

**Minutes of a Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council's
Tourism and Economy Committee
held in the Council Chamber, Woolcombe House, Sidmouth
on Wednesday 19 March 2025 at 6.30 pm**

Councillors present: Ian Barlow (from minute 41 onwards)
Lorraine Brown
Paul Dodds
Hilary Nelson (Chair)
John Nicholson
Kevin Walker
Edward Willis Fleming (Vice Chair)

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

Apologies : Francetta Bridle, Chris Lockyear, John Loudoun, Rachel Perram

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 7.55pm

PART 'A'

32 Minutes

The Minutes of the Tourism & Economy Committee meeting held on Wednesday 11 December 2024 were signed and approved as a true and accurate record.

33 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

34 Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED: that the classification given to the documents to be submitted to the Council be confirmed, and that the reports relating to exempt information, be dealt with under Part B.

35 Tourism & Promotion Advisory Group Update

Councillor Nelson updated members on the work carried out by the Tourism Advisory Group (**TAG**) and reported that the group had discussed a new publicity campaign centred around making some new video shorts. Research showed that shorter promotional films of around 30 seconds were likely to be viewed more often and by more people. These would be based around different areas of interest and targeted for different landing pages on the Visit Sidmouth website and also aimed at the Christmas campaign marketing later in the year. The TAG will explore options for a rejuvenated "winter lights" offering in conjunction with local businesses and the Chamber of Commerce.

Members were asked to consider a revised marketing approach from Ignyte which would split the map, website and other parts of the existing package into separately available services making the selling of advertising to businesses more flexible and attractive.

The idea of an 'Unsung Heroes' award was also discussed which would aim to honour individuals or groups that contribute to the Sid Valley over and above what is expected of them particularly with volunteering in mind. Members felt that this would be an excellent way of thanking those involved and also helping promote volunteering and the many different groups within the area.

RESOLVED: That

1) the Tourism Advisory Group report be noted.

2) the revised marketing approach allowing the selling of different Visit Sidmouth advertising elements separately, be supported and approved.

RECOMMENDED: That Council support the idea of an 'Unsung Heroes' award to be investigated further by the Chair of the Tourism and Economy Committee, Chair of Council and Town Clerk.

36 Tourism Information Centre Summary of Activities

Tim Shardlow, Tourist Information Centre Manager presented his previously circulated report. He added, that the footfall into the centre and town was increasing as the calendar moved into spring and that ticket sales for the Jazz and Blues Festival had been very healthy. Folk Festival Ticket sales were likely to increase with the announcement of more acts and events.

RESOLVED: That the Sidmouth Information Centre report be noted.

37 Tourism & Promotion Contract Update

Tina Veater of Ignyte, presented the Visit Sidmouth promotional contract summary report. She commented that the outlook for UK tourism was more positive for 2025 with increases in both domestic and international visitors expected. Last minute booking was still a trend which was hard to deal with for many businesses however.

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 to February 2025.

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

39 Tourism & Economy Budget 2025/26

The Chair asked Members to approve the Tourism & Economy Budget for 2025/26 as circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED: That the Tourism & Economy Budget for 2025/26 be approved.

40 Task and Finish Forum (TAFF) – Trading on the Ham

Members agreed to form a TAFF to examine commercial use of the Ham which included potential concessions such as the selling of ice cream and the use of the Fishermen's Shed area.

RESOLVED: That a TAFF be formed to examine the use of the Ham with regard to a review of trading arrangements, potential business concessions and ongoing support for the Fishermen's shed area. Membership to be: Cllr Barlow (EDDC Member), Cllr Brown (STC Ward Member), Cllr Nelson (Chair of Tourism and Economy), Cllr Nicholson, Cllr Perram and Cllr Willis Fleming (Vice Chair of Tourism and Economy)

41 Market Place Building

The Chair asked members to support the Council registering its concern to East Devon District Council over the state of the Market Place Building. It was considered that the prominent and attractive building should be the centrepiece of the town but was instead dirty, run down and presenting a very poor image for residents and visitors.

RECOMMENDED: That the Council registers its deep concerns over the condition and appearance of the East Devon District Council owned Market Place Building and works with the District Council to improve the Market Place area.

42 Sidmouth & East Devon Walking Festival

Councillor Kevin Walker presented a report into the activities of the Sidmouth and East Devon Walking Festival which he was assisting as it adjusted to changes in membership and organisation. Councillor Walker thanked the STC TIC team for their support in helping the festival grow and develop. Members agreed that the update which outlined that the festival was going still ahead and that the future was bright was excellent news.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) The Walking Festival report be noted.
- 2) That The Walking Festival Committee, TIC Team and Cllr Walker be thanked for their support of the festival.

43 Matters Raised by Invited Representatives

David Cook of the Chamber of Commerce gave a brief report of the Chamber's activities and recent business advice sessions.

RESOLVED: That the report from Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce be noted.

44 Exclusion of the Public and Press

RESOLVED: 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'

45 Grant Application

Members were asked to consider a Grant application made to the Council which fell outside the criteria for a Council Community Grant award. It was felt that the relatively small sum involved and large return to be gained in publicity meant that a funding sum from the Tourism Promotion budget was appropriate.

RESOLVED: That a sum of £250 be made available from the Tourism Promotion 2024/25 budget to TPL Films Ltd to support the launch of a new Music and Documentary Film Festival commencing in August 2025.

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CHAIR OF THE TOURISM & ECONOMY WORKING GROUP