

**SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of Sidmouth Town Council's**  
**Environment Committee held in the Council Chamber,**  
**Woolcombe House, Woolcombe Lane, Sidmouth**  
**on Monday 24 April 2023 at 6.30pm**

Councillors present: Ian Barlow (Chair)  
Chris Lockyear  
Denise Bickley  
Hilary Nelson  
Marianne Rixson  
Rachel Perram

Invited Reps: Catherine Causley (EDDC)  
David Cook (Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce)  
Diana East (Sidmouth Arboretum)  
Ed Dolphin (Sidmouth Arboretum)  
Jon Ball (Sidmouth Arboretum)

Apologies: Councillor Evans, Councillor Murdoch, Stephen Blakeway, Dave Bramley, Ian Gregory and Jeremy Woodward.

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 7.35pm

**PART 'A'**

**31 Minutes**

The minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on Monday 13 February 2023 were confirmed.

**32 Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of interest were made.

**33 Matters of Urgency and Report**

None reported.

**34 Natural Environment:**

34.1 Councillor Barlow gave an overview of the River Sid partnership project. It was noted that various donations including from a generous individual meant that the project was funded for the whole river project.

34.2 Councillor Lockyear gave an update regarding his dialog with South West Water and the ongoing water testing being carried out by volunteers. There was continuing concern over bacteria found at the Bedford Steps which was being investigated by South West Water's Misconnection team along with other parts of the valley.

Councillor Lockyear also gave an overview of South West Water's short and long term action plan and time scale for accelerated investment recently announced. Sidmouth and Falmouth were being prioritised with a budget of around 9.8 million for 2023/24 and 30 million up to 2030. The Chair thanked Councillor Lockyear, the Member of Parliament for East Devon, Simon Jupp and the many local volunteers assisting which had put pressure on South West Water and inevitably helped in securing such funding. There may be a need to change much pipework and the tank at the Ham, which would need to be carefully coordinated with all the other potential projects including the Beach Management Plan defences to ensure limited disruption.

- 34.3 Ed Dolphin gave an update to the Working Group on the project to plant 14,000 trees. He was pleased to report that the team are well ahead of schedule and had planted or facilitated the planting of more than 5,000 whips in the first planting season. Those planted on private land would contribute to local biodiversity and mitigate potential flooding by attenuating rainwater run off at the head of the valley. This beneficial aspect would be a particular focus of the project in the next two years. Mr Dolphin wished to ask the Council to match fund a grant application to the AONB Trust to help pay for the completion of the Queen's Canopy planting. The total cost was likely to be in the region of £2,000 split evenly between the two organisations. This would come out of the annual £5,000.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the funding sum of £1000 be approved for a grant to Sidmouth Arboretum to be taken from the Environment Committee budget, towards the completion of the Queen's canopy Project in the Sid Valley.

## **35 Built Environment**

- 35.1 Councillor Barlow gave an update and confirmed he had received a quote for the cleaning of road signs from a local handy man at the cost of £50 per month. This could be reviewed in 6 months and would help keep the Town looking well kept. It was also suggested that the contractor be asked if he could report back about the metal signs that need repainting. The Town Clerk would also liaise with Councillor Stuart Hughes as Portfolio Holder for Transport and Highways of Devon County Council.

**RECOMMENDED:** That a contractor be employed to clean Road Signs in the Sid Valley at the cost of £50 per month to come from the Environment Committee budget for an initial period of six months.

- 35.2 Councillor Chris Lockyear gave an update on the infrared camera survey saying they have had 22 people requesting surveys this spring as opposed to 90 people last year taking part in the survey. Catherine Causley advised that Devon County and East Devon District Council were working a trusted supplier database that would be able to help homeowners take the next step after the survey. Currently Energy Saving Devon offered a consultancy service. It was suggested that businesses would benefit from this greatly and a simple 1-2 page guide would be helpful.

- 35.3 Councillor Barlow gave an update on the future plans for the Town Council owned market place telephone boxes. Sidmouth School of Art working with Sidmouth Coastal Community Hub had carried out meetings to explore the refit and were arranging further meetings to finalise plans to repair, repaint, fit with shelving, fixtures and fitting and lighting to repurpose the space to host two Micro Museums.

One box was planned to be a Micro Museum of Antiquities (old) and the other a Micro Museum of Contemporary Art (new). Both telephone boxes would retain iconic traditional red box colour and designs.

Initial exhibitions were being worked on for presentation in June 2023 these will be public exhibitions for the benefit of local residents and visitors. The ambition was then to create a series of exhibitions possibly led by other groups once the initial refit and test pilot has been achieved. Funding of £1000 had been requested to go towards the fund.

**RECOMMENDED:** That funding of £1000 be approved to be taken from the Environment Committee budget, to be used towards the project to create micro museums in the Council's two Market Place phone boxes.

### **36 Engagement**

- 36.1 Climate Awareness Project Sidmouth (CAPS) was looking at encouraging residents to become more engaged in understanding their personal carbon footprint with a view to encouraging them to reduce it. A volunteer student from Exeter university would be assisting with the project. He would be examining survey results, social media and communications and hold sessions with younger people's groups to get a younger demographic to take part as to date it had been mainly people of 45 years plus that have been taking part in the survey.

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CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE