

**SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council's**  
**Environment Working Group held on**  
**Monday 31 October 2022 at 6.30pm**

Councillors present: Ian Barlow (Chair)  
Denise Bickley  
Richard Thurlow  
Hillary Nelson  
Rachel Perram  
Chris Lockyear

Invited Reps: Ed Dolphin (Sidmouth Arboretum)  
Dave Bramley (Sidmouth Science Festival)  
Diana East (Sidmouth Arboretum)  
Jon Ball (Sidmouth Arboretum)  
Jeremy Woodward (Vision Group of Sidmouth)  
Jan Metcalf  
Richard Eley (Chamber of Commerce)

Apologies Cllr Marianne Rixson, Cllr Clarissa Evans and Cllr Emma Murdoch

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.05pm

**PART 'A'**

**1 Minutes**

The minutes of the Environment Working Group meeting held on Monday 11 July 2022 were confirmed and agreed as a true record subject to the following amendments:

**2 Declarations of Interest**

Name	Item Number	Type	Action Taken	Details
Cllr Denise Bickley	All items	Personal	Remained in the Meeting during discussion and voting	Member of Extinction Rebellion, Member of Friends of the Earth, Member of Greenpeace, Chair of Sidmouth Plastic Warriors Member of Sidmouth Biodiversity Group
Cllr Rachel Perram	All items	Personal	Remained in the Meeting during discussion and voting.	Member of Sidmouth Plastic Warriors

**3 Matters of Urgency and Report**

- 3.1 The next meeting would be held on 6.30pm at Woolcombe House, 13 February 2023.
- 3.2 Cllr Chris Lockyear gave an update regarding the meeting he had held with South West Water, but they were not able to give much information until later in the year.

Jan Metcalf updated the group on the E coli testing saying it was being carried out and she would update the group of the results at the next meeting.

- 3.3 Cllr Chris Lockyear also gave an update on the infrared camera survey saying that they surveyed 90 homes earlier this year and that all the homes were very engaged with the process. Cllr Lockyear would now look to arrange a meeting with all the members of the group to decide where to go from here.

#### **4 Natural Environment:**

- 4.1 Ed Dolphin gave an update to the Working Group. The project to plant 14,000 trees was going well and that they had 3 sites already with a 4 in the pipeline. It was agreed by the group that there should be £600 made available to finance the trees for this year and £5,600 per year going forward for 4-5years until all 14,000 trees were planted.

#### **5 Built Environment**

- 5.1 Cllr Richard Thurlow gave an update on the project Cllr Thurlow had received some quotes for cleaning the signs around the £2,600pa mark which the group thought was a little expensive so would like him to go back and look to see if he can get any more details. Also, the subgroup was to examine getting gullies cleared. Louise Cole would move on the project regarding the 2 old telephone boxes in the town and seeing what they can be used for.

#### **6 Sustainability and Engagement**

- 6.1 An update was given stating that solar, wind and hydro power were not possible for the Sidmouth Valley area, but the group would be looking at Kelp farming. The group had looked at having EV Charging points up at the Knowle which would be possible at a cost of £4,500 for 2 charging points. (See appendix 1 and 2)
- 6.2 Denise Bickley gave an update on making Sidmouth sustainable saying that Sidmouth was a plastic free town and that they were looking at creating a Website/App which would help people to understand how they can help reduce their carbon footprint. It was decided that Denise's group needed to work together with Cllr Chris Lockyear, Dave Bramley, Cllr Ian Barlow and Cllr Hillary Nelson as some projects seemed to overlap.

#### **7 Alma Field**

- 7.1 Ed Dolphin gave an update saying that the field had been cut recently and looked better. It was agreed that the field should be cut once a year and the cuttings to be taken away.

#### **8 IRF Bid**

- 8.1 A short update was given by Hilary Nelson on behalf of Cllr Louise Cole about the successful IRF bid. There has been progress on the process to deliver tourism for Sidmouth, as a result the group will be focussing on sustainable tourism.

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CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

## Appendix 1

### REPORT OF SUBGROUP ON TOWN INFRASTRUCTURE.

The subgroup has been asked to investigate how to reduce the cluttering of the town centre with unnecessary signage and to the possibility of additional planters within the road layout to help improve the appearance of the town centre (including the repurposing of the telephone boxes) to add interest and vibrancy to the town centre whilst having particular regard to improving the environment and benefitting the economy.

1. Proliferation and excess signs. We started a review of signs and street furniture in the central area and main approach roads. This will be continued, and a review undertaken with EDDC and DCC. In due course. Discussions will be held with Chamber of Commerce on the use of A boards and other signs, particularly in the Conservation area.
  - a. Cleaning of signs. Most signs are dirty and create a poor impression of the town to visitors. It was felt that cleaning of signs should not be a volunteer activity. Cleaning should be undertaken once per year. An estimate for a firm to clean 250 signs in the town centre and approach roads was £2500,
2. Street Infrastructure in public realm, (Bollards/Lampposts etc). Many look dilapidated, some are missing. Discussions to be held with EDDC and DCC.
3. Gullies; Many appear not to have been cleaned for a number of years despite DCC schedules stating that they have been. Overflow leads to flooding and possible danger to road users. Discuss situation with DCC once significant problems have been identified.
4. Telephone boxes. We are considering the use of these.

## Appendix 2

### REPORT OF SUBGROUP ON ENERGY PRODUCTION AND EV CHARGING POINTS.

The subgroup has been asked to look into the “Provision of long-term production of electricity in the Sid valley, including Solar, Wind, Hydro or other means of production to make Sidmouth more sustainable. The subgroup was also asked to examine the provision of EV charging points at the Knowle car park the ownership of which will be transferred to STC.

#### 1. Energy Production

##### a. Background.

i. The area around Sidmouth is an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and a Coastal Conservation area. The coastline is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Lyme Bay, (the water surrounding Sidmouth) is a Marine Conservation area. This makes any proposal for any large-scale development very contentious.

b. Hydro generation. Based on knowledge of the coast, tidal and other factors, waters in the Sidmouth area are not in any way suitable for the generation of hydro power. Sidmouth wave or tidal conditions are not suitable for energy production. Tidal devices need a location with a good tidal race e.g., Anglesey, Scotland, Scillies.

c. Wind generation. The high cost, locations constraints and lack of wind make Sidmouth a very unlikely location for Wind energy. It may be worth exploring the services provide by “Ripple Energy” which builds wind turbines in suitable locations on a co-operative funding basis, investment proving electricity at reduced prices to co-operative funders.

d. Solar generation. Earlier research work by the now defunct “Sid Vale Energy” group, established that only one site in the Sid valley was suitable, (and available?) for a solar farm. This was near East Hill strips and is 5 acres in size. This are very small, as a commonly accepted output is 6-8 acres is needed to produce 1 megawatt. A major factor is the “upstream” capacity of Western Pauer to incorporate any power so generated. We have been told that this is a major constraint at the present time. However, we will continue to investigate this option.

e. Kelp farming, Kelp, (Seaweed) farming can provide a source of natural material for energy production. We will investigate this further

f. Proposal. The sub-group will continue to investigate the issues and report back on any progress at the next meeting of the Environmental Working Group. We seek a budget of £1000

#### 2. EV charging at Knowle car park

a. We have discussed this with EDDC who are providing EV points at some of their car parks under a government subsidised installation scheme. It is unlikely that STC would be eligible for this. We have researched providers of the units and have had a meeting with an electrical contractor to discuss supply options. Installation is not difficult.

b. A constraint is that there are a number of providers, who offer equipment, but standards are still being developed.

c. Total cost of this is likely to be in the region of £4500, (Supply and installation of units), plus £XXXXXX (still awaiting quote from electrical contractor).

d. STC could set the tariffs providing a small payback on provision costs.