

**Minutes of a Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council's  
Tourism and Economy Working Group  
held in the Council Chamber, Woolcombe House, Sidmouth  
on Wednesday 13 September 2023 at 6.30 pm**

Councillors present: Ian Barlow

Lorraine Brown

Stuart Hughes

Hilary Nelson

Rachel Perram

Kevin Walker

Invited Reps: TIC Manager – Tim Shardlow

Chamber of Commerce – Sally Mynard

Apologies: Cllrs Chris Lockyear, John Loudoun

Ignyte Ltd – Tina Veater

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 7.45pm

## **PART 'A'**

### **10 Minutes**

The Minutes of the Tourism & Economy Committee meeting held on Monday 7 June 2023 were signed and approved as a true and accurate record.

### **11 Declarations of Interest**

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

### **12 Matters of Urgency and Report**

Councillor Nelson gave an update on the forthcoming government review of Destination Management for England, which was endeavouring to introduce a single conduit for Devon to enable central government funding for strategic issues such as education, training, transport and sustainability.

Cllr Nelson and Louise Cole had met with the consultant Richard Dickinson and had presented the Visit Sidmouth model including the Coast Meets Country project providing connected branding across East Devon.

There would be a seminar held in Paignton on Wednesday 4 October and there was an open invitation for businesses and Town Councillors to attend.

### **13 Tourism Advisory Group Update**

Councillor Nelson reported that there had been no meetings during the summer months as the tourism businesses were too busy; the next meeting was scheduled for Friday 15 September.

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

#### **14 Information Centre Updates**

Tim Shardlow, Tourist Information Centre Manager, gave an update of TIC activities and reported that:

- Footfall was averaging at over 100 per day and was split with approximately two thirds visitors and one third local residents.
- There had been poor weather over some of the summer but there had been a good variety of events in Sidmouth, both indoors and outdoors, for visitors to enjoy and the TIC had received very good feedback from visitors using Sidmouth as a base.
- The TIC had become an unofficial Lost Property Office and had been able to assist many people.
- The Giant Deckchair had been very well used over the summer and been supported and supervised by the beach life savers. It would be removed shortly and stored over the winter.
- The TIC had hosted a visit from Woodroffe School students who were studying tourism and businesses studies.
- The TIC was holding the register for booking the Walking Festival trips running from 16 to 22 September, many of which still had places left. Visit Sidmouth merchandise would be available at the opening event held on Saturday 16 September at Kennaway House.
- TIC staff would have a stall at the Classic Car Show to be held on Saturday 23 September selling Visit Sidmouth merchandise.
- From Sunday 1 October the TIC would move to the 'winter season' hours of 1pm to 4pm Monday to Saturday, with one member of staff.

**RESOLVED:** That the Sidmouth Information Centre report be noted and thanks be recorded to Tim Shardlow and the TIC staff for all their hard work throughout the summer months.

#### **15 Tourism & Promotion Contract Update**

In the absence of Tina Veater, Ignyte, Cllr Nelson presented the Ignyte Visit Sidmouth summary report. Sally Mynard reported that, since the changeover to the new website, Ignyte had been unable to provide comparable statistics of website hits etc. and this was likely to affect business decisions of where to allocate marketing spending. Cllr Nelson would be following this up with Ignyte.

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

#### **16 Tourism & Promotion Finance Report**

The Chair presented the Tourism & Promotion Finance report for the period ending July 2023.

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

#### **17 IRF Project Update**

The Chair presented the IRF (Coast Meets Country project) Finance report for the period ending July 2023 and gave an update on the progress of the IRF Project:

- The IRF project focus was now on the sustainable tourism part of the program, partnering with Change Maker Champions businesses who were already working with a green agenda and would act as exemplars.
- Voyage Marketing had held free online training sessions and the videos were available for businesses to view and would support them in their transition to a more sustainable approach.

- The Sustainable Tourism Roadmap and Carbon Action Plan would be issued in October.
- The Coast Meets Country team were working hard to sign up local businesses in the four partner towns, to encourage them in joint working to give a long lasting legacy.

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

## **18 Sidmouth Regatta and Air Show**

Cllr Nelson reported that there had been good feedback from all the events held over the Sidmouth Regatta weekend, especially during the Friday night Air Show, with good reviews of the new food court held on The Ham.

However, due to the poor weather there was a much lower turnout and therefore a lower level of donations with only £6,500 cash collected on the night, approximately half that of previous years. This would mean that there would be a financial shortfall this year leading to use of some of the Earmarked Reserve.

Cllr Nelson asked that the Sidmouth Regatta Working Group also considers financial impacts and potential new funding streams in its forthcoming review meetings, which would report in December and include planning for 2024 and the following three years.

**RESOLVED:** That:

1. The Sidmouth Regatta Working Group report be noted and Members be thanked for their work in planning for this year's successful events.
2. The Sidmouth Regatta Working Group review would include finances and planning for 2024 and the following three years; to report to the December Council meeting.

## **19 Visit Sidmouth – Trails**

Councillor Nelson presented the proposal to add the Trails map functionality to the Visit Sidmouth website in order to promote walking, cycling and other tours in conjunction with other organisations.

If accepted then Ignyte would work with Sidmouth Arboretum, Sidmouth Walking Festival and the Sid Vale Association who already had many preprepared walks that could be copied onto the website giving approx. 15 walks that could be made available immediately.

**RESOLVED:** That a Trails Collection Widget be created for the Visit Sidmouth website at an initial set up cost of £1,488 and an annual fee of £465pa, for the following three years.

*The following two items on the agenda were considered together.*

## **20 Request to sell ice-creams and snacks at The Ham**

At the June Trustee meeting it was resolved that:

The benefits and disbenefits of a formal concession to permit the sale of Ice Creams and snacks by an operator at the Ham for 2024, be investigated by the Tourism and Economy Committee.

### **Fishermen's Sheds – Sidmouth Trawlers – Fish & Chip Trailer**

At the August Trustee meeting it was resolved that:

The benefits and disbenefits of a formal concession to permit the sale of fish and chips from the Fisherman's Sheds area for 2024, be investigated by the Tourism and Economy Committee

**RESOLVED:** That a TaFF be set up to consider both potential concessions and their benefits and disbenefits, reporting to full Council; membership would be Cllrs Nelson, Brown, Lockyear and Perram.

**21 Matters Raised by Invited Representatives**

Sally Mynard, Chair, Chamber of Commerce, reported that:

- This had been a very difficult year and many businesses were struggling.
- The Chamber of Commerce were continuing with their car parking survey and were encouraging feedback from businesses.
- The annual Classic Car Show would be held on Saturday 23 September and usually brings around 5,000 visitors into the town. The donations collected at this event would assist the CofC's support to the Christmas Lights, the Light Trail, Science Festival and Sidmouth in Bloom.
- The organiser of the Jurassic Coast Business Awards was extending into Sidmouth as many businesses had applied to be included.
- Would it be possible for the Chamber of Commerce events be advertised on the locked Market Place notice board? It was agreed that the TIC would place them in the notice board when space was available.
- The Regatta and Air Show had been very successful and the Chamber of Commerce thanked the Town Council for organising it every year.
- Councillor Nelson reported that at its June meeting the Tourism & Economy Working Group had agreed that a sum of £10,000 for CCTV cameras be considered for inclusion in the Pre-Budget schedule.

**RESOLVED:** That the Chamber of Commerce report be noted and Sally Mynard be thanked for her work with the Tourism Advisory Group and Tourism & Economy Working Group.

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CHAIR OF THE TOURISM & ECONOMY WORKING GROUP