

**Minutes of a Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council's  
Tourism and Economy Committee  
held in the Council Chamber, Woolcombe House, Sidmouth  
on Wednesday 18 September 2024 at 6.30 pm**

Councillors present: Ian Barlow  
Francetta Bridle  
Chris Lockyear  
Hilary Nelson  
John Nicholson  
Kevin Walker  
Edward Willis Fleming

Invited Reps: TIC Manager – Tim Shardlow  
Ignyte Ltd (Visit Sidmouth Tourism Promotion) – Tina Veater  
Chamber of Commerce – David Cook

Apologies : Lorraine Brown, Paul Dodds, John Loudoun, Rachel Perram  
Chamber of Commerce – Ian Gregory

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.30pm

## **PART 'A'**

### **12 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.

### **13 Declarations of Interest**

Name	Item Number	Type	Action Taken	Details
Cllr Edward Willis Flemin	19 Potential Tourism Tax	Personal	Remained in the meeting during discussion and voting	Sidmouth Trust Founding Member

### **14 Matters of Urgency and Report**

There were no matters of urgency.

### **15 Tourism & Promotion Advisory Group Update**

Councillor Nelson updated members on the work carried out by the Tourism Advisory Group and reported that an application had been submitted, that fulfilled the criteria, to join the East Devon Coach Friendly Scheme. This fitted well with the Visit Sidmouth Sustainable Tourism targets and facilities for coach drivers had been made available at the Leisure East Devon swimming pool site which included showers, toilets and refreshments.

**RESOLVED:** That the Tourism Advisory Group report be noted.

### **16 Tourism Information Centre Summary of Activities**

Tim Shardlow, Tourist Information Centre Manager, presented his report, which had been distributed to Members prior to the meeting, giving an update of TIC activities.

**RESOLVED:** That the Sidmouth Information Centre report be noted.

**17 Tourism & Promotion Contract Update**

Tina Veater of Ignyte, presented the Ignyte Visit Sidmouth summary report and explained the Expedia Group's graph which emphasised the importance of social media and destination websites used during the process of inspiration and research when deciding where to take holidays. Visitors still preferred to make final bookings using online travel agencies, believing that savings could be made. It was noted that visitors were continuing to leave the booking of visits and holidays very late in a trend shared across the country.

Tina presented Members with a trophy that Visit Sidmouth had won during a conference held by the Simpleview software provider. The award was for the Sustainable Tourism category and Visit Sidmouth had come first across the UK above all destinations. The application included submissions of the Sustainability webpages, the Sustainable Tourism Road Map and the Changemakers Champions scheme.

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

**18 Tourism & Promotion Finance Report**

The Chair presented the Tourism & Promotion Finance report for the period to August 2024.

Tina Veater confirmed that the Ignyte sales income would likely be slightly under £20,000 instead of the £24,000 which had been budgeted; the season had been very tough for many businesses and sales were currently lower than previous years.

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

**19 Potential Tourism Tax**

Members discussed the possible implications of a potential tourism tax being applied nationally by the Government. Tina Veater explained the way that charges had been introduced elsewhere, some as a standard nightly charge and others as a levy based upon rateable value of the business. It was believed that this would be imposed by Central Government, at some point in the future.

**RESOLVED:** That Cllr Willis Fleming consult with the Chamber of Commerce and accommodation providers and report back to a future Tourism & Economy Committee meeting.

**20 Knowle Car Park Enhancement Project**

Members were asked to consider recommending to Council the use of Fortfield S106 Tourism funding for the Knowle Car Park Enhancement Project. A company had quoted to prepare a design and plans for a planning application. It was anticipated that parking spaces would increase from 33 up to 100 in the space available and that there would be two EV charging points installed. Any future detailed plans would be considered by the full Council.

**RECOMMENDED:** That Sidmouth Town Council give in principle agreement to use the S106 Tourism funding for the Knowle Car Park Enhancement Project.

**21 Shop Local Campaign**

Tina Veater presented the report and outline proposal for a 'Shop Local' Campaign.

This would require further work and consultation with the Chamber of Commerce to create a suitable scheme.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the Tourism Advisory Group would consult with the Chamber of Commerce to create a 'Shop Local' campaign that would support Sidmouth businesses.

**22 Matters Raised by Invited Representatives**

David Cook, Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce, reported that:

- The Classic Car Show would be held on Saturday 21 September with over 330 cars displaying at the show. In previous years this event had brought around 5,000 visitors to the town.
- It was hoped that the Christmas Light Switch On and the Late Night Shopping evenings could be combined together on the same date, in future years, possibly in 2024.
- The additional car parking spaces at The Knowle would be very welcome on busy days when parking spaces were difficult to find in the town.
- The Chamber of Commerce were encouraging new members by introducing evening meetings, the first of which would be held in November after the Government's Autumn budget.

**RESOLVED:** That the Chamber of Commerce report be noted.

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CHAIR OF THE TOURISM & ECONOMY WORKING GROUP