

SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council
held in the Council Chamber, Woolcombe House,
Woolcombe Lane, Sidmouth
on Monday 9 January 2023 at 6.30pm

Ward	Councillors Present:
Sidmouth North	Charissa Evans
	Stuart Hughes
	Dawn Manley
	Jenny Ware
Sidmouth South	Denise Bickley
	Kelvin Dent
	Chris Lockyear (Chair)
	Hilary Nelson (Vice Chair)
Sidmouth West	Louise Cole
Primley	Emma Murdoch
Sidford	Jack Brokenshire
	Marianne Rixson
Sidbury	John Loudoun
Salcombe Regis	Ian Barlow
	Richard Thurlow
Apologies:	Deirdre Hounsom, Steven Kendall-Torry, Rachel Perram, Jeff Turner

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 7.25pm.

PART 'A'

103 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 5 December 2022 were signed as a true and accurate record.

104 Declarations of Interest

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

105 Matters of Urgency or Report from the Chair

- i. Councillor Brokenshire notified the Council that he intended to step down as Councillor at the end of the evening. He thanked Councillors past and present and the Town Clerk and staff for their support over the years and commented that he had enjoyed the time spent serving the people of Sidford Ward and the town. Responding, The Chair of the Council thanked Councillor Brokenshire for his long service (since 1999) and hoped that he would still stay in touch in the future.
- ii. The Chair of Council reported that the CAPS group (Climate Awareness Partnership Sidmouth which was part of the Biodiversity Group and working with the Environment Working Group towards encouraging public engagement in environmental issues) had the opportunity to ask an MSC student at Exeter University to do some work for the group.

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Such a project would involve only light costs associated with travelling and expenses and could be a good way of studying public engagement in this and other Council projects. Members agreed that the Council would officially support the scheme and involvement of an Exeter University student.

106 Public Open Question Time

- i. There were no questions from the Public.
- ii. Councillor Louise Cole asked District Councillors if there was any news regarding the Rockfish restaurant development at the former Drill Hall. District Members advised that there was no new public news though it was noted that design work and relations teams had made initial contact with both District and Town Officers.
- iii. During discussion of the new Rockfish restaurant, Town Members also asked District Councillors if there had been any progress on the review of Public Toilets after significant consultation with the public and Council. It was noted that District Officers were progressing the issues but that no new information was available at this time.

107 Police Advocate Report

Councillor Dent, Devon and Cornwall Police Advocate, reported that in the latest communications from the Police they had advised that there were no significant areas for concern. The most recent spate of crime had centred around the theft of Catalytic Converters from vehicles whilst on people's driveways. Another minor but very time-consuming number of incidents had centred around loose animals on highways and land owners were encouraged to keep a regular check on their livestock boundaries.

RESOLVED: That the Police Advocate report be noted.

108 Working Group Reports

108.1 Planning Working Group Reports

Councillor Dent, Chair of the Planning Working Group, presented the reports of the Planning Working Group meetings held on Wednesdays 30 November and 14 December 2022.

RESOLVED: that the Planning Working Group reports be noted.

108.2 Tourism & Economy Working Group Report

Councillor Cole, Chair of the Tourism & Economy Working Group, reported that the recent Coast Meets Country Project Imaginarium brainstorming event, held at the Victoria Hotel and kindly provided by the hotel at no cost to help attract key and high-level tourism providers to the meeting to discuss the future of sustainable tourism had been very successful. It was also noted that the individual town pages for the Coast Meets Country Project had been published on time at the end of 2022.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

108.3 Environment Working Group

There was no report.

108.4 Council Resources Review Working Group

Councillor Lockyear, Chair of the Council Resources Review Working Group reported that a meeting of the Working Group would be arranged shortly.

108.5 Youth Provision Working Group

There was no report.

109 Reports from Members with Special Responsibilities

109.1 Finance Report

In Councillor Turner's absence, Councillor Thurlow presented the Finance Report for November 2022.

RESOLVED: That the Finance Report for November 2022 be noted.

109.2 Other Reports from Members with Special Responsibilities

In light of the recent negative portrayal of the Beach management Project that East Devon District Council was leading, Councillor Lockyear gave a brief update on the current state of the scheme:

- A draft Outline Business Case for the additional breakwater, groyne on East Beach, splash wall foundation upgrade and some raising, and recharge and recycle has been prepared.
- Changes to the funding template has caused delays to the previously published timetable
- The funding shortfall was £3 million but recent work has reduced this to £1.7 million
- There is engineering and commercial uncertainty and as a consequence the risk budget attached to this project is significant
- EDDC are proposing covering this shortfall through loans but hopeful that as further work is done the risk budget can be reduced to a point where the project can be funded without the EDDC loan.
- Either way, the project will proceed.
- The Advisory Group will have the opportunity to view the Outline Business Case before submission
- Outline Business Case will be submitted in Q1 2023
- Outline Business Case is a funding document and does not commit to the final design. Detailed engineering design should start before the end of 2023
- A subgroup of the Advisory group will be formed to help shape the scope for the detailed design and modelling stage.
- Construction of the structures is hoped to be undertaken in 2025

110 Weddings in Connaught Gardens

Members were asked to consider the East Devon District Council letter and report regarding weddings in Connaught Gardens.

RESOLVED: the District Council be advised that;

- a) The Town Council was pleased that EDDC had taken account of its views, allowing Weddings only (not receptions) at the gardens.
- b) The hybrid model and principle of weddings only being permitted to take place at Connaught Gardens continued to be supported by the Town Council.
- c) Members echoed the reasoning surrounding the value of the weddings to tourism and the contribution to the wider economy of the area, particularly within the shoulder season to the main summer tourism season. They agreed that this should be included in any review of costs.
- d) Members felt that the District Council was significantly under-pricing itself with regard to the venue, even with the proposed revised pricing.
- e) The sole partnership with the Clock Tower restaurant was not supported. Members felt that this facility in the gardens should continue to be enjoyed by all at all times and not be closed for weddings. They also expressed concern that it was showing prejudice towards one business over others in the same sector within East Devon by the District Council.

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CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL