

SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of Sidmouth Town Council's
Environment Committee held in the Council Chamber,
Woolcombe House, Woolcombe Lane, Sidmouth
on Monday 21 October 2024 at 6.30pm

Councillors: Ian Barlow (Chair)
Stephen Blakeway (Vice Chair)
Kelvin Dent
Bernie Davis
Paul Dodds
Mike Goodman
Chris Lockyear
Hillary Nelson
John Nicholson
Kevin Walker
Edward Willis-Flemming

Invited Reps:

Ed Dolphin (Sidmouth Arboretum)
Jon Ball (Sidmouth Arboretum)
Jan Metcalf (River Sid Project)
Charles Sinclair (River Sid Project)

Apologies: Rachel Perram
Dave Bramley (CAPS)

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.35pm

PART 'A'

66 Minutes

The minutes of the Environment Working Group meetings held on Monday 8 July 2024, were agreed, and signed, subject to Councillor Lockyear giving apologies.

67 Declarations of Interest

Name	Item Number	Type	Action Taken	Details
Cllr Ian Barlow	All items	Personal	Remained in the Meeting during discussion and voting	Member of Sidmouth Biodiversity Group Member of Sidmouth Arboretum
Cllr Kelvin Dent	Knowle	Personal	Remained in the Meeting during discussion and voting.	Resident of Knowle Drive

68 Matters of Urgency and Report

None reported.

- 69** Members received draft of the Environment Policy for recommendation for Council to adopt. Members had concerns about the wording regarding 'We will not permit commercial exploitation of live animals'. The Chairman gave thanks to the Working Group for their hard work.

RECOMMENDED:

That the draft revised environment policy be adopted by the Council, subject to final drafting.

70 Natural Environment:

- 70.1 Jan Metcalf reported on the continuing work of the River Sid Partnership. Thanks were given to The River Sid Partnership for their ongoing dedication to the project.

RESOLVED:

- a) A list from the River Sid Partnership of what to raise with the Environment Agency to enlist their help to get to the next level.
- b) Speak to South West Water about gaining more evidence to support the findings.
- c) An official letter from Sidmouth Council to the Environment Agency with the request.

- 70.2 A update was received from the Biodiversity Group.

- 70.3 a) Jon Ball from the Arboretum gave an update on the 10-year treeconomics report. 3000 trees were being planted in November, December and January. All the data from Treeconomics is being collated. Members gave thanks for the success of the project so far.

b) It was reported that The Knowle tree trail has QR codes that need replacing.

RESOLVED:

£400 agreed for replacement labels for the trees.

- 70.4 Councillor Stephen Blakeway suggested a traffic light proposal to help develop a feedback mechanism to collect information on current projects, challenges, and additional support needs.

- 70.5 Councillor Kevin Walker gave a summary of the report from the new Friends of the Knowle Group and their activities.

a) The minutes were of the meeting of the Knowle Park and Gardens Working Group held on 17th September were noted.

b) To adopt the Knowle Park and Gardens Management Plan recommended by the Working Group.

c) The dissolution of the working group was agreed

d) It was agreed that the memorial seating would be discussed in the next meeting after obtaining additional information.

- 70.6 Councillor Walker gave a verbal report on the Cemeteries on behalf of VGS, Cherish Sidmouth Cemeteries and Friends of the Goyle. There was a universal agreement that differences and improvements have been made. There were ongoing challenges with EDDC and issues with dogs fouling in the area.

- 70.7 It was noted by Members that hard preparation work had been carried by Sidmouth in Bloom and their team over winter and spring in Sidmouth, and they had gained the Sunday Times 'award' as 'the UK's top floral seaside spot'. Members wanted to congratulate the volunteers for all their hard work and beautiful displays.

71 Built Environment

- 71.1 a) Councillor Paul Dodds gave a detailed presentation on assisting Devon County Council with the ongoing issue of Potholes and drainage in the Sid Valley.
b) The Chair suggested more effective use of resources the Town Council already has at its disposal, to help keep the town tidy.

Hiring a contractor to clear drains and clear kerb/road vegetation.

RESOLVED:

Set up a Working Group with Cllr Barlow, Cllr Dodds, Cllr Perram, Cllr Hughes and either the Chair or Vice Chair of the Council.

To use up to £5k of the Committee's funds in consultation with East Devon District Council and Devon County Council Highways to trial over the Winter and to report in the Spring regarding the hire of a contractor to clear drains and clear kerb/road vegetation.

Target the Council's current weed clearing employee and suggest a better use of his time, sending specific locations in need of clearing.

Members needed to report any locations in their Ward to the Town Clerk.

Cllr Stephen Blakeway suggested the use of maps of Sidmouth Wards to determine areas of need and progress.

72 Engagement

- 72.1 Councillor Edward Willis-Flemming presented a suggestion to have a 5-star rating on business premises doors, to show compliance with environmental standards.

RESOLVED:

To set up a working group with Cllr Willis-Flemming, Cllr Nelson and Cllr Lockyear. To work alongside Dave Bramley and CAPS and create a report on how to encourage Sidmouth businesses to take part in the scheme.

- 72.2 Councillor Chris Lockyear reported from CAPS about the various talks scheduled throughout the Year from energy saving organisations and the ongoing success of the CAPS newsletter.

- 73** Members confirmed the date for the next meeting as Monday 13 January.

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CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE