

**Minutes of a Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council's  
Tourism and Economy Working Group  
on Monday 13 March 2023 at 6.30 pm  
(The Tourism and Economy Working Group met virtually)**

Councillors present: Ian Barlow  
Louise Cole  
Deidre Hounsom  
Chris Lockyear  
Hilary Nelson  
Rachel Perram  
Richard Thurlow

Invited Reps: Chamber of Commerce – David Cook  
TIC Manager – Tim Shardlow

Apologies: Charissa Evans  
Chamber of Commerce – Sally Mynard  
Ignyte Ltd – Tina Veater  
South West Tourism Alliance – Alistair Handyside

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.40pm

## **PART 'A'**

### **33 Minutes**

The Minutes of the Tourism & Economy Working Group meeting held on Monday 21 November 2022 were approved as a true and accurate record.

### **34 Declarations of Interest**

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

### **35 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:

- A new publicity campaign promoting Sidmouth Festivals and Events including a video showing content of the key events throughout the year was due to be released shortly.
- The Sidmouth@Christmas campaign had been a pilot collaborative approach to market Sidmouth during the shoulder season which had been well received and the dedicated page had received over 1,000 views.
- A suggestion for additional funding to support the Jazz & Blues Festival free music events had been received and Members were asked to consider allocating funds from the existing budgets or Tourism Earmarked Reserve.
- The Chair reminded the Working Group that the Members of the TAG were: Cllrs Cole, Nelson and Hounsom, TIC Manager: Tim Shardlow, Chamber of Commerce: Sally Mynard, Marketing: Louise Thompson and accommodation provider: Jo Watson.

**RESOLVED:** That:

- 1) the Tourism Advisory Group report be noted.
- 2) £3,000 funding would be made available from the Tourism & Economy Promotion budgets to support the free music events during the 2023 Sidmouth Jazz & Blues Festival.

### **36 Information Centre Updates**

Tim Shardlow, Tourist Information Centre Manager, gave a comprehensive report of TIC activities and reported that:

- Jazz & Blues Festival headline act tickets were being sold from the TIC.
- Folk Festival sales were more than double compared to those at the same time last year.
- From mid-April the TIC would move to 'shoulder season' opening times and be open until 4pm Monday to Saturday with one member of staff and then later in May would move to 'summer season' hours of 10am to 5pm Monday to Saturday and 10am to 4pm Sunday, with two members of staff.
- The TIC would again hold the register for booking the popular Walking Festival trips running from 16 to 22 September.
- The Greenslade Tours program was expected shortly and a new company Wayfarer Tours, had contacted the TIC and wished to have an agency presence within the Sidmouth TIC to sell tickets for their coach trips.
- The 2023 Town Maps had been printed and were due to be received soon.
- The LGA Culture, Tourism and Sport website enabled local authorities to share events and community news for local events.
- The TIC staff had a good working relationship with the Chamber of Commerce and the Manager had attended the CofC AGM which had been well attended.
- The Manager had attended a zoom day run by Creative UK which presented information about TV and film production locations outside London.
- Many visitors were enquiring when the EDDC Electric Vehicle charging points would be available for use.

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

### **37 Tourism & Promotion Contract Update**

In the absence of Tina Veater, Ignyte, Cllr Louise Cole presented the report of the promotional activity work carried out with and on behalf of the Town Council and described the functionality of the new, improved Visit Sidmouth website which would be launched on 22 March 2023.

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

### **38 Tourism & Promotion Finance Report**

The Chair presented the Tourism & Promotion Finance report for the period ending February 2023.

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

### **39 IRF Project Update**

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

- Karen Whittaker had been employed as the new IRF Project Manager.

- The IRF project focus was moving towards the sustainability part of the program, partnering with Green Champions to create a Sustainable Tourism Roadmap and Carbon Action Plan with Sidmouth as the pilot town for this element.
- The Travel Foundation ran a very successful, well attended 'Imaginarium' event at the Victoria Hotel, held to inspire innovation and share knowledge enabling businesses to achieve greater sustainability and move towards their net zero targets.
- Link to the Travel Foundation – Sidmouth CMC appears at the end of the page.  
<https://www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk/project/destination-stewardship-planning/>

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

#### **40 Sidmouth Regatta**

Members considered and debated how best to support and develop Sidmouth Regatta which takes place in the August Bank Holiday. It was agreed that the Town Council was a coordinator and that other than the Regatta Airshow and Fireworks, individual organisations and groups would run their own events as in 2022.

- RESOLVED:**
- 1)** That a small Sub Working Group be set up to act as coordinator, enabler and facilitator for the Sidmouth Regatta Weekend bringing together the work of Sidmouth Town Council, Community event organisers and the Coast Meets Country Project.
  - 2)** Membership of the Sub Working Group to include Cllrs Barlow, Nelson, Perram and Thurlow.
  - 3)** A group of volunteers including Graham Symington and Duncan Woods together with others from the participating organisations as required, be invited to operational level meetings.
  - 4)** That the Coast Meets Country sustainable Tourism pilot project be reflected in the event.
  - 5)** That the Council through the Town Clerk will be the single point of contact for the marketing, communications and publicity for the event.

#### **41 Matters Raised by Invited Representatives**

David Cook Chamber of Commerce, recognised and commended all the valuable work carried out by the Tourism & Economy Working Group and reported that:

- Tickets for the Chamber of Commerce Coronation Street Party, to be held on Sunday 7 May 2023, would be available from The Anchor Inn, from 25 March onwards.

Members also discussed the forthcoming EDDC Licensing Committee's meeting and agreed that a formal letter be sent to East Devon District Council and Cllr Cole would attend the meeting to voice concerns raised by the Tourism & Economy Working Group.

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CHAIR OF THE TOURISM & ECONOMY WORKING GROUP