

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

Councillors present: Ian Barlow
Paul Dodds
Francetta Bridle
Lorraine Brown
Chris Lockyear
Hilary Nelson
Rachel Perram
Kevin Walker
Phil Weaver
Edward Willis Fleming

Invited Reps: TIC Manager – Tim Shardlow
Ignyte Ltd – Tina Veater

Apologies: Cllr Stuart Hughes
Chamber of Commerce – Sally Mynard

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.00pm

PART 'A'

22 Minutes

The Minutes of the Tourism & Economy Committee meeting held on Wednesday 13 September 2023 were signed and approved as a true and accurate record.

23 Declarations of Interest

Name	Item Number	Type	Action Taken	Details
Cllr Edward Willis Fleming	29 Festivals Forum	Personal	Remained in the meeting during discussion and voting	Jazz & Blues Festival supporter
Cllr Chris Lockyear	29 Festivals Forum	Personal	Remained in the meeting during discussion and voting	Science Festival Committee member
Cllr Chris Lockyear	29 Festivals Forum	Personal	Remained in the meeting during discussion and voting	Folk Festival Trust member

24 Matters of Urgency and Report

Cllrs Nelson and Barlow gave an update on the proposal that International Coach trips may be encouraged to visit East Devon, supporting the initiative of working towards sustainable transport tourism.

25 Tourism Advisory Group Update

Councillor Nelson and Tina Veater of Ignyte, gave a presentation giving the background and updating all members on the work carried out by the Tourism & Economy Committee, supported by the Tourism Advisory Group.

RESOLVED: That the Tourism Advisory Group report be noted.

25 Information Centre Updates

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

- The TIC was currently open for the 'winter season' hours of 10am to 1.30pm Monday to Saturday, with one member of staff.
- All Members were encouraged to visit the TIC to meet the staff and see what information and services were available. There were many organisations and activity groups that the TIC supported and publicised including, most recently, the important Autumn events of the September Walking Festival and Classic Car Show, followed by the Science Festival in October.
- TIC staff had attended many informative meetings, such as the East Devon National Landscape Project (previously the AONB), the Tourism Network, Visit England webinars and Trade Shows at Westpoint.
- It had been announced that the reduced EDDC car park charges would remain in place until the end of March 2024 and the £2 flat rate bus fare would continue until Autumn 2024. These were very positive outcomes for both visitors and residents.
- TIC staff were extremely concerned by the proposed siting of a Changing Places toilet immediately in front of the TIC building. The Town Clerk reported that he had spoken to officers at the District Council regarding some alternative locations and that the Town Council would have an opportunity to respond at the planning application stage. Members expressed their dismay that the District Council had not fully engaged with the Town Council to look seriously at alternative sites.

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 year who were a great credit and asset to Sidmouth.

26 Tourism & Promotion Contract Update

Tina Veater, Ignyte, presented the Ignyte Visit Sidmouth summary report and explained the breakdown of the social media data report. Tina encouraged Members to inform her of any events or information that could be updated on the Visit Sidmouth, Ignyte welcomed content being supplied.

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

27 Tourism & Promotion Finance Report

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

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

28 IRF Project Update

The Chair presented the IRF (Coast Meets Country project) Finance report for the period ending October 2023 and gave an update on the progress of the IRF Project which was nearing completion.

The other towns involved in the CMC project had given their commitment to continue to work together into the future and it was hoped that Axminster and possibly other nearby towns would also become involved.

RESOLVED: That the IRF Project report be noted.

29 Festivals Forum

It was noted that a Festivals Forum had been set up with the intention of encouraging co-operation and knowledge sharing between festivals and promote shared initiatives. It was hoped that the forum could help reduce costs, particularly for some of the smaller regular events.

30 Local Visitor Economy Partnership Discussions

The Chair of the Committee had included an update on discussions to create a Local Visitor Economy Partnership for Devon and the implications for tourism and tourism promotion in Sidmouth, as part of the tourism Advisory Group update report earlier in the meeting.

Having a single voice for Devon was a key part of the formation of the group and the Council's existing partner, Visit Devon was best placed to take this forward.

31 Matters Raised by Invited Representatives

Sally Mynard, Chair, Chamber of Commerce, had been unable to attend the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Chair of the Committee would write to Sally Mynard to thank her for all her valuable work with the Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Advisory Group and Tourism & Economy Committee.

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CHAIR OF THE TOURISM & ECONOMY WORKING GROUP