> Birmingham – 2.3%

6<sup>th</sup> Bristol – 1.96%

7<sup>th</sup> Bournemouth 1.55%

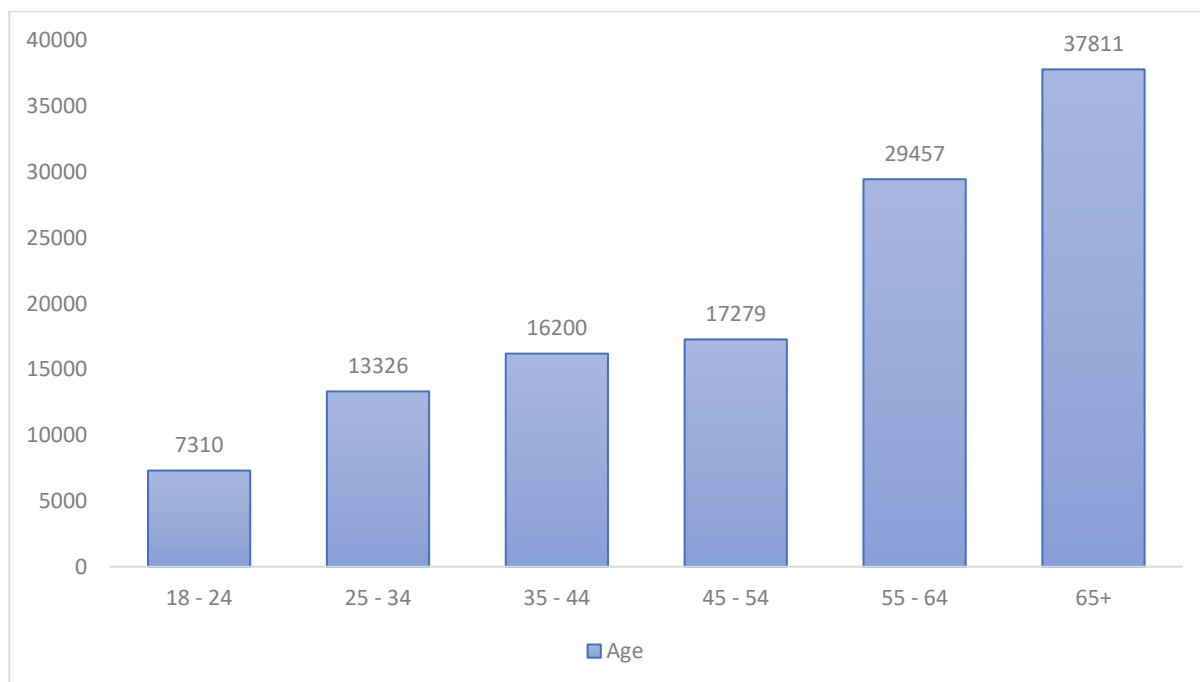
The number of people using mobile devices to look at the website continues to grow, Visit Sidmouth the break down is:

Mobile – 45.1%

Desktop – 40.8%

Tablet – 14.1%

Age demographic of sessions by age of the Visit Sidmouth website in January to October



### **Consumer newsletters**

The consumer database has grown to 4,016 subscribers with an open rate of 42% and a click rate of around 13% each month.

### **Members Newsletters**

On average 42% of the members are regularly opening their members newsletter.

On average 41% of the prospective members are opening their email newsletter every month.

### **Visit Sidmouth Town Map 2023**

All stock of 2022 maps have now been distributed.

The Ignyte team are now working on the plans for the 2023 town map and members are now booking to appear on the map.

### **Social Media**

I have attached a separate social media report for October 2022

We achieved 1,198,600 impressions in the first 10 months of the year with 96,786 engagements.

The profiles are all growing, and we now have a total audience of 9,235.

The Instagram page is the fastest growing, as expected and has now reached 2984 followers.

We have launched a Tick Tock page for Visit Sidmouth in November.

### **Industry update**

The tourism industry in Devon has been significantly quieter than 2021, as people are now able to travel abroad and there were many offers available to travels to encourage them to leave the country this year.

Public behaviour has changed with many more last minute bookings taking place up to the night before travel and this behaviour is expected to continue while the cost of living crisis puts additional pressure on families and businesses.

Many Sidmouth businesses are very concerned about their increased costs and are holding back from spending due to the need to increase the budgets on heat and light during the winter.

### **Christmas campaign**

The Ignyte team led on the Christmas campaign bringing together the Chamber of Commerce and Connaught at Christmas to form a joint funded campaign to promote all things Christmas in Sidmouth. A video was created and social media and Google display campaigns are under way.

## Tourism and Promotion Strategy and Service Provision Chair's Report

Since 2019, the Tourism and Economy Committee, now Working Group, supported by the Tourism Advisory Group (TAG), have been focused on positioning and promoting Sidmouth as a unique and key tourism destination. The focus has been on utilising the Visit Sidmouth branding to work in support of the tourism, retail and hospitality sector.

The TAG has continued to prioritise our tourism promotion strategy which balances the needs of visitors and residents as mutually beneficial. This effectively ensures that Sidmouth Town Council continues to support, encourage and facilitate Tourism promotion to realise the aspirations laid out in the Sid Valley neighbourhood plan:

*“Our vision is of a Sid Valley that maintains and promotes its rural and coastal beauty and its welcoming community, and advances its appeal to young and old providing a quality of life, work and visitor experience. This vision conserves and enhances our picturesque location on the Jurassic coast. it nurtures and promotes the ambience of our community to which both residents and visitors connect.”*

It has been important to embed the role that our sales and marketing specialists Ignyte Ltd, are commissioned to do and to grow and develop our approach with the aim of raising Sidmouth's profile, showcasing what collectively we have to offer to ensure a resilient economy and grow new visitor markets.

Work has focused on working collaboratively to identify new opportunities and the need for change, this was particularly so given the impact and rapid changes that the Covid -19 global pandemic caused. We identified the IRF as an opportunity to lead that change as part of our positioning strategy for Sidmouth as a tourism destination to build on its strengths, better reflect what it does and to innovate new work particularly in the area of sustainable tourism to benefit both residents and visitors.

Our successful EDDC Innovation and Resilience Fund Coast Meets Country Project bid, presents a significant opportunity which is now being delivered, to balance both our strategic vision to continue to promote Sidmouth's destination profile and to take a lead in strengthening its sustainable tourism offer. This includes practical implementation to build relationships, support businesses to develop sustainable practices and develop new promotional assets to support that journey.

Our approach since 2019 is based on the collaborative advantages of working together and achieving greater impact through our shared platforms. This approach has never been so important given that since 2019, the Tourism industry has suffered continuous shocks and the current economic context is incredibly hard for businesses.

Whilst the national picture for tourism is one of underperformance, recent indicators that we are outperforming the market provide a strong rationale for continuing to focus our efforts in promoting Sidmouth in the most effective way, within our available resources which includes specialist skills and marketing platforms.

### Indicators of Success

#### [Sidmouth and Kingsbridge are roaring back after Covid - Devon Live](#)

The figures have been released by Place Informatics, which monitors visitor numbers, known as footfall, across the UK. They put the two Devon towns in the top five in the South West, indicating that at least the south of the county has seen a strong bounce-back from the impact of the pandemic.

## [Best Places to Live: Sidmouth | Muddy Stilettos](#)

Muddy Stilettos is a curated and researched insider's guide to the very best food, walks, boutiques, day trips, hotels, interiors and events for smart, fun-loving women living outside London. In Jan 2013 the site turned into a business, and nine years on, Muddy Stilettos has 1.2m monthly fans, nearly 275,000 subscribers, 250,000 social followers, and can now be found in 28 counties.

### **Additional Factors**

EDDC have recently approved a new Tourism Strategy for the District (*Appendix 1*) through involvement with stakeholders. EDDC have articulated that:

**Our vision is for East Devon to be the leading, year-round tourism destination in Devon, whose diverse ecosystem of outstanding natural environments, distinctive, high-quality businesses, towns and villages, all thrive and grow through a commitment to Net Zero, accessibility and collaboration**

STC/Visit Sidmouth played an important part in developing the strategy which includes in its strategic objectives;

Objective 4: Build on the activity of the Innovation and Resilience Fund project, led by Visit Sidmouth, which aims to empower a minimum of 10 business to become Green Champions, providing training, mentoring and structural support to decrease carbon footprint and other environmental goals. From 2023 onwards, implement a programme to actively support the tourism sector to reduce carbon usage, commit to Net Zero and improve accessibility.

Through the IRF Sustainable Tourism Coast Meets Country project we are leading delivery of the district wide vision for tourism.

STC Tourism Promotion Key Achievements include:

- Visit Sidmouth website (performance is included *Appendix 2* Detailed Achievements of Visit Sidmouth)
- Ignyte Ltd providing tourism promotion, sales and marketing services providing social media campaigns, digital guide and town map products
- A self-financing model, generating income to cover service delivery costs and investments in tourism promotion that benefit the town and ensures that STC resources are used effectively
- 'punching above our weight' through professionalism to boost our tourism profile
- Improved collaboration with the sector – tourism businesses, regional tourism networks, working with the East Devon MP, partners across Honiton, Ottery, Seaton, Budleigh Salterton, closer working with EDDC at a strategic level
- Review of the Sidmouth Information Centre leading to the refurbishment and re-launch of the TIC including ensuring the TIC staff focus is more integrated to support promotion of the town
- IRF Coast Meets Country Sustainable Tourism Project EDDC funding

## **Renewed Purpose and Objectives**

Building on successes, learning and experience and our approach we have updated and developed new objectives (see below) which reflect the current state of play, both in terms of the challenges locally to businesses and the sector, and to continue to look to the future to ensure we can both lead and innovate and respond appropriately to sector challenges.

In particular developing our sustainable tourism approach is central to creating a sustainable position for our tourism-based economy. This is also to reflect changing visitor trends, to build on the strengths of the work of our civic groups and the environment committee, towards a more sustainable future to proactively respond to the challenges of climate change and to continue to lead that positive change.

## Purpose and Objectives

### Purpose:

STC will build on its existing strategy to facilitate sustainable growth and resilience of the tourism and retail sectors in Sidmouth, acting as an enabler to foster collaborative partnerships, best practice and innovation, with a focus on environmental sustainability, accessibility and inclusivity and leading on the promotion of these core values for Sidmouth's tourism and economy.

STC has identified the following specific objectives for 2023-2026:

- To develop and grow Sidmouth's market position as a premier high quality coastal destination, building on the existing strengths of the town's tourism strategy and the success of Visit Sidmouth since 2020.
- To position Sidmouth to support collaboratively and be an integral part of the new sub-regional brand identity and approach as set out in the East Devon Tourism Strategy and to align Sidmouth with the EDDC cultural strategy.
- To position Sidmouth as an all year round (365) sustainable, accessible and inclusive tourism destination.
- To protect the High Street and hospitality businesses and to create the conditions for them to thrive, enabling businesses to be responsive and proactive to shocks in the sector, including Covid recovery, the energy crisis and the cost-of-living crisis.
- To develop and implement a sustainable tourism programme, to support the sector to reduce carbon usage, commit to net zero and encourage responsible stewardship of our local assets including the natural environment.
- From October 2023, to build on the learning and development from the Coast Meets Country project to ensure a permanent legacy of this project.

To support these objectives, STC requires marketing and promotional support, as detailed more fully in the Proposal for Marketing and Tourism Promotion and Sales of Digital and Print *Appendix 3*.

This includes ensuring Sidmouth is positioned:

- To promote Sidmouth using the best possible online platforms ensuring high quality and up to date technology and functionality to facilitate ability to lead and respond to new trends and context;
- To grow traffic and engagement across digital platforms through a cohesive programme of organic content generation, PR and initiative driven advertising campaigns.
- To ensure continual production of relevant, up-to-date content, which aligns with the objectives above, to be distributed through digital and, where appropriate, print media;
- To encourage business memberships and advertising so that digital and print channels are financially self-sustaining and fully cover the costs of STC, as was the case in 2021-22;
- From October 2023, to continue to build upon the enhanced platform developed under the Coast Meets Country project, including support to the online shopping platform and linked sub-regional content.

## Website Upgrade and Contract Renewal

The TAG have been reviewing the existing Visit Sidmouth website and the Ignyte contract which is now due for renewal. Also due for renewal is our contract with Visit Devon who provide the sister platform on which Visit Sidmouth sits. In line with our updated objectives above, the attached draft Marketing and Tourism Promotion and Sales of Digital and Print schedule of services proposal has been developed.

Key Detailed Achievements of Visit Sidmouth were documented as part of the review process *Appendix 2*.

Visit Devon is renewing and upgrading its website in February 2023 and moving to a new Content Management System (CMS) which will afford us a timely opportunity to continue to access the best possible tourism website in terms of both functionality and design. This supersedes a review process of our own existing website as it will deliver the improvements we had identified as being needed and ensure we are using the best possible platform in terms of industry standards.

The website developments and benefits are also outlined in Website Developments IRF *Appendix 4*.

The insight and learning we have gained from this process and through the past three years of working with Ignyte Ltd and from feedback from others informs our business case for renewing the contract and strengthen what has been achieved to date:

- Success so far is the result of a flexible responsive positive relationship with Ignyte Ltd and the relationships with businesses and tourism industry networks they manage on our behalf
- Investment to date is significant and we would not be able to achieve the same without repeat similar levels of investment
- a fully integrated service that encompasses content creation, social media management, web build, sales management and design all under one roof with a tourism specialism is unusual
- sourcing suppliers with different specialisms would not represent value for money and require additional management resources

## Recommendations

Given the track record detailed earlier in this report and the ongoing challenges to the sector, there is no place for complacency. There is an ongoing need to continuously improve, cement existing relationships and develop new ones and to ensure we have the right skills and tools with which to deliver our approach.

1. The TAG have worked with Visit Devon to renew the microsite agreement (draft in Appendix 5) for the next three years January 2023 – January 2026, this supports the sub site model of delivery that we developed and agreed in 2019. It is recommended that a new contract is issued to ensure ongoing and improved service delivery.
2. It is also proposed that the Tourism and Economy Working Group recommend that the new Ignyte Ltd services schedule are agreed for the next three years to give both continuity, to deliver the improvements we require, deliver the revised objectives and to continue to innovate.
3. The annual cost of Ignyte services will increase by £1,357 +VAT per year to £23,977 + VAT and it is anticipated to continue to be self-financing as it has been in the last two years.

It is therefore recommended that the Tourism and Economy Working Group make the following recommendation to Sidmouth Town Council:

**RECOMMENDED:** That in line with Financial Regulation 18.2, Members agree 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.



The Purpose of the recommendation is:

To allow the appointment of a preferred contractor and the timely progression of Sidmouth Town Council's tourism promotion strategy and services.

## Appendices

- Appendix 1      EDDC Tourism Strategy
- Appendix 2      Key Detailed Achievements of Visit Sidmouth
- Appendix 3      Proposal for Marketing and Tourism Promotion and Sales of Digital and Print Draft
- Appendix 4      Website Developments IRF
- Appendix 5      Visit Devon Microsite Agreement Draft

## 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  |        |        |        |        |        | £11,310       | £22,620         | 50%     |
| Ignyte Sales Income                                   |        | -603   | -1,325 | -600   | -393   | -870   |        |        |        |        |        |        | -£3,791       | -£22,000        | 17%     |
| Visit Sidmouth Website Development costs/updates      | 127    |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        | £127          | £1,500          | 8%      |
| Social Media Advertising                              |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        | £0            | £2,000          | 0%      |
| Video Production                                      | 380    |        | 700    |        |        |        | 180    |        |        |        |        |        | £1,260        | £4,000          | 32%     |
| 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  | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | £16,740       | £28,000         | 60%     |
| <b>Budget remaining</b>                               |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |               | -£11,260        |         |

### Earmarked Reserve brought forward

|                                |       |  |  |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |          |        |
|--------------------------------|-------|--|--|--------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|----------|--------|
| Sidmouth Jazz & Blues Festival | -3000 |  |  |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | £33,945  |        |
| STC contribution to IRF        |       |  |  | -22000 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | -£3,000  |        |
| <b>EMR remaining</b>           |       |  |  |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | -£22,000 | £8,945 |

## 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  |        |        |        |        |        | £20,790       | £33,000         | 63%     |
| Other Expenditure               | 1,461  | 491    | 217    | 404    | 671    | 103    | 1,825  |        |        |        |        |        | £5,172        | £6,400          | 81%     |
| Purchase of stock               |        |        | 318    | 625    | 196    | 167    | 352    |        |        |        |        |        | £1,658        | £3,500          | 47%     |
| Sales Visit Sidmouth merch      |        | -101   | -100   | -117   | -191   | -226   | -90    |        |        |        |        |        | -£825         | -£1,100         | 75%     |
| Sales stamps, publications, etc | -480   | -736   | -854   | -823   | -663   | -910   | -472   |        |        |        |        |        | -£4,938       | -£6,100         | 81%     |
| Commission on ticket sales      |        | -451   | -877   | -750   | -699   | -51    | -10    |        |        |        |        |        | -£2,838       | -£3,100         | 92%     |
| STC Funding                     | -7,600 |        | -5,000 |        | -5,000 |        |        |        |        |        |        |        | -£17,600      | -£32,600        | 54%     |
| <b>Total</b>                    | -5,352 | 1,088  | -2,745 | 2,948  | -1,945 | 3,176  | 4,249  | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | £1,419        | £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  |        |        |        |        |        | £11,412       | £18,000         | 63%     |
| Webpage Development                          |        |        |        |        |        |        | 9,245  |        |        |        |        |        | £9,245        | £55,471         | 17%     |
| 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  |        |        |        |        |        | £2,334        | £22,000         | 0%      |
| Additional Linked Content - Honiton and OSM  |        |        |        |        |        |        | 5,750  |        |        |        |        |        | £5,750        | £8,000          | 0%      |
| Equipment for Sustainability Training        |        |        |        |        |        |        | 1,822  |        |        |        |        |        | £1,822        | £2,078          | 88%     |
| <b>Net Council Budget</b>                    | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 6,000  | 55,853 | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | £61,963       | £176,209        | 35%     |
| <b>Budget remaining</b>                      |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |               | -£114,246       |         |

### 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   | %    |
|---------------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------------|----------|------|
| EDDC I&R Fund |        |        | 146,209 |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        | £146,209       | £146,209 | 100% |
| Sidmouth TC   |        |        |         | 22,000 |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        | £22,000        | £22,000  | 100% |
| Ottery TC     |        |        |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        | £0             | £5,000   | 0%   |
| 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  | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | £171,209       | £176,209 | 97%  |

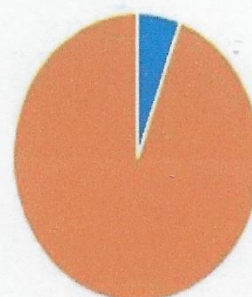
## Call for evidence

### Impact on the increase in charges in EDDC Car Parks to businesses

53 Responses 05:16 Average time to complete Closed Status

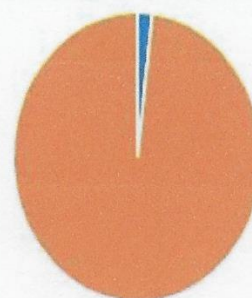
1. Did you support EDDC doubling of car parking charges throughout East Devon seaside towns?

● Yes 3  
● No 50



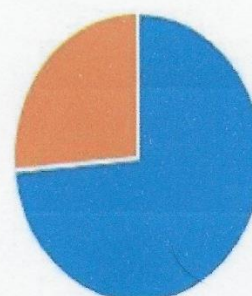
2. As a business owner, were you consulted by EDDC before car parking charges were increased?

● Yes 1  
● No 52



3. Did you sign the public petition against car parking price increases?

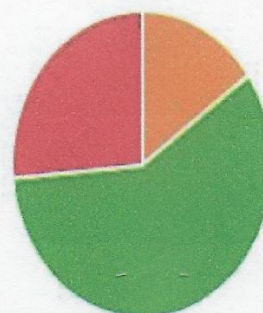
● Yes 39  
● No 14





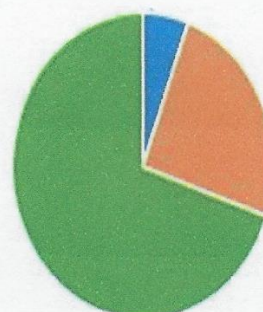
4. During the period May to September 2022. How much time did customers spend in your business?

|                                 |    |
|---------------------------------|----|
| More than you would expect      | 0  |
| The same as you would expect    | 8  |
| Less than you would have exp... | 31 |
| Not applicable                  | 14 |



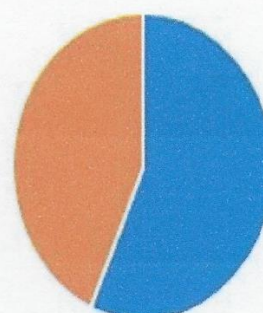
5. Compared to your anticipated level of trade from May to September 2022 were you

|                   |    |
|-------------------|----|
| Above expectation | 3  |
| Same as expected  | 13 |
| Below expectation | 37 |



6. Were your customers aware of the car parking charges increases?

|     |    |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 30 |
| No  | 23 |

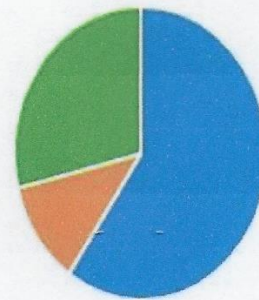


7. Please state some of the comments you received from your customers

26  
Responses

Latest Responses  
"Greed by the council - not supporting local businesses"

8. Do you believe the increase in car parking charges by EDDC adversely affected your business during the peak tourism season?



9. Briefly explain your reason

24  
Responses

Latest Responses

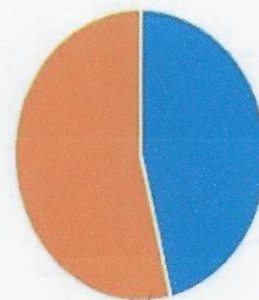
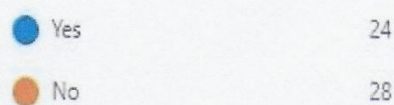
*"Recently published data reveal that the numbers using car parks decl..."*

10. Briefly explain your reason

4  
Responses

Latest Responses

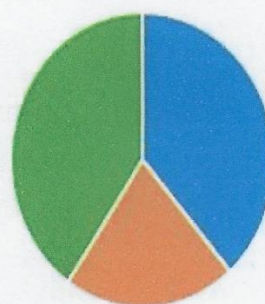
11. Did the increased car parking charges adversely affect your staff?





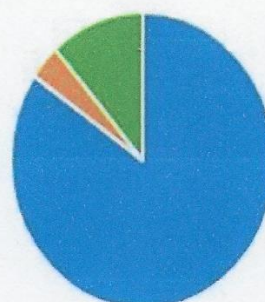
12. Do you believe these increases have made it harder to recruit staff?

|        |    |
|--------|----|
| Yes    | 20 |
| No     | 11 |
| Unsure | 21 |



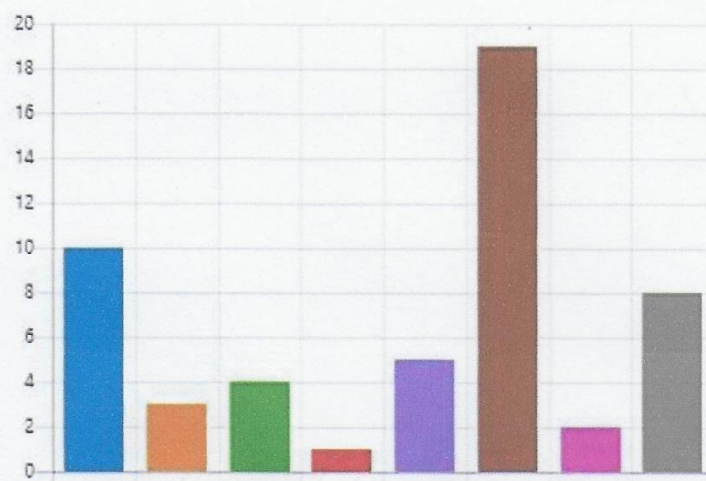
13. Would you support lowering the cost of car parking charges in 2023?

|       |    |
|-------|----|
| Yes   | 44 |
| No    | 2  |
| Maybe | 6  |



14. Please select the type of business you operate

|                                    |    |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Pub/Café/Restaurant/Takeaway       | 10 |
| Hotel/B&B/Accommodation P...       | 3  |
| Hair & Beauty                      | 4  |
| Health & Wellbeing                 | 1  |
| Financial/Solicitors/Estate Age... | 5  |
| Retail                             | 19 |
| Charity Shop                       | 2  |
| Other                              | 8  |



### **Comments received in relation to Question 7**

#### **Please state some of the comments you received from your customers**

Wouldn't visit East Devon again

We are shocked at the increase in parking charges. We come to Sidmouth for the day every few months, it's too expensive now with the increase in parking. We normally come for shopping and coffee, we aren't staying for coffee. I'll come back when I've got more time, my parking is almost up. I heard these comments repeatedly all summer. I have definitely lost a lot of business because of the increase in parking charges.

More expensive than Exeter. Will go elsewhere to Lyme Regis where it's cheaper. Won't come into town half as much.

"must get back to the car as parking is going to expire - ISN'T IT EXPENSIVE"

A lot of customers made their feelings of disappointment made to me in the shop. Customers are now coming into town, doing what they have to and then heading straight home rather than as they used to, taking their time to have a mooch around the shops and maybe a coffee and a browse.

We won't be coming as often as we're not paying parking. We'll just have coffee rather than food as we don't want to put extra money on the car.

Can't stop I've only got a few minutes left at the car park.

Too expensive to park in Sidmouth so won't visit anymore or only less frequently

We don't come to Sidmouth any more, and if we do, we only spend an hour.

Too expensive to be able to spend as long looking around the shops,

Increased parking fees meant they would spend less time in Sidmouth and therefore spend less. Customers are ordering / shopping online more and this is one of the reasons why

They say it's too much when they are in town for 3 hours or more.

They won't return on principle of the charge level

The price increase puts them off shopping locally. They might as well go to Exeter

Too expensive, not good to shop in town now, criminally high, Rip off ..

Cor Sidmouth is expensive, how quick will I be done? My parking going to run out, prices are high will they go down soon

Many of my customers travel in from towns around Sidmouth, and can't believe the prices!

Can't believe it's so much. It's free in Seaton

Irrelevant

They don't come back as often they would like to, because of parking charges.

Last time coming to Sidmouth the car parking charges are horrendous. The charges make you think about just popping down into town to meet friends etc.

They go to out of town shopping or shop online instead

Won't be coming back to Sidmouth due to parking charges

The majority of customers reacted negatively to the increase with most stating they would no longer spend longer periods in Sidmouth due to cost of parking ! Prior to the increase customers would spend half a day in the town using hospitality for coffee and lunch but now said they would only pop in for specific purchases



### **Comments received in relation to Question 8**

#### **Do you think to charges adversely affected business during the park season**

Greed by the council - not supporting local businesses

Briefly explain your reason

I was explicitly told by customers.

From speaking to or hearing from a lot of local people many said they wouldn't be coming into town any more because of the charges. When leaving and collecting my bike at the Roxburgh car park I have heard numerous people commenting on the prices, local and visitors and saying they won't be coming back

While August was busier, the rest of the months were much quieter.

less people parking in town and those that do park stay for considerably shorter periods

There was a definite reduction in browsers due to the increased charges - our little seaside town was being compared to the city of Exeter in terms of the cost of parking.

Footfall has been lower. Numerous customer complaints regarding the parking. I personally park in Manor Road Car Park on a permit daily and move my care to Ham West around 3pm prior to evening service and I did not have to queue for a parking space once, whereas over the previous two years I would have driven around the car park several times before finding a space or waiting for a vehicle to move!

Clearly people were rushing to get their visit over in a short Lee time frame to avoid having to pay more fees for parking

Customers have told us that parking charges are putting them off

As a shop at the top of the town we lost trade because we are further from the car parks and customers did not have to time visit as many shops away from the centre

Customers are ordering / shopping online more and this is one of the reasons why

Because people are only coming in getting what they need and going again.

Listening to our guests and people around the town, they have said they have stayed away due to the parking charges and made minimal visits to Sidmouth

Parking charges prohibitive especially for short visits if under 2 hours.

Our year on year figures are significantly down

For us as a business we rely quite heavily on day trippers and we had feedback saying that it was too expensive to travel and shop in Sidmouth due to the Carparking increases.

Not enough time to shop.

Customers would of come into town to meet friends and gone shopping have a coffee etc. Not anymore.

Because people don't want to stay

People made the decision not to "pop" Into town to grab a few things from local shops instead buying at supermarkets or Amazon. The parking was so much it affected their decision to spend a few hours in town

Customers spending less time in the town

Extra charges means less time spent in the town. Less shopping/eating is being consumed. You can park for free in some of the out of town shopping centres around Exeter for free and get everything you need, from groceries to electrical. There is the other alternative of online shopping, no parking fees and you save on petrol

Allot of customers said they just did not have time to shop because of the extreme parking charges

Guests frequently told us about the increases and some even said that they will not be returning to stay in East Devon next year.

Recently published data reveal that the numbers using car parks declined and that they stayed for shorter periods.



### Any further comments

Still don't understand why EDDC councillors get free parking in EDDC public car parks

The current cost of living crisis is having an impact, we need to make Sidmouth as attractive as possible to visitors. Reducing parking would be a great help

If I had to rely on passing footfall for my customers my business would have been adversely affected. I am fortunate in the nature of my business, shops and other traders are not so fortunate.

Whilst the winter rates might help, assuming they are still happening, a lot of the spaces will be taken up by people working in the town. The rates should be from 10:00 as they used to be a number of years ago.

Abysmal of EDDC.

I personally find the increase in parking a blow to local businesses, in one breath the council are apparently trying to rejuvenate the high-street and in the next they are helping to kill it with increased costs to visit the area.

The drastic reduction in summer trade has forced us to consider our future in Sidmouth as it's becoming unviable working for half the minimum wage!!

my customers book in for a session for 2 hours - they often say they aren't going into town or the beach as they don't want to pay for more parking. although my business is small i do get lots of customers from exeter and east devon who make a special visit to my studio.

We are located very near the Ham car park. This has been noticeably less busy than it was before the increases.

As a town we have to compete with other seaside towns in the area, we cannot just take the easy option and slap an increase on parking. There is lots of good work done in the town, promote it more, generate more tourism and business and Sidmouth will prosper, it's a very popular town and people like it. It only takes one negative to turn people away forever

The level is such it drives people away

Please reconsider these exorbitant increases which will decimate our local trade.

Keep the winter 2£ all day. Make first half hour free then charge the new rate.

I need some sort of annual permit that's effective all day. For me as a business owner

The council need to advertise the monthly and yearly permits, many customers would purchase them!

2 hrs free parking will drive people into town

Parking charges got to go down in price, in the winter we need local customers and visitors to come back.

With everything that is happening a trip out always brighten up your day and mental health

There was no public consultation that I was aware of and we should be involved in these decisions

You only need to visit Sidmouth to realise the cost of parking has had an adverse effect on using the town in previous years finding a car park space during the day was a challenge now it is easy with car parks mostly empty

Guests Comments - We shall return to stay off peak season now when parking is cheaper. As I holiday alone I normally visit 2 towns each day to enjoy a coffee in each place, this year, I am returning back to my accommodation. So far this week it has cost £56 in parking charges, we shall not be returning to East Devon on holiday again. Wow your car parks are expensive.