

**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