

SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council
held at the Council Chamber, Woolcombe House, Sidmouth,
on Monday 5 February 2024

Ward	Councillors Present:
Sidmouth North	Stephen Blakeway Bernie Davis Stuart Hughes
Sidmouth South	Kelvin Dent Paul Dodds Chris Lockyear (Chair) John Nicholson Rachel Perram
Sidmouth East	Lorraine Brown
Sidmouth West	Phil Weaver
Primley	Hilary Nelson (Vice Chair) Kevin Walker
Sidbury	John Loudoun
Sidford	Mike Goodman
Salcombe Regis	Ian Barlow Edward Willis Fleming

Apologies: Louise Laybury

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.03pm.

PART 'A'

117 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of the Town Council held on Monday 8 and 22 January 2024 were signed as a true and accurate record.

118 Declarations of Interest

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

119 Matters of Urgency or Report from the Chair

- The Chair reported that the most recent planning application for the site at the former Council Offices at Knowle in Sidmouth (23/0571/MFUL) had been refused by East Devon District Council's Development Management Committee. It was possible that the owners of the site would appeal and it was suggested that the Town Council's Planning Working Group could work to prepare a submission should it be needed.

RESOLVED: that the Planning Working Group be asked to prepare as is considered necessary, for any potential appeal against the recent planning application 23/0571/MFUL relating to development at the Knowle.

(Cllrs Kelvin Dent and Mike Goodman declared Personal Interest in the planning application as they lived adjacent to the site.

Cllr Ian Barlow declared a Personal interest in the application as he sat on East Devon District Council's Development Management Committee)

120 Public Open Question Time

- There were no questions from the public.
- Cllr John Loudoun asked County Councillor Stuart Hughes a question relating to flooding and drainage at Two Bridges Road, Sidford. Cllr Hughes answered that gully clearing and jetting together with clearing of verges had improved the situation but that works and investigations were ongoing to try and improve the road conditions in times of heavy rain.

121 South West Water

Charlie Ford of South West Water attended the meeting to give a briefing to Members on forthcoming major improvement works in the Sid Valley over the next few months and years which included improvements to water separation systems.

RESOLVED: That Charlie Ford be thanked for attending the meeting and the South West Water report be noted.

122 Police and Police Advocate Report

Councillor Nelson, Police Advocate, gave a report on Policing and recent developments in the area including that the Public Enquiry Office at Honiton had reopened. It was also noted that East Devon had the lowest level of victim-based crime in the UK and the 2nd lowest crime level overall in the UK.

RESOLVED: That the Police Advocate report be noted.

123 Working Group Reports

123.1 Planning Working Group Reports

Councillor Dent, Chair of the Planning Working Group, presented the reports of the Planning Working Group meetings held on Wednesdays 3 and 17 January 2024.

RESOLVED: that the Planning Working Group minutes be noted and decisions agreed.

123.2 Tourism & Economy Committee Report

Councillor Nelson, Chair of the Tourism & Economy Committee, reported that the Sidmouth Winter Festival of Light would be starting on 9 February and that there was due to be a meeting of the Committee on 20 March.

Members were also asked to note the confirmation of the absence of the RAF Aerobatic Team, the Red Arrows from the 2024 Regatta lineup due to an overseas tour. The Regatta Working Group had therefore, recommended that the 2024 event would be devoted to developing land and sea events. This would give the regatta team the opportunity to assess the popularity of a non-air event and compare this to previous years when there had been an Air Show, which was an aspiration expressed in the resolution of Full Council in November 2022.

The Regatta Working Group would also use the intervening months to work with the event production team on a business plan for future Regatta & Air Show events, including increasing monetisation of the Regatta and Air Show and working to enhance benefits to businesses and the town. It would also seek to have discussions within the Festivals Forum, where they would continue to work on cooperation with other festivals and improving infrastructure and sustainability.

123.3 Environment Committee

Councillor Barlow, Chair of the Environment Committee reminded Members that the next meeting of the Environment Committee was due to be held on Monday 12 February 2024. It was also noted that there would be a CAPS (Climate Awareness Partnership Sidmouth) presentation and talk on 29 February.

123.4 Council Resources Working Group

Councillor Lockyear, Chair of the Council Resources Working Group, gave an update on the recent Council Resources Working Group meeting. It was noted that East Devon District Council would shortly be writing to the Town Council offering the Category B/C toilets to the Council (Sidbury, Sidford and Long Park). The Town Council had to date, indicated that it was likely to only consider taking on the Long Park site as Public Toilets due to the location near other Council assets and other public amenities.

It was noted that Planning Permission to build the Arches Steps Project had been approved by East Devon District Council. The plan, to provide a pedestrian link and steps to the upper pathway at the Arches on to the paths around the Cricket pitch had first been suggested by the Vision Group and supported by the Sid Vale Association and Cricket Club. Since the initial idea had been suggested, memberships and the position of both the Cricket Club and Sid Vale Association had changed. Members too felt that other needs and schemes warranted prioritisation.

RESOLVED: that the Council would not take the Arches Steps Project any further at this time.

Councillor Lockyear also repeated that the Resources Working Group had received an updated proposal from Sidmouth Coastal Community Hub for the Ham Utility Building (Former Macerator) to create an art, culture and educational centre with a kitchen, garden and café. The Council would be drawing up an agreement form of lease for 10 years which would assist the group in securing grant funding.

If funding was obtained the lease would be agreed at a future Council meeting.

123.5 Youth Provision Working Group

Councillor Nelson, Chair of the Youth Provision Working Group, reported that the feasibility study into replacement of the current Youth Centre Building was ongoing and providing valuable information.

The next meeting of the group was on 21 February.

124 Reports from Members with Special Responsibilities

124.1 Finance Report

a) Councillor Lockyear presented the Finance Report for December 2023.

RESOLVED: That the Finance Report for December 2023 be noted.

b) In accordance with section 2.2 of the Town Council's Financial Regulations Members were asked to note that the Member with Special Responsibility for Finance has verified the bank reconciliations, for all accounts, as at the end of December 2023.

RESOLVED: That in accordance with section 2.2 of the Town Council's Financial Regulations, Members noted that the Member with Special Responsibility for Finance had verified the bank reconciliations, for all accounts, as at the end of December 2023.

124.2 Parish Paths Partnership

Councillor Walker reminded Members of the work that the Sidmouth Parish Paths Partnership (P3) team did to help maintain and manage the numerous rural pathways and rights of way across the Sidmouth area.

RESOLVED: That the Parish Paths Partnership report be noted.

124.3 Sidmouth Wellbeing and Health Action Team (WHAT)

Councillor Davis reported that the WHAT team were incredibly grateful to the Council for their grant. It was noted that the team were still needing to source other funding to maintain the services offered.

RESOLVED: That the report on Sidmouth Wellbeing and Health Action Team funding be noted.

124.4 Beach Management Scheme (BMS)

Councillor Lockyear updated Members on the ongoing plans for beach management at Sidmouth. It was noted that the Beach Management Plan (BMP) had now become the Beach Management Scheme (BMS) due to EA and Government funding of £15 million being released. Together with other and local funding the scheme currently had a total cost of around £20 million and likely build date of July 2026 - July 2027.

RESOLVED: That the report on the BMS be noted.

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CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL