

**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