

**Minutes of a Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council's  
Tourism and Economy Working Group  
on Monday 13 June 2022 at 6.30 pm  
(The Tourism and Economy Working Group met virtually)**

Councillors present: Ian Barlow  
Louise Cole  
Deirdre Hounsom  
Chris Lockyear  
Hilary Nelson  
Richard Thurlow

Invited Reps: Chamber of Commerce – Sally Mynard  
Acting TIC Manager – Tim Shardlow

Apologies: Cllr Charissa Evans,  
Alistair Handyside – South West Tourism Alliance,  
Tina Veater – Ignyte Ltd

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.30pm

## **PART 'A'**

### **1 Minutes**

The Minutes of the Tourism & Economy Working Group meeting held on Monday 14 March 2022 were approved as a true and accurate record; with the addition to Minute number 34.1 that the Tourism Promotion Earmarked Reserve would be used to cover the cost of the traffic survey at approx. £2,200.

### **2 Declarations of Interest**

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

### **3 Tourism Advisory Group Update**

Councillor Cole, Chair of the Tourism Advisory Group, 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 had started to use a new budget format which would be helpful to follow the detail of income and expenditure.
- John Radford had attended the last meeting to discuss how best to access grant funding for the 2022 Connaught at Christmas event.
- Cllrs Cole and Nelson had met with Nicola Hughes who was working with the District Council to formulate a tourism strategy for East Devon. There would be a draft strategy review meeting on 4 July with the final strategy being presented to the District Council on 25 July.
- It had been noted that there was still much difficulty in recruiting and retaining hospitality industry staff in Sidmouth and throughout the East Devon area. This meant that many businesses were not able to open to full capacity.
- The Town Signage project was slightly delayed due to additional suggested alterations, but designs would shortly be finalised and recommended to Council for approval. The Environment Working Group would also be considering the reduction and decluttering of general signage around the town.

- Councillor Hounsom reported that she would be resuming her role as a coordinator between the many festival and event organisers and would continue discussions to encourage collaboration between the various groups.

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

#### 4 **Information Centre Updates**

Tim Shardlow, acting Information Centre Manager, reported that:

- The TIC had moved to summer opening hours and was now open 10am-5pm Monday to Saturday and 10am-4pm Sunday.
- Footfall had increased to well over 100 people per day with Monday 13 June being 143.
- There had been additional work for TIC staff supplying information and selling tickets for the Jazz & Blues Festival and they had built up a good working relationship with Ian Bowden, Festival Director.
- £37,000 of Folk Festival tickets had been sold so far with a 10% commission to the TIC.
- Many enquiries had been received from visitors whether the deck chairs would be made available on the Esplanade during the summer which formed a strong part of the brand image for Sidmouth. The Town Clerk reported that he had spoken to EDDC officers who had informed him that no one who had applied were able to take up the concession. The small number of deckchairs which had been seen stacked in Connaught Gardens were only made available for the Town Band Sunday concerts.
- It was hoped that Jurassic Paddle Sports group would take responsibility for placing the giant deckchair on and off the Esplanade each day and secure it overnight.
- The Town maps were being distributed very quickly this year directly to visitors and from many local outlets including shops and hotels.
- TIC staff were hoping to attend various events throughout the summer to sell more Visit Sidmouth merchandise, although priority would be given to high footfall events so that anticipated sales income was not significantly exceeded by the staffing costs.

**RESOLVED:** 1) That the Sidmouth Information Centre report be noted.

2) that the Town Clerk write to EDDC for an update on the deckchair concession and to express concern at the lack of chairs on the esplanade.

#### 5 **Tourism & Promotion Contract Update**

In the absence of Tina Veater of Ignyte, Cllr Cole 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.

#### 6 **Tourism & Promotion Finance Report**

The Chair presented the Tourism & Promotion Finance report for the financial year ending March 2022.

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

#### 7 **Sidmouth Air Show & Regatta Weekend**

##### **7.1 Air Show Evaluation Working Group**

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

- A format for questionnaires had been agreed, there would be three; the first for residents that would be online for 2 weeks and would only accept responses from EX10 postcodes, the second for visitors to the Air Show where email addresses would be taken at the event and in order to encourage responses they would be entered

into a prize draw, and the third for local businesses who would be visited by Cllrs Barlow, Nelson and Tina Veater to draw out the positive and negative impact of the event. The Working Group would also be consulting with local environmental groups and local organisations.

- Barry Neal, Air Show Flight Director was assisting with the approximate calculation of the environmental impact of the aircraft for 2022.
- The traffic survey would be carried out over a number of weeks throughout the year; one week at the time of the meeting, over Folk Week, Wednesday to Wednesday over the Air Show and one week later in the season for comparison purposes.
- It had been confirmed by EDDC officers that food Street Trading would not be permitted along the Esplanade throughout the Air Show although it was thought that the owner of Bedford Lawn private car park may apply for some pitches on his land. The TAG's opinion was that local business 'pop ups' would be preferred to outside traders. The Chamber of commerce was opposed to Street trading as direct potential competition to local traders and businesses.

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

### **7.2 Sidmouth Air Show and Regatta Weekend Events**

Councillors Thurlow and Barlow had been working with the many sea-based organisations to encourage events being held over the Bank Holiday weekend. The Town Council would take responsibility for road closures, the Air Show, the fun fair and a fireworks display.

Sidmouth Sailing Club would be holding their usual Regatta races on both Saturday and Sunday, Sidmouth Lifesaving Club and Sidmouth Gig Club would also be holding races. The Rotary Club were organising street entertainment including two 'giants' to entertain the children. Each organisation would be responsible for their own event and insurance, but the Town Council would produce a program and supply prizes and cups for the various events and races. It was hoped that if successful a full Bank Holiday of events would continue in future years and lead to an annual Regatta weekend.

**RESOLVED:** That the Sidmouth Air show and Regatta Weekend Events report be noted.

## **8 Traffic Monitoring**

Members were asked to note the appointment of Neotrafic to carry out a traffic survey in 2022 to be used for event planning and evaluation, to be funded from the Tourism Promotion Earmarked Reserve. (This item had been covered during the report of the Air Show Evaluation Working Group)

**RECOMMENDED:** That the Traffic Monitoring report be noted and agreed.

## **9 IRF Bid Update**

Councillor Cole reported that the Town Council's application to the Innovation Resilience Fund had been successful and a grant of £146,209 had been allocated and with funding available from the five towns involved would bring the total fund available to £176,209.

Sidmouth Town Council had committed £22,000; Ottery St Mary £5,000; Honiton £3,000; Seaton was still discussing how much they would be able to allocate to the project.

Councillor Cole gave a presentation of the project overview and reported that it was anticipated to complete at the end of November 2023.

**RESOLVED:** That the IRF Bid Update report be noted and thanks and congratulations be noted to Councillors Cole, Nelson and the TAG for all the hard work to make the bid successful.

**10 Matters Raised by Invited Representatives**

Sally Mynard, Chamber of Commerce, reported that:

- The Jubilee Street Party had been very successful, although it had become obvious that more volunteers were needed to put up/take down all the tables and chairs.
- The petition in response to the District Council's increase in car parking charges had been submitted to East Devon District Council but they had been informed that it was not in an acceptable format so had been disregarded. Many local shops and cafes were reporting that lots of their customers were saying that they would not be returning to Sidmouth as the car parking charges were so high.
- The Chamber of Commerce were encouraging the promotion of seasonal/weekly car parking permits in order to minimise the overall cost for residents and visitors.  
Cllr Cole reported that she would arrange for the Visit Sidmouth website to have a 'click here' to purchase a car parking permit.
- The Chamber of Commerce were currently on a membership drive to increase their numbers and widen their representation.

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CHAIR OF THE TOURISM & ECONOMY WORKING GROUP