



SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL TOWN ASSEMBLY

Monday 4 March 2024 at 6.30 pm
St Francis Hall, Woolbrook, Sidmouth

Sidmouth Town Council offers a very warm welcome to all residents in the Sid Valley area to attend this Annual Town Assembly meeting where reports of the Town Council's work will be received, with the opportunity for residents to raise any general concerns/issues and ask questions regarding the work of the Town Council.

- 1. To receive apologies for absence**
- 2. Welcoming address from the Chair of the Council—Councillor Chris Lockyear**
- 3. To receive Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on Monday 3 April 2023**
- 4. To receive annual reports from:**
 - **Sidmouth Police**
 - **Member with Special Responsibility for Finance—Cllr Chris Lockyear**
 - **Chair of Tourism and Economy—Councillor Hilary Nelson**
 - **Chair of Planning—Councillor Kelvin Dent**
 - **Chair of Environment—Councillor Ian Barlow**
- 5. General issues and questions relating to the work of the Town Council (Questions notified prior to the meeting will be given priority)**
- 6. Presentations from:**
 - Gateway Sidmouth – Susan Marshall**
 - Sidmouth Jazz & Blues Festival – Ian Bowden**

SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly of Sidmouth Town Council
held at Sidbury Village Hall
on Monday 3 April 2023 at 6.30 pm

Ward	Councillors Present:
Sidmouth North	Stuart Hughes Jenny Ware
Sidmouth South	Kelvin Dent Chris Lockyear (Chair) Hilary Nelson (Vice Chair) Rachel Perram
Sidmouth East	Steven Kendall-Torry
Sidmouth West	Louise Cole
Primley	Jeff Turner
Sidford	Marianne Rixson
Sidbury	John Loudoun
Salcombe Regis	Ian Barlow Richard Thurlow
Apologies:	Deirdre Hounsom, Emma Murdoch

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 7.50pm.

PART 'A'

1 Welcome from the Chair of the Council

The Chair, Councillor Chris Lockyear, welcomed the attendees; all electors of Sidmouth Town Council wards had been invited to attend the meeting.

2 Minutes of the Town Assembly held on Monday 4 April 2022

The Minutes of the Town Assembly meeting held on Monday 4 April 2022, which had been circulated with the agenda, were received and signed as a true and accurate record.

3 Reports

Members of the public were encouraged to make comments and ask questions at the end of each of the following reports.

3.1 Sidmouth Police

Sidmouth Police were unable to attend this meeting.

3.2 Member with Special Responsibility for Finance

Councillor Jeff Turner, Member with Special Responsibility for Finance, presented the Finance Report showing a breakdown of the 2023-2024 budget compared with 2022/2023, with an explanation of the major increases and decreases.

3.3 Chair of Tourism & Economy

Councillor Louise Cole gave a report regarding the work carried out by the Town Council's Tourism & Economy Working Group including the refurbishment of the TIC, creation of the Visit Sidmouth branding including a newly designed website, social media; Facebook, Instagram and TikTok and various marketing campaigns, the latest designed to highlight the many events and festivals held in Sidmouth.

The Working Group was currently working with The Travel Foundation on the IRF Coast Meets Country project involving other towns; Budleigh Salterton, Ottery St Mary, Honiton and Seaton who were all endeavouring to become Sustainable Tourism destination areas.

3.4 Chair of Youth Provision Working Group

Councillor Louise Cole gave a report regarding the work carried out by the Town Council's Youth Provision Working Group who were responsible for negotiating contracts with Young Devon, managing the Youth Centre building and surrounding areas. The group had also worked on updating the play facilities with replacement and refurbishment work on both The Ham and Long Park play areas. The Working Group was currently working with Design West on a Vision and Strategy for Young People engagement and consultation project which was now at the Draft Strategy Stage.

3.5 Chair of Planning

Councillor Kelvin Dent gave a report explaining that the primary role was to consider planning applications and give observations to East Devon District Council who were the planning authority and made the final decision. In the past year, there had been 25 planning meetings with 197 applications considered during the last year and about 84% had been supported, the majority of which the Local Planning Authority had followed the Town Council's recommendations.

There had been two major applications this year: the redevelopment of the Alexandria Industrial Estate including a new access road onto the B3176 Bulverton Road and the application by McCarthy Stone for the development at the Knowle.

The Working Group also had delegated power to decide on applications relating to trees and had dealt with 72 applications, following the professional advice from the District Council's tree officers.

The Working Group had also been following the progress of the emerging new Local Plan and were working on a response. Under the most recent version of the draft plan 168 new houses were proposed for Sidmouth and a further 38 for Sidbury; all sites were within the AONB and would impose additional strain on community facilities.

Councillor Dent thanked his Vice Chair, Councillor Turner, and all the other Working Group Members for their work throughout the year; they had the benefit of advice from the Town Clerk and Planning Clerk. Next week would be Chrissie's last official meeting and Councillor Dent wished her well in her retirement.

3.5 Chair of Environment

Councillor Ian Barlow gave a report regarding the work carried out by the Town Council's Environment Working Group which worked closely with other local environmental groups and organisations such as the Biodiversity Group, Sidmouth Arboretum, Sid Vale Association, Carbon Action Plan and Sidmouth in Bloom. With the support of the Environment Working Group, Sidmouth Arboretum had been challenged with planting 14,000 trees in the Sid Valley (this represented one tree per resident). Councillor Barlow was pleased to report that 5,000 trees had already been planted so far and the project was both under budget and ahead of time.

3.6 Chair of Parish Paths Partnership

Councillor Jeff Turner gave a report on the work carried out by the Parish Paths Partnership committee which brought together representatives from the County Council, Town Council and landowners. There were approx. 130km of footpaths and bridleways in the Sid Valley and volunteers worked to maintain the path surfaces, hedges, bridges, gates and stiles etc.

4 General Issues and questions

Members of the public were given the opportunity to make comments and ask questions to Members of the Council concerning any issues within the Sid Valley area.

5 Presentations

Sidmouth Science Festival

David Bramley gave a presentation describing the work carried out by the Science Festival team of volunteers, who worked to create a festival with as many events as possible being free to attend. He thanked the Town Council for its financial support via the grant application program, this enabled the main running costs like insurance, IT etc. to be covered as so many other grants were only offered for single event projects and not the running costs.

The festival was run by people with an interest in STEM and a desire to encourage enquiry and enthusiasm in STEM topics in young people, working with schools and children throughout the year.

In 2022 there had been 1,500 young people involved, 80 separate activities and 25 speakers; one of the challenges had achieved a World Record for the longest tin can phone.

The three key words received via festival feedback were Interesting, Fun and Varied.

The Chair thanked those present for attending Sidmouth Town Council’s Town Assembly.

.....
CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL