



SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

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13 March 2025

To: All Members of the Tourism & Economy Working Group
(Cllrs: Ian Barlow, Francetta Bridle, Lorraine Brown, Paul Dodds, Chris Lockyear,
John Loudoun, Hilary Nelson, John Nicholson, Rachel Perram, Kevin Walker,
Edward Willis Fleming)

Invited Representatives:

Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce Representatives (x2)

Sidmouth Information Manager

For Information:

Other Members of the Council

Town Clerk

Dear Sir/Madam,

Meeting of the Tourism & Economy Committee Wednesday 19 March 2025 at 6.30pm

You are called upon to attend the above meeting to be held in the Council Chamber, Woolcombe House, Woolcombe Lane, Sidmouth. It is proposed that the matters set out on the agenda below will be considered and resolution or resolutions passed as the Town Council considers appropriate.

The Chair of the Committee has the right and discretion to control questions to avoid disruption, repetition and to make best use of the meeting time. Individual contributions will be limited to a maximum period of three minutes.

Yours faithfully,

Christopher E Holland
Town Clerk

A G E N D A

1 Apologies

To receive any apologies for absence.

2 Minutes

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Tourism & Economy Committee meeting held on Monday 11 December 2024.

Page/s

4 – 6

3 **Declarations of Interest**

To receive any Members' declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.
Note: You must also declare the nature of any personal or prejudicial interests in an item whenever it becomes apparent that you have an interest in the business being considered.

4 **Matters of Urgency and Report**

To consider any items that in the opinion of the Chair should be dealt with as matters of urgency because of special circumstances. (Note: such circumstances need to be recorded in the minutes)

5 **Exclusion of the Public**

To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the press) have been excluded. There is one item which the Clerk recommends should be dealt with in this way.

6 **Tourism & Promotion Advisory Group Update**

To receive a summary update from the Chair of the Tourism & Promotion Advisory Group, Councillor Hilary Nelson, on the TAG's recent work.

7 **Tourist Information Centre Summary of Activities**

To receive the attached report from the manager of the Tourist Information Centre and to note the TIC Finance Report and Visit Sidmouth merchandise sales for February 2025.

7 – 10

8 **Tourism & Promotion Contract Report**

A written update of recent promotional activity and Ignyte's work with Sidmouth Town Council by Tina Veater will be supplied.

Report to follow

9 **Tourism & Promotion Finance Report**

To receive the Tourism & Promotion Finance Report for February 2025.

11

10 **Tourism and Economy Budget 2025/26**

To consider the Tourism and Economy Budget for 2025/26.

12

11 **Task and Finish Forum (TAFF) - Trading on the Ham**

Following the decision of the Trustee on 3 March 2025 relating to trading on Trustee property until September 2025 and a request from Council prior to this, Members are asked to agree to the set up of a TAFF to review trading arrangements and potential concessions on the Ham and the ongoing support for the Fishermen's Sheds area in particular. Membership of the TAFF to include Cllrs Barlow (EDDC Ward Member), Brown (STC Ward Member), Nelson, Perram and Willis Fleming.

12 **Market Place Building**

Members to consider registering concerns regarding the Market Place building and to recommend to Full Council that the Town Council approaches East Devon District Council to work together to improve the Market Place area.

13 **Sidmouth & East Devon Walking Festival**

To receive a report regarding the Sidmouth & East Devon Walking Festival from Cllr Walker.

13

14 **Matters Raised by Invited Representatives**

To consider any other items or matters to be raised by representatives of the Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce.

15 **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

The Vice-Chair of the Council to move the following:

“that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting due to the confidential nature of its contents.”

PART ‘B’

16 **Grant Application**

Members are asked to consider the attached Confidential Report requesting a grant from the 2025/2026 Tourism Promotion budget.

14 – 15

**Minutes of a Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council's
Tourism and Economy Committee
held in the Council Chamber, Woolcombe House, Sidmouth
on Wednesday 11 December 2024 at 6.30 pm**

Councillors present: Ian Barlow
Francetta Bridle
Paul Dodds
Hilary Nelson
Rachel Perram
Kevin Walker
Edward Willis Fleming

Invited Reps: TIC Manager – Tim Shardlow
Chamber of Commerce – Ian Gregory
Sidmouth Walking Festival – Tim Spray

Apologies : Lorraine Brown, Chris Lockyear, John Loudoun, John Nicholson
Ignyte Ltd (Visit Sidmouth Tourism Promotion) – Tina Veater

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.00pm

PART 'A'

23 Minutes

The Minutes of the Tourism & Economy Committee meeting held on Wednesday 12 June 2024 were signed and approved as a true and accurate record.

The Chair gave an update regarding Minute no 20 Knowle Car Park Enhancement Project that the anticipated number of additional car parking spaces would be many fewer than hoped. The design engineer had been asked to review the site again

24 Declarations of Interest

Name	Item Number	Type	Action Taken	Details
Cllr Ian Barlow	30 Bringing New Orleans to the Streets of Sidmouth	Personal	Remained in the meeting during discussion and voting	Jazz & Blues Festival Sponsor
Cllr Edward Willis Fleming	30 Bringing New Orleans to the Streets of Sidmouth	Personal	Remained in the meeting during discussion and voting	Jazz & Blues Festival Sponsor

25 Tourism & Promotion Advisory Group Update

Councillor Nelson updated members on the work carried out by the Tourism Advisory Group and reported that a winter campaign on social media had been designed and released. The combined event of Christmas Light Switch on and Late Night Shopping had been a great success and thanked all the volunteers who had organised the event.

The TAG group would meet again in January 2025 to discuss two forthcoming campaigns.

RESOLVED: That the Tourism Advisory Group report be noted.

26 Tourism Information Centre Summary of Activities

Tim Shardlow, Tourist Information Centre Manager, read his report which gave an update of TIC activities. At the Devon Tourism Awards held in Plymouth on 21 November the Sidmouth Information Centre had received the Gold Award as Visitor Information Service of the Year 2024/25. Tim Shardlow and Joy Carlyle had attended the ceremony to accept the Dartington Crystal trophy which had been sponsored by South West Visitor Economy Hub.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) the Sidmouth Information Centre report be noted.
- 2) SIC would introduce a mailing list for 'Friends of Sidmouth' show would be updated with news and events on a quarterly basis.
- 3) the TAG would consider whether the window display in the TIC should be changed/updated and whether it would be financially feasible to place a video screen in the window.
- 4) thanks and congratulations be noted and passed on to the TIC staff for their achievements and hard work.

27 Tourism & Promotion Contract Update

In the absence of Tina Veater of Ignyte, Cllr Nelson presented the Ignyte Visit Sidmouth summary report.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) the Tourism & Promotion contract update report be noted.
- 2) It be noted that the contract with Ignyte would be renegotiated with a contract review date of January 2026.

28 Tourism & Promotion Finance Report

The Chair presented the Tourism & Promotion Finance report for the period to October 2024 and reported that the Ignyte income would be much lower than budgeted. However other savings had been made by a reduced spend on Video Production, with students supplying phone video content that had been curated by Ignyte, and the budgets for Training & Events and Visitor Survey were unlikely to be spent.

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

29 Walking Festival 2025

Tim Spray, Treasurer presented the Walking Festival report and reported that there had been a loss of committee members, especially that the lead organiser/coordinator had also stepped down. The group had adequate funding and plenty of volunteers to lead the walks, but administration and coordination would be a problem for the 2025 festival.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) The Walking Festival report be noted.
- 2) Ted Swan and the outgoing committee members be thanked for their hard work and for organising successful events over the last 10 years.
- 3) Sidmouth Town Council would continue to support the festival with a Press Release and social media posts to encourage individuals to come forward to be involved with organising future events.
- 4) As an interim measure, Cllr Walker would work with Tim Spray to organise the 2025 festival, whilst searching for an individual to take over the organiser/coordinator role.

30 Bringing New Orleans to the Streets of Sidmouth

Members were asked to consider a funding request from Sidmouth Jazz & Blues Festival.

RESOLVED: That a £5,000 grant be allocated from the Tourism & Economy Committee Earmarked Reserve to support the 2025 Sidmouth Jazz & Blues Festival's 'Bringing New Orleans to the Streets of Sidmouth' project.

31 Matters Raised by Invited Representatives

Ian Gregory, Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce, reported that:

- The Classic Car Show held on Saturday 21 September had been very successful with over 330 cars displaying and around 5,000 visitors to the town.
- The Christmas Light Switch On and Late Night Shopping evenings were combined on the same date for 2024 and had been well received with the town very busy. Next year's event was scheduled for 22 November 2025.
- Giving feedback on the Visit Sidmouth website it was noted that the What's On section included a lot of information about events happening outside Sidmouth to the detriment of those occurring in the Sid Valley. The Chamber of Commerce would be asked for further feedback regarding the need for curation of the information held on the website and would report to a future meeting.
- The Chamber of Commerce were encouraging new members by introducing evening seminars with guest speakers. Future meetings would include:
 - Marketing your Business – Tina Veater
 - Sustainable Tourism – Cllr Hilary Nelson
 - Health & Safety for Small Businesses
 - AGM – Ian Bowden, Jazz & Blues Festival

RESOLVED: That the Chamber of Commerce report be noted.

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CHAIR OF THE TOURISM & ECONOMY WORKING GROUP

SIDMOUTH INFORMATION CENTRE REPORT

For Tourism Advisory Group and Council Tourism & Economy Committee

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENTS JANUARY-MARCH 2025

Since my last report the Information Centre has opened 10-1.30pm Monday-Saturday with one member of staff on “front desk”. We are pleased that Melissa Cole has returned from medical leave as Di Dann is currently recovering from a knee operation. Footfall is averaging 38 per day, an increase on 2024 so far.

Additions to our publications and VS merchandise include teatowels and (on order) computer mousemats featuring the wonderful coastal view eastwards from Connaught Gardens, plus a new art poster and lettercard from well-known local artist Rob Crisp.

2025 promises a succession of quality events to be enjoyed by visitors and residents, including the reopening of Manor Pavilion and our museums. Although East falls in late April, Sidmouth’s Spring flowers have attracted a great deal of visitor interest, currently supported by an excellent Sidmouth School of Art billboard display at Ham East car park. We have also been pleased to promote their installation at the Sensory Garden of “Your Town-My Town” public photo exhibition, which runs until May. Pecorama of Seaton is celebrating its 50th anniversary and has chosen us as this week’s outlet for a promotion of 50 free golden tickets, recognising the value of our connection.

Signage directing the public to our location is under review with designs by Sign Vision suggested for additional display on or near the building.

We have updated the Town Map which is expected shortly from printing for distribution throughout the area, including good contact and relationships with our partner towns. It is hoped Devon C.C. will print a new area bus timetable by May, since the 2024 issue has been out of stock and each day we are supplying information on local services.

Our staff attended the West Country Tourism Conference at Westpoint and followed up discussions with SW Visitor Economy Hub for Town Trends reports and data to help our liaison with Ignyte and entering the Devon Tourism awards again this year. Feedback received on last year is being studied, including additional communications with visitors to engage and retain interest in our services, local activities and future events.

Our ticket sales for Sidmouth Folk Festival 2025 are currently £22,700, being slightly less than last year but the full range of tickets are not released until later this month. Local residents can obtain discounts only by visiting our office, as with the Jazz & Blues Festival. Concessionary afternoon tickets for EX10 are expected shortly with many customers “on stand-by”. The expanded programme with public access events and extra car parking facilities should increase its popularity and future success.

We continue to host the Eco-Hub initiative drop-in sessions which generate much interest in community sustainability issues. Its next topic is Active Tourism, which relates well to our connections with S.W. Coast Path, National Landscape and Sidmouth Walking Festival.

Although the Jurassic Coast Trust has been wound up it is hoped future co-operation between Devon and Dorset C.C.s will effectively manage its future. Two recent examples of its importance are our hosting a visiting academic video documentary project on Sidmouth's relationship to the World Heritage site and its geology and a request from the West Midlands for advice on a large walking group wishing to be based in Sidmouth for an active visit next year. We were pleased to share this with our town Walking Festival organisers, who are making good progress with their own 2025 programme of events.

I am attending meetings with SVA, Sidmouth Folk Festival and School of Art representatives on a proposed archiving project with academic funding support which may result in further recognition of the Festival's cultural significance, and later this month a Seaside Heritage Network webinar focussing on the potential of British seaside resorts for World Heritage listing.

The TIC team continue to offer a wide range of services and remain receptive to new ways of promoting Sidmouth's quality offering for visitors and the local community, Coast and Country, throughout the year.

Tim Shardlow

Information Centre Manager 11/3/25

Sidmouth Tourist Information Centre - Income and Expenditure Report **Month 11 - February 2025**

	Actual Year to Date	Current Annual Budget	Budget Balance
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Salaries	39,267	38,000	-1,267
Cleaning & Office Mtce	123	500	377
Business Rates	2,939	2,800	-139
Photocopier	330	100	-230
Stationery	93	100	7
Telephone	408	500	92
Postage & Packing	110	200	90
Sundries, Provisions, Equipment	74	300	226
Bank/Credit Card/Shopify Charges	1,158	1,700	542
Purchase of Stamps	113	200	87
Purchase of Publications	2,027	1,700	-327
Purchase of Goods/Souvenirs	189	200	11
	£46,831	£46,300	-£531

<u>Income</u>			
Sale of Stamps	549	1,000	451
Sale of Publications	3,269	4,000	731
Sale of Souvenirs	603	1,000	397
Sale of VAT Merchandise	784	600	-184
Sale of Children's Merchandise	23	100	77
Commission - Sidmouth Folk Festival	3,992	6,000	2,008
Commission - Jazz & Blues Festival	0	300	300
Sundry Income & Commissions	597	500	-97
STC Funding	32,800	32,800	0
	£42,617	£46,300	£3,683

Total Expenditure	£46,831	£46,300	-£531
Total Income	£42,617	£46,300	£3,683
Net Expenditure over Income	£4,214	£0	-£4,214

Current/Deposit Bank Accounts £12,010

Visit Sidmouth Merchandise - Sales 2024-25

Product - Sales	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	2024-25 Sales to date	2024-25 Sales Income	Total 2021-22 Sales	Total 2022-23 Sales	Total 2023-24 Sales
Coffee Cup				1	3								4	£28.32	12	12	9
Vacuum Flask			1		1	1							3	£37.50	18	11	2
Plastic drinks bottle		1		1	2	1				1			6	£41.22	14	9	6
Jute bags	1	2	3	8	2	5	3	1	2	2	3		6	£32.52	31	40	18
Price change July 2024													26	£162.50			
Umbrella			1	1		3					1		6	£75.00	6	2	5
Adults cap		1		1	3	6	1						12	£120.00	18	14	20
Polo Shirts		2			2	5							9	£180.00		8	9
Tea Towels							2	8	5	1			16	£106.72			
Children's cap					1								1	£8.00	3	6	2
Children's T-Shirts		1											1	£15.00			3
	1	7	5	12	14	21	6	9	7	4	4	0	90	£806.78	102	102	74

**Sidmouth Tourist Information Centre - Income and Expenditure Report
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Tourism Promotion Draft Budget 2025 - 26

Item	Spend to date	2024-25 Budget	% Spent	2025-6 Suggested	Actual 2021-22	Actual 2022-23	Actual 2023-24
Ignyte Service Agreement	£17,983	£23,977	75%	£24,975	£22,620	£16,965	£11,989
Visit Sidmouth Website Development costs/updates	£1,171	£3,850	30%	£5,025	£0	£127	£7,619
Social Media Advertising	£1,250	£2,000	63%	£2,000	£950	£2,150	£0
Video Production	£0	£4,000	0%	£6,000	£2,500	£1,960	£1,900
Visit Sidmouth Merchandise	£745	£1,000		£1,000	£4,985	£798	£0
Town Map	£3,490	£7,000	50%	£7,000	£10,307	£6,293	£1,079
Promotional Material: Ad Spend, Signs, Editorial	£1,737	£3,500	50%	£2,000	£2,620	£4,358	£1,249
Training & Events	£0	£3,500	0%	£1,500	£0	£3,516	£0
Visitor Survey/Evidence Base Research	£0	£1,173	0%	£500	£0	£0	£0
Net Council Budget	£26,376	£50,000	53%	£50,000	£43,982	£36,167	£23,836
Budget remaining		-£23,624	Under/over spend will transfer to/from EMR at Year End				

Earmarked Reserve brought forward
Transfer remaining IRF CMC EMR £23,799
£674

Earmarked Reserve current balance
£24,473

Sidmouth & East Devon Walking Festival 13-19 September 2025

Members will recall that at their meeting on 11 December, Tim Spray, Treasurer of Sidmouth Walking Festival addressed the Committee and reported that there had been a loss of Walking Festival Committee members and especially that the lead organiser/coordinator had also stepped down. The group had adequate funding and plenty of volunteers to lead the walks, but administration and coordination would be a problem for the 2025 festival.

After discussion, Members resolved as follows:

RESOLVED: *That:*

- 1) The Walking Festival report be noted.*
- 2) Ted Swan and the outgoing committee members be thanked for their hard work and for organising successful events over the last 10 years.*
- 3) Sidmouth Town Council would continue to support the festival with a Press Release and social media posts to encourage individuals to come forward to be involved with organising future events.*
- 4) As an interim measure, Cllr Walker would work with Tim Spray to organise the 2025 festival, whilst searching for an individual to take over the organiser/coordinator role.*

Update Report from Cllr Walker

The decision to issue a Press Release announcing that the festival would go ahead this year was successful in that it encouraged enough of the previous committee members to come forward and take on their previous administrative roles.

I then acted as chair to coordinate meetings and Ted Swan continued to provide the benefit of his experience. We have not found an individual to replace Ted, a rather impossible challenge, but the team have realised that by working together they have the skills to undertake the task.

A copy of the draft programme is attached, as you can see it still has some items to finalise and some errors to correct but the aim is to have printed copies with the TIC by Easter. A mini programme, basically the cover and back page, will be available in an A6 format for wider distribution.

Last year only 30% of the walkers came from beyond Devon so the aim is to increase this by using social media. Any advice and expertise that Ignite, and others can provide with this would be appreciated. Last year for the full brochure was downloadable from the Visit Sidmouth web-site and we look forward to working more closely with Ignite on distribution in future. The festival could not run at all without the support of Tim and his staff at Sidmouth TIC.

The future of the festival beyond this year is not assured but the situation looks much better. STC has indicated an intention to continue to aim to provide a grant of £1,500 annually and East Devon National Landscapes have matched that this year but cannot promise to do so in future. Financially the situation looks sound for now because of the commitment of a team of volunteers, however the continued support provided by this council will be critical to its continued success.

Cllr Kevin Walker

12 March 2025