

**Minutes of a Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council's
Tourism and Economy Committee
held in the Council Chamber, Woolcombe House, Sidmouth
on Wednesday 20 March 2024 at 6.30 pm**

Councillors present: Ian Barlow
Chris Lockyear
Hilary Nelson
Rachel Perram
Kevin Walker
Phil Weaver

Also Present: John Nicholson

Invited Reps: TIC Manager – Tim Shardlow
Ignyte Ltd – Tina Veater
Chamber of Commerce – Ian Gregory

Apologies: Francetta Bridle, Lorraine Brown, Paul Dodds

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.10pm

PART 'A'

32 Minutes

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

33 Declarations of Interest

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

34 Matters of Urgency and Report

There were no matters of urgency.

35 Tourism Advisory Group Update

Councillor Nelson and Tina Veater of Ignyte, updated members on the work carried out by the Tourism & Economy Committee, supported by the Tourism Advisory Group.

Priorities for the coming year were a 'Family Friendly' promotion to advertise low-cost activities for visitors and residents and a 'Buy Local' promotion aimed at encouraging residents and visitors to spend on food and services locally.

It was noted that the new Virtual Tour Promotion was already online and was being updated and optimised for mobile devices.

RESOLVED: That the Tourism Advisory Group report be noted.

36 Information Centre Updates

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

- The TIC continued the promotion of local events, activities and facilities of interest for visitors and residents, options for sustainable tourism and good value for family groups.

- Opening hours would increase in late April and extend to 7 days per week in the second half of May; footfall has increased considerably over 2023 so far.
- TIC staff had attended tourism networking opportunities and informative online sessions, including those for disability awareness.
- The TIC manager was currently reviewing stocks of merchandise for 2024 and opportunities with visitor attractions in order to reciprocate promotion.
- There had been a good level of Folk Festival ticket sales since mid-December and TIC staff were assisting with enquiries from attendees.
- International Jazz & Blues Festival tickets were expected for sale at TIC by Easter.
- The Town Map for 2024 would be received shortly; the 2023 version had once again proved to be incredibly popular

RESOLVED: That the Sidmouth Information Centre report be noted.

37 Tourism & Promotion Contract Update

Tina Veater, Ignyte, presented the Ignyte Visit Sidmouth summary report and explained the breakdown of the social media data report.

It was noted that 2023 had finished with over 1.4 million pageviews nearly equalling that immediately after lockdowns, which itself was extremely high.

The forecast for 2024 remained incredibly challenging for the hospitality and the tourism sector with last minute bookings, shorter stays, bargains being sought and the pressure from warmer sun holidays impacting the UK.

Members were encouraged to inform the Council and Ignyte of any events or information that could be updated on Visit Sidmouth.

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

38 Tourism & Promotion Finance Report

The Chair presented the Tourism & Promotion Finance report for the period ending February 2024.

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

39 IRF Project Update

The Chair reported on the conclusion of the funded element of the Coast & Country project and asked Members to note the final IRF Finance report for the period ending 15 December 2023. Cllr Nelson also gave an update on the ongoing legacy elements of the project including the continued collaboration and working with the partner towns.

RESOLVED: That the IRF Project report be noted.

40 Sustainable Tourism Roadmap

Members were asked to receive and adopt the Sustainable Tourism Roadmap report issued with the agenda.

RECOMMENDED: That the Sustainable Tourism Roadmap report be adopted by the Town Council as a working document.

41 Matters Raised by Invited Representatives

Ian Gregory, newly appointed Vice Chair of the Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce, raised no specific issues from the agenda but commented that he hoped to make the Chamber more structured in its approaches to continuing to work with the Council to ensure that all voices from more businesses were heard.

RESOLVED: That the Chamber of Commerce report be noted.

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CHAIR OF THE TOURISM & ECONOMY WORKING GROUP