



SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

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19 March 2026

To: All Members of the Tourism & Economy Committee
(Cllrs: Edward Willis Fleming, Ian Barlow, Francetta Bridle, Jo Dodds, Paul Dodds, Chris Lockyear, John Loudoun, Hilary Nelson, John Nicholson, Kevin Walker)

Invited Representatives: Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce, Sidmouth Coastal Community Hub
For Information: Other Members of the Council, Town Clerk

Dear Sir/Madam,

Meeting of the Tourism & Economy Committee Wednesday 25 March 2026 at 6.30pm

You are called upon to attend the above meeting to be held in the Council Chamber, Woolcombe House, Woolcombe Lane, Sidmouth. It is proposed that the matters set out on the agenda below will be considered and resolution or resolutions passed as the Town Council considers appropriate.

The Chair of the Committee has the right and discretion to control questions to avoid disruption, repetition and to make best use of the meeting time. Individual contributions will be limited to a maximum period of three minutes.

Yours faithfully,

Christopher E Holland
Town Clerk

A G E N D A

- | | | Page/s |
|---|---|--------|
| 1 | Apologies
To receive any apologies for absence. | |
| 2 | Minutes
To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Tourism & Economy Committee meeting held on Wednesday 10 December 2025. | 3-5 |
| 3 | Declarations of Interest
To receive any Members' declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.
Note: You must also declare the nature of any personal or prejudicial interests in an item whenever it becomes apparent that you have an interest in the business being considered. | |

- 4 **Matters of Urgency and Report**
To consider any items that in the opinion of the Chair should be dealt with as matters of urgency because of special circumstances. (Note: such circumstances need to be recorded in the minutes)
- 5 **Exclusion of the Public**
To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the press) have been excluded. There is one item which the Clerk recommends should be dealt with in this way.
- 6 **Tourism & Promotion Finance Report** 6-9
To receive the Tourism & Promotion Finance Report & ‘Visit Sidmouth’ sales merchandise for Nov 2025-Jan 2026.
- 7 **Tourism and Promotion Budget 2026-2027** 10
To approve the 2026-2027 budget.
- 8 **Tourist Information Centre Summary of Activities** 11-12
To receive a summary update from the manager of the Tourist Information Centre
- 9 **Strategic Tourism Development (STD) and ‘The Fishermen’s Sheds & The Ham’ TAFF**
Members to consider the recommendation of the Town Clerk, to ‘merge’ the Strategic Tourism Development (STD) and ‘The Fishermen’s Sheds & The Ham’ TAFF due to the degree of overlap between the two sub-groups. The Chair will provide an update on the proposal to merge these groups into a single Strategic Tourism Development (STD) Committee.
- 10 **UK Town of Culture 2028 and suggested renaming of committee**
To receive an update from the Chair on the submission of Sidmouth to the first round of the national competition for UK Town of Culture 2028, highlighting the town’s strengths in arts, culture, music, heritage, and community.
To reflect the growing work of the Committee, Members to also consider renaming the Committee to the *Tourism, Economy, Arts and Culture Committee*.
- 11 **Festival Updates**
To receive an update from Cllr Bridle on a proposed Wellbeing Festival initiative, and a progress report from Cllr Walker on the Walking Festival 2026.
- 12 **Tourism & Promotion Contract Report** Report attached
A written update of recent promotional activity and Ignyte’s work with Sidmouth Town Council by Tina Veater.
- 13 **Matters Raised by Invited Representatives**
To consider any other items or matters to be raised by representatives.
- 14 **Exclusion of the Public and Press**
The Vice-Chair of the Committee to move the following:
“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’
- 15 **Ignyte Ltd – Contract proposal** Report attached
Members asked to consider the confidential proposal from Ignyte Ltd.

**Minutes of a Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council's
Tourism and Economy Committee
held in the Council Chamber, Woolcombe House, Sidmouth
on Wednesday 10 December 2025 at 6.30pm**

Councillors present: Edward Willis Fleming (Chair)
Hilary Nelson (Vice Chair)
Chris Lockyear
Francetta Bridle
John Nicholson

Invited Reps: Tim Shardlow - TIC Manager
Joy Carlyle - TIC
Tina Veater - Ignyte Ltd (Visit Sidmouth Tourism Promotion)

Apologies : Ian Barlow, Jo Dodds, Paul Dodds, Kevin Walker and John Loudoun

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.30pm

PART 'A'

26 Minutes

The Minutes of the Tourism & Economy Committee meeting held on Wednesday 10 September were signed and approved as a true and accurate record.

27 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest received for items on this agenda.

28 Matters of Urgency and Report

The Chair provided an update on the ongoing contract negotiations between Sidmouth Town Council and Ignyte. Members were informed that the new contract had only been received on the day of the meeting and had not yet been fully reviewed. It was agreed that the new contract would be added as an agenda item for consideration at the next meeting.

The Chair also noted that the current contract with Ignyte was due to expire on 1 April 2026.

Councillor Lockyear provided an update on the South West Water (SWW) works at The Ham. Members were informed that SWW had submitted a project plan which had been considered and supported by full Council and which contained key milestones. Work had already commenced. SWW had developed a three-phase strategy to reduce spillages:

- Installation of a 100-cubic-metre tank on The Ham
- Use of sewer-lining technology
- Re-routing surface water away from the sewer

Councillor Lockyear also assured Members that The Ham would remain available for the Folk Festival. In the event of unexpected project delays, SWW would suspend work, implement a contingency plan and install a temporary surface to ensure the festival could proceed as planned. He also agreed to prepare and distribute a fact sheet explaining the works in clear, accessible terms to reassure residents and local business owners.

Tina Veater from Ignyte agreed to produce a visitor-facing version of the same fact sheet.

29 Engagement Lead at South West Economy Hub

Alex Spalding presented an overview of the South West Visitor Economy Hub (SWVEH). He explained that the Hub was an online platform designed to support tourism, hospitality and related businesses by providing real-time, comprehensive data and insights into visitor behaviour, trends and economic impact across Devon and Somerset.

SWVEH offers annual subscription options and Members were invited to consider supporting a subscription, in return for Sidmouth-specific live data which can be accessed through the online hub. Reports and infographics are produced monthly and quarterly.

RESOLVED: That the Council would proceed with an annual subscription, which would provide access to key statistics, including average visitor spend, the impact of festivals and other significant events in the town. The annual subscription fee of £1,000 would be funded from the Tourism and Economy budget.

30 Tourism Information Centre Summary of Activities

Tim Shardlow - Tourist Information Centre (TIC) Manager, presented his report, which had been distributed to Members prior to the meeting, giving an update of TIC activities. Tim also advised Members that the 2026 Folk Festival ticketing had started and was available for purchase at the TIC.

RESOLVED: That the Sidmouth Information Centre report be noted.

31 Tourism & Promotion Finance Report

The Vice Chair presented the Tourism & Promotion Finance report for the period July to September 2025. An updated copy of the Tourism and Promotion 'Budget & Spend' report was distributed to Members at the meeting, as the original report circulated with the agenda had omitted the calculation for line item three.

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

32 Tourism & Promotion Contract Update

Tina Veater, Ignyte, presented the Ignyte Visit Sidmouth summary report. She also reassured Members that the liquidation of 'Visit Cornwall' would have no impact on 'Visit Devon,' explaining that 'Visit Cornwall' was financed by the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF4), which concludes in March 2026, whereas 'Visit Devon' operated as a self-funded model.

RESOLVED: That the Tourism and Contract update be noted.

33 'The Festival Coast' Signage

The Chair asked Members to consider the initial 'Festival Coast' concept designs, costings and potential locations. Suggested sites included Woolbrook, The Bowd, Sidmouth Triangle and the Esplanade. He advised that the signs would need to be subject to the usual Devon County Highways approval procedures.

Members reviewed the initial designs and suggested that, as some festivals occur in close succession throughout the season, the signs should be designed to promote the next two festivals.

The Chair also invited Members to consider including other towns and cross-promoting their festivals. This was noted as likely to have a positive impact on visitor numbers in Sidmouth, with visitors attending events such as the Budleigh Literature Festival potentially choosing to stay in Sidmouth.

RESOLVED that:

a) That the 'Festival Coast' concept and potential site locations be explored further with the Town Clerk, with the recommended outcomes communicated to Full Council.

b) That Tina Veater, Ignyte, prepare a proposal on how the 'Festival Coast' concept could progress and engage with neighbouring towns to seek their support for the cross-promotional approach.

34 Matters Raised by Invited Representatives

The Chair thanked the Sidmouth Coastal Community Hub and the Sidmouth School of Art for their outstanding contributions to the town, noting recent projects such as the Sensory Gardens and the Phone Box art.

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CHAIR OF THE TOURISM & ECONOMY WORKING GROUP

Sidmouth Tourist Information Centre - Income and Expenditure Report
Month 8 - November 2025

	Actual Year to Date	Current Annual Budget	Budget Balance
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Salaries	32,413	45,300	12,887
Cleaning & Office Mtce	6	700	694
Business Rates	3,293	3,200	-93
Photocopier	269	300	31
Stationery	11	100	89
Telephone	745	500	-245
Postage & Packing	3	200	197
Sundries, Provisions, Equipment	454	300	-154
Bank/Credit Card/Shopify Charges	810	2,000	1,190
Purchase of Stamps	0	200	200
Purchase of Publications	1,870	1,900	30
Purchase of Goods/Souvenirs	134	200	66
	£40,008	£54,900	£14,892
<u>Income</u>			
Sale of Stamps	322	500	178
Sale of Publications	2,955	3,500	545
Sale of Souvenirs	542	750	208
Sale of VAT Merchandise	666	600	-66
Sale of Children's Merchandise	165	50	-115
Commission - Sidmouth Folk Festival	2,762	5,000	2,238
Commission - Jazz & Blues Festival	755	0	-755
Sundry Income & Commissions	854	500	-354
STC Funding	35,000	44,000	9,000
	£44,022	£54,900	£10,878
Total Expenditure	£40,008	£54,900	£14,892
Total Income	£44,022	£54,900	£10,878
Net Expenditure over Income	-£4,014	£0	£4,014

Current/Deposit Bank Accounts £6,698

Sidmouth Tourist Information Centre - Income and Expenditure Report

Month 9 - December 2025

	Actual Year to Date	Current Annual Budget	Budget Balance
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Salaries	35,425	45,300	9,875
Cleaning & Office Mtce	14	700	686
Business Rates	3,293	3,200	-93
Photocopier	269	300	31
Stationery	11	100	89
Telephone	745	500	-245
Postage & Packing	3	200	197
Sundries, Provisions, Equipment	454	300	-154
Bank/Credit Card/Shopify Charges	865	2,000	1,135
Purchase of Stamps	0	200	200
Purchase of Publications	2,180	1,900	-280
Purchase of Goods/Souvenirs	134	200	66
	£43,393	£54,900	£11,507
<u>Income</u>			
Sale of Stamps	341	500	159
Sale of Publications	3,007	3,500	493
Sale of Souvenirs	559	750	191
Sale of VAT Merchandise	680	600	-80
Sale of Children's Merchandise	165	50	-115
Commission - Sidmouth Folk Festival	2,762	5,000	2,238
Commission - Jazz & Blues Festival	755	0	-755
Sundry Income & Commissions	997	500	-497
STC Funding	39,000	44,000	5,000
	£48,267	£54,900	£6,633
Total Expenditure	£43,393	£54,900	£11,507
Total Income	£48,267	£54,900	£6,633
Net Expenditure over Income	-£4,874	£0	£4,874

Current/Deposit Bank Accounts

£11,095

Sidmouth Tourist Information Centre - Income and Expenditure Report

Month 10 - January 2026

	Actual Year to Date	Current Annual Budget	Budget Balance
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Salaries	38,220	45,300	7,080
Cleaning & Office Mtce	14	700	686
Business Rates	3,293	3,200	-93
Photocopier	269	300	31
Stationery	27	100	73
Telephone	1,093	500	-593
Postage & Packing	3	200	197
Sundries, Provisions, Equipment	454	300	-154
Bank/Credit Card/Shopify Charges	966	2,000	1,034
Purchase of Stamps	0	200	200
Purchase of Publications	2,368	1,900	-468
Purchase of Goods/Souvenirs	134	200	66
	£46,841	£54,900	£8,059
<u>Income</u>			
Sale of Stamps	351	500	149
Sale of Publications	3,093	3,500	407
Sale of Souvenirs	569	750	181
Sale of VAT Merchandise	680	600	-80
Sale of Children's Merchandise	165	50	-115
Commission - Sidmouth Folk Festival	3,085	5,000	1,915
Commission - Jazz & Blues Festival	755	0	-755
Sundry Income & Commissions	997	500	-497
STC Funding	39,000	44,000	5,000
	£48,696	£54,900	£6,204
Total Expenditure	£46,841	£54,900	£8,059
Total Income	£48,696	£54,900	£6,204
Net Expenditure over Income	-£1,855	£0	£1,855

Current/Deposit Bank Accounts

£17,665

Tourism Promotion Budget & Spend 2025/2026

												Spend	2025-26	%
Item	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	to date	Budget	Spent	
Ignyte Service Agreement			5,994			5,994			5,994		£17,983	£24,975	72%	
Visit Sidmouth Website Development costs/updates		330	175		605	698	284	520			£2,612	£5,025	52%	
Social Media Advertising											£0	£2,000	0%	
Video Production				1900							£1,900	£6,000	32%	
Visit Sidmouth Merchandise											£0	£1,000	0%	
Town Map											£0	£7,000	0%	
Promotional Material: Ad Spend, Signs, Editorial		32		516	892	90					£1,530	£2,000	77%	
Training & Events				1,803						85	£1,888	£1,500	*126%	
Visitor Survey/Evidence Base Research	190									1,000	£1,190	£500	*238%	
Net Council Budget	190	362	6169	4219	1497	6782	284	520	5994	1085	£27,102	£50,000	54%	
Budget remaining													-£22,898	
*A further £6803 has been spent (Jazz Festival £5K, Festival of the Flags £1250 and Sumup machines purchased for Regatta weekend)														
Earmarked Reserve carried forward													£21,864	
Ignyte Sales Income			-1,269	-259	-541	-2,550	0	-4,336	-561	-2,959	£12,475	£15,000	83%	
Tourism Information Centre 2025/2026											Spend	2025-26		
Item	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	to date	Budget		
TIC Salaries	2,511	3,556	4,081	4,600	5,463	4,910	4,278	3,014	3,012	2,795	£38,219	£45,300	84%	
Other Expenditure	1,755	398	171	406	403	90	2,226	141	63	465	£6,118	£6,200	99%	
Purchase of stock		331	29	374	146	305	594	225	310	188	£2,502	£2,100	119%	
Sales Visit Sidmouth merch	-50	-102	-147	74	-69	-240	-66	-67	-14		-£681	-£700	97%	
Sales stamps, publications, etc	-257	-369	-504	-816	-895	-936	-593	-426	-231	-106	-£5,133	-£6,500	79%	
Commission on ticket sales		-1,401	-686	-508	-767	-155				-323	-£3,840	-£6,300	61%	
STC Funding	-10,000		-5,000	-5,000	-5,000		-10,000		-4,000		-£39,000	-£44,000	89%	
Total	-6,041	2,412	-2,056	-870	-719	3,974	-3,561	2,887	-860	3,019	-£1,815	-£3,900		

Agenda item 7

Tourism Promotion Draft Budget 2026 - 27									
	Spend	2025-26	%	2026-7 Suggested		Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
Item	to date	Budget	Spent			2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Ignyte Service Agreement	£17,983	£24,975	72%	£25,175		£22,620	£16,965	£11,989	£23,977
Visit Sidmouth Website Development costs/updates	£2,612	£5,025	52%	£4,975		£0	£127	£7,619	£5,021
Social Media Advertising	£0	£2,000	0%	£2,000		£950	£2,150	£0	£1,250
Video Production	£1,900	£6,000	32%	£2,000		£2,500	£1,960	£1,900	£0
Visit Sidmouth Merchandise	£0	£1,000	0%	£0		£4,985	£798	£0	£745
Town Map	£0	£7,000	0%	£6,600		£10,307	£6,293	£1,079	£12,977
Promotional Material: Ad Spend, Signs, Editorial	£1,530	£2,000	77%	£1,000		£2,620	£4,358	£1,249	£1,737
Training & Events	£1,888	£1,500	126%	£750		£0	£3,516	£0	£0
Visitor Survey/Evidence Base Research	£1,190	£500	238%	£1,500		£0	£0	£0	£0
Tourism Branding	£0	£0	0%	£6,000		£0	£0	£0	£0
Net Council Budget	£27,103	£50,000	54%	£50,000		£43,982	£36,167	£23,836	£45,707
Budget remaining		-£22,897							
Earmarked Reserve brought forward		£21,864							
Transfer remaining IRF CMC EMR		£0							
Earmarked Reserve current balance		£21,864							

Under/over spend will transfer to/from EMR at Year End

SIDMOUTH INFORMATION CENTRE

REPORT TO TOURISM & ECONOMY COMMITTEE 25th March 2026

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENTS JANUARY-MARCH 2026

Our preparations for 2026 are going well, with much interest from residents in forthcoming events as seen by our full notice board and the town's fine display of daffodils has encouraged many early visitors. We currently operate from Monday-Saturday 10-1.30pm with footfall to date of 2140, very similar to 2025.

Our records from 2014 for main season of April-October showed footfall of 10,800 whereas by 2025 this had grown to 16,900 on slightly less opening hours.

We send monthly data to S.W. Visitor Economy Hub for useful analysis and monitoring aspects of our local experience against wider trends.

In February we attended the West Country Tourism Conference at Westpoint which included discussion and advice on important topics including visitors' factors of choice, access and disability considerations, focus on Wellness, and "the Future of Travel is Restorative", preservation of goodwill by reputation of area, town or individual business. Government consultations on Overnight Visitor Levy (Hotel or Tourist Tax) were seen as a two-way squeeze on consumers and providers and led to advice on lobbying MPs and local Councillors on priority issues.

On 24th March I am attending the E.Devon Tourism Network event at Dart's Farm, theme "Speaking up for East Devon Tourism" with several speakers including promotion of September's local food and drink event. The network's following event will be at Rockfish Sidmouth on 2nd June.

At the Chamber of Commerce AGM on 10th March Ian Gegory of Sidmouth Toy and Model Museum was installed as Chairman. He spoke of the need for clarity of purpose by the business community. There are encouraging signs of distinctive new openings, including Butchers, Printmakers Studio and Vinyl Record store. The ATM now operating at The Hub helps to keep options open for shopping with cash. The opening of Rockfish enables the new public toilets to operate at Port Royal with continued improvement of this area.

This is a busy season for our sale of 2026 Folk Festival tickets with current sales over £25,000, which is an increase on 2025. On 9th March we started our allocation of 300 Jazz & Blues Festival residents' discount tickets, and two-thirds have been sold. Along with the Air Day/Regatta these prestigious events have impact on residential roads and we note Traffic Restrictions for the Folk Festival are under review.

I have attended 2026 Walking Festival planning meetings in January and February to settle the programme of 25 walks, our booking system and printing of publicity material ready for distribution from April. The event will launch at TIC on Saturday 12th September.

We are also in contact with Sidmouth Science Festival in preparation for its October programme. It is pleasing to see the reopening of Manor Pavilion with fully refurbished seating area and a full programme through the year. The Town Museum reopens on 30th March with special displays on the theme of Jane Austen.

South West Water's board wall surrounding The Ham has been put to excellent use by Sidmouth School of Art and Coastal Hub displays.

In response to many enquiries we have found a Coach operator, Lomax Tours offering day trips from Sidmouth. We will act as booking agents on commission for their selection of Saturday excursions and hope they will prove popular.

A new style Town Map for 2026 is expected soon, incorporating design improvements following recent discussions. This is a very important free handout to visitors, local businesses and accommodation providers with distribution throughout the area. We also make it available by post if requested. It is hoped the redesign will promote recognition of Sidmouth "at the Heart of the Festival Coast" and relate well to other current initiatives:-

Supporting UK Town of Culture application to be shortlisted for a Government development grant
And a separate but complementary opportunity

Sidmouth Folk Festival and its supporting Charity making an application for inclusion in the National Inventory for Living Heritage in UK of economic and cultural significance (UNESCO Convention for Intangible Cultural Heritage)

We hope the town and its visitors will enjoy a happy busy and successful Easter. By late April we will extend opening hours to 4.30pm and look forward to improving weather for enjoyment of Sidmouth's natural beauty and attractions.

Tim Shardlow

Information Centre Manager 17/3/2026