

**Minutes of a Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council's  
Tourism and Economy Working Group  
on Monday 21 November 2022 at 6.30 pm  
(The Tourism and Economy Working Group met virtually)**

Councillors present: Ian Barlow  
Louise Cole  
Chris Lockyear  
Hilary Nelson

Invited Reps: Chamber of Commerce – Richard Eley  
TIC Manager – Tim Shardlow  
TAG members – Jo Watson, Louise Thompson

Apologies: Cllr Richard Thurlow  
Ignyte Ltd – Tina Veater  
South West Tourism Alliance – Alistair Handyside  
Chamber of Commerce – Sally Mynard

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.10pm

## **PART 'A'**

### **22 Minutes**

The Minutes of the Tourism & Economy Working Group meeting held on Monday 12 September 2022 were approved as a true and accurate record.

### **23 Declarations of Interest**

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

### **24 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:

- The TAG meets every 6 weeks, with Tim Shardlow taking notes of the meetings.
- The TAG was busy working on the Coast Meets Country IRF project.
- The TAG had developed a Christmas marketing campaign to advertise the many Christmas events occurring in Sidmouth.
- Full Council had accepted the Air Show final report and had resolved to organise an Air Show in 2023.

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

### **25 Information Centre Updates**

Tim Shardlow, Information Centre Manager, reported that:

- The TIC had now moved to the Winter opening hours of 10am to 1.30pm.
- The second half of September had been busy with many events and festivals being held throughout and around the town.
- The shows held at the Manor Pavilion were a real attraction for visitors to Sidmouth.
- TIC staff were giving assistance to members of the public who wished to attend the Connaught @ Christmas event and were looking forward to receiving pre-ticket marketing information for the 2023 Jazz & Blues and Sidmouth Folk Week Festivals.

- TIC staff were attending Visit England free online webinars and were obtaining very useful information regarding supporting international visitors.
- Many visitors were asking about the availability of public use EV charging points so the installation of points in The Ham East and Roxborough car parks were eagerly anticipated. Jo Watson reported that many hotel visitors booked Sidmouth Hotels purely because they had EV charging points available for hotel residents.
- The TIC would close at the end of the day on 23 December and would reopen on 3 January 2023 after the New Year bank holiday.
- The Chair thanked Tim Shardlow for acting as the TIC manager since Jeff Bailey had retired and was pleased to report that Tim had been confirmed as the TIC Manager.

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

## **26 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.

## **27 Ignyte Tourism Promotion Contract Renewal**

The Chair presented the Ignyte Tourism Promotion Contract renewal report and asked Members to confirm the report's recommendation. The purpose of the recommendation was to allow the appointment of a preferred contractor and the timely progression of Sidmouth Town Council's tourism promotion strategy and services.

**RESOLVED:** That:

- 1) The Town Council would renew its agreement with Ignyte Ltd and its licence with Visit Devon for an additional 3 years using the updated and renewed purpose and objectives, as listed in the report.
- 2) In line with financial Regulation 18.2, Members agreed 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.

## **28 Tourism & Promotion Finance Report**

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

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

## **29 IRF Project Update**

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

- The sub regional identity with partner towns had been developed by Voyage Marketing and the individual web pages were under development. The full web pages were slightly delayed due to modifications to the Visit Devon platform, but they would be live before the end of December to enable their use by prospective 2023 visitors.
- The Travel Foundation, the IRF sustainability partner, would be holding a Strategic Stakeholder meeting in mid-December, Simon Jupp MP would be in attendance along with over 20 other local attendees and stakeholders.
- The IRF would be advertising shortly for an additional consultant to work with the IRF Project Team specifically on the development of sustainable tourism in the IRF area.

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

**30 East Devon District Council Local Plan Consultation**

The Chair asked Members to note the copy of the draft Local Plan as distributed with the agenda and Cllr Ian Barlow reported on the response that the Planning Working Group had sent to EDDC.

**RESOLVED:** 1) that the Working Group felt that the Local Plan should include more affordable housing provision as the Sidmouth economy was highly dependent on the tourism and service sectors and staff were needed in these businesses.

2) That the draft Local Plan link would be sent again to the Tourism & Economy Working Group members with a request to send bullet point comments to the Town Clerk that could be incorporated into any future consultation response.

**31 Chamber of Commerce Car Park Survey**

Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce had fought against the EDDC's increases to car park charges earlier in the year with a petition, in which over 1,500 residents and businesses signed.

Richard Eley gave an update on the car park survey that the Chamber of Commerce had conducted and which would be presented to EDDC, he would forward a copy of his report to Members when it was finalised.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the Car Park Survey report be noted.

**32 Matters Raised by Invited Representatives**

Richard Eley, Chamber of Commerce, reported that:

- The Chamber of Commerce would be holding a Coronation Street Party on Sunday 7 May 2023 in a similar format to previous events with space for 900 people to attend.
- It was anticipated that there should be a significant Public Works project carried out to mark the occasion of the coronation. Cllr Lockyear reported that Council had discussed this and had brought forward two proposals: naming the steps at The Arches as Coronation Steps and planting a number of significant specimen trees incorporating trees from the four nations of the UK.

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CHAIR OF THE TOURISM & ECONOMY WORKING GROUP