

**SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of Sidmouth Town Council's**  
**Environment Committee held in the Council Chamber,**  
**Woolcombe House, Woolcombe Lane, Sidmouth**  
**on Monday 10 July 2023 at 6.30pm**

Councillors present: Ian Barlow (Chair)  
Bernie Davis  
Mike Goodman  
Chris Lockyear  
Rachel Perram  
Kevin Walker

Invited Reps:  
Ed Dolphin (Sidmouth Arboretum)  
Jon Ball (Sidmouth Arboretum)  
Jan Metcalf (Sid valley Biodiversity Group)  
John Hammond (Ebb Tides Seaweed)  
Denese Molyneux (Chamber of Commerce)  
Alan Gadien

Apologies: Councillor Hillary Nelson, Catherine Causley, Dave Bramley

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8pm

**PART 'A'**

**31 Minutes**

The correct minutes of the Environment Working Group meeting held on Monday 24 April 2023 were not attached to the meeting agenda and would be agreed at the next meeting.

**32 Declarations of Interest**

None reported.

**33 Matters of Urgency and Report**

None reported.

**34 Natural Environment:**

- 34.1** Councillor Lockyear on the beach management plan. It was under formal review. John Hammond also gave an initial brief about a suggested offshore Kelp Farm which could also be used for wave energy removal. He highlighted the key advantages of using a seaweed farm to assist the beach management plan. Installing a wave attenuation seaweed farm could dampen wave energy by 30-50%, protecting the coastline against erosion and stabilising the shoreline which could be a very good alternative to a splash wall. Other benefits included employment, environmental protection and greater species diversity and recruitment. The cost is predicted to be around £200,000 over 4 years.

**34.2** Jan Metcalf from the Sid Valley Biodiversity group gave an overview of the River Sid Partnership project (*A summary is attached at the end of the minutes as Appendix 1*). Plans for the immediate future included improving river habitat; this would be directed by Ed Eley [WTT] with the help of local volunteers. There were around sixteen boulder weirs between Fortescue and School Weir. The riverbed upstream of a weir becomes featureless and the water flows without any turbulence. These areas were not very 'fish friendly'. The plan was to fell selected trees in overly shaded areas. Six sites have been identified potentially. This would create better habitats and increase variety of the river wildlife.

A water quality report on two years plus of data was in the offing.

Nine volunteers monitor in eleven locations, four locations on Sid, one on each of five tributaries but on two locations on Woolbrook, in addition to Bickwell Brook at Glen Goyle, Japanese knotweed had been reported. It was being treated professionally over five years at Sidford on land adjoining the river above Sidford Bridge. There were also large amounts below Sidford Bridge which required attention. It was pointed out that Japanese Knotweed was not something that the Town Council had the power to treat or act on as it was a landowner responsibility to liaise with the Environment Agency.

**34.3** Councillor Chris Lockyear gave an update regarding his dialogue with South West Water. They are hoping to complete works by March 2025. This included ground water infiltration and surface water separation. There was concern about the tank at The Ham needing replacing. Monitoring of the presence of E coli has actively started near Bickley Bridge.

**35.4** Ed Dolphin gave an update to the Working Group on the project to plant 14,000 trees. This was going well, and they had planted 5500 trees/whips in the first year. There are approximately 800 whips on order to be planted from November to March. It hoped to have 4000 whips in the ground by next season, totalling 9000. Ed Dolphin also reported that the Ginkgo tree at The Knowle which was protected needs to be moved by developers McCarthy and Stone. The cost was estimated at £30,000. The tree had been ready to move for 4 years and would be discussed in a meeting with EDDC tree officers to where it shall be relocated.

## **36 Built Environment**

**36.1** Councillor Ian Barlow gave a brief update on sign cleaning and confirmed that work had been started. The Chair had asked for photo updates.

**36.2** Councillor Chris Lockyear gave an update on the infrared camera survey saying that there were no updates due to it being a Winter project.

**36.3** Councillor Ian Barlow will be speaking to strategic planning about stipulating a B brick and bird box be fitted into all new housing in the Sid Valley as a necessity for the future.

37.4 Councillor Barlow gave an update on the future plans for the Town Council owned marketplace telephone boxes. The phone boxes now had electricity and windowpanes installed. They were working with the toy museum to have the first exhibit and are hoping to have them open in time for Sidmouth Folk Festival.

**38 Sustainability**

38.1 Councillor Chris Lockyear gave an update on the CAPS project. A survey was sent out via many groups within the town to get a better understanding of how residents were thinking about their carbon footprint. There were 260 responses. 72% being concerned about climate change. There was willingness to walk/cycle rather than drive and to change diet. Councillor Kevin Walker suggested a youth provision project to get a wider, more varied response.

.....  
CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE