

SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council
held at the Council Chamber, Woolcombe House, Sidmouth,
on Monday 4 August 2025 at 6.30pm

Ward	Councillors Present:
Sidmouth North	Stephen Blakeway
	Bernie Davis
	Stuart Hughes
Sidmouth South	Kelvin Dent
	Paul Dodds (Vice Chair)
	Chris Lockyear
	John Nicholson
	Rachel Perram
Primley	Francetta Bridle
	Hilary Nelson (Chair)
Sidford	Mike Goodman – arrived at agenda item 6
	Joanne Dodds

Apologies: Kevin Walker, Christopher Holland, Denise Bickley (DCC).

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 7:45pm.

PART 'A'

19 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 7 July 2025 were signed as a true and accurate record, with the exception of minute 15.3. Cllr Lockyear did NOT attend the advisory meeting of the Beach Management Scheme on 22 May 2025.

20 Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were received at this meeting.

21 Matters of Urgency or Report from the Chair

The Chair reported that there had been functionality issues with the four Town Council and Folk Festival subsidised temporary toilets at Port Royal over the weekend of the Folk Festival.

The Town Council had made the decision at its meeting on 7 July 2025 to fund additional temporary toilet provision during the month of August, a busy month that included Sidmouth Folk Festival and Sidmouth Regatta. The Council had been mindful that provision at Port Royal had been reduced significantly, since the sale and demolition of the former EDDC toilet block and had noted that the Folk Festival did not intend to provide toilets in that location except for those attending events in the marquee.

STC's contractor, Skinners had installed 4 units in late July and these were opened on 31 July in time for the first Folk Week pre-concert. However, on 1 and 2 August, there had been several incidents of people becoming locked in the toilets including a small child which had to be rescued from a unit by the Fire Brigade. At this point, EDDC and the Folk Festival took the independent decision to close the toilets from 2 August.

Skidders had examined the toilets on the Monday morning and confirmed that the locks on all units were functioning normally. To remediate the issue of lock ins, STC had placed notices on the inside of the doors to explain the locking mechanism. Skidders have also disabled the industry standard hot water sealed units, which were felt by one member of the EDDC Streetscene staff, to be unsafe.

The toilets were reopened by 10 a.m. on Monday 4th August and would be provided for the rest of the month as originally planned with EDDC continuing regular cleans as part of their cleaning rota and contract with STC.

STC had also placed notices on the outside of the temporary units, showing the location of alternative public toilet provision at the Market Place, the Arches and the Triangle to help with queue management.

The Chair gave thanks to collaborative problem solving between STC, the Folk Festival, Skidders and EDDC Councillors. The Chair particularly thanked Cllr Loudoun and Cllr Barlow for liaising with EDDC over the weekend, and to the team at STC for managing the response with calm efficiency.

It was regrettable that visitors and residents had a suboptimal experience over such a busy weekend. The lack of availability of toilets was the precise issue the Council had been trying to solve, in making the discretionary temporary provision.

22 Public Open Question Time

- Cllr Blakeway asked if EDDC could be made aware of new international research in to the use of Glyphosate. A report is now available in the Environmental Health Journal, and it was agreed that a copy of the report would be emailed to EDDC councillors.
- Cllr Willis Fleming raised concerns about the number of advertising A frame boards outside certain businesses within the town. These signs were not only obstructing pedestrian and wheelchair access but also unsightly. Members discussed escalating the issue to Devon County Council (DCC).

Cllr Hughes informed Members that there had been an option in the past for the Town Council to take responsibility for this area from DCC .

RESOLVED that the option to take more responsibility for the monitoring of A Frames in the town be investigated further.

- Cllr Perram reported that there were ongoing maintenance issues with toilet facilities in Market Square. Cllr Barlow informed Members that Streetscene had been experiencing staff shortages and it was agreed that these issues should be notified to Streetscene.

23 Police Advocate Report:

- Cllr Brown reported that the Police Advocacy meeting scheduled for 24 July 2025 did not go ahead and was re-scheduled for 11 August 2025.
- A Police Surgery had been scheduled for 4 September 2025 from 10AM-12PM at Sidmouth Library.
- Cllr Brown updated Members on a recent press release that highlighted the success of 'Operation Scorpion South West' - a Police crackdown on illegal drug activity in the region. A large number of arrests have been made (41), £57,000 in cash seized, together with a large number of weapons. It had also been reported that Police had successfully shut down 29 County Lines operations.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and agreed.

24 Committee/Working Group Reports

24.1 Planning Committee Report

Cllr Dent presented the reports of the Planning Committee meetings held on Wednesday 25 June and 16 July 2025.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the Planning Committee report be noted and agreed.
- b) further to the recommendation in minute 71 of the Planning Committee meeting on 16 July 2025 in relation to the display of signs and banners on East Devon District Council property, the Town Council would respond to EDDC indicating that they are not in favour of the display of any signs and banners on the seafront railings or Three-Cornered Plot. The Town Council would investigate alternative means of advertising public festivals and events in ways which would not adversely affect a conservation area.

24.2 Tourism and Economy Committee Report

Cllr Willis Fleming, Chair of the Tourism & Economy Committee, reported that the new window design had been completed and installed at the Tourist Information Centre and was a big improvement.

Cllr Willis Fleming discussed the overall appearance of The Ham and need of improvement.

It was agreed that suggested improvements to The Ham would be sent to Cllr Willis Fleming for discussion at the next Tourism and Economy meeting, scheduled for 10 September 2025

24.3 Environment Committee Report

Cllr Barlow, Chair of the Environment Committee, presented the report from the Environment Committee meeting held on Monday 14 July 2025.

Cllr Barlow also reported that Cllr Dodds had recently completed 'Chapter 8 training' and had gained 'Road Warden' status.

RESOLVED: That the Environment Committee report be noted.

24.4 Council Resources Working Group

Cllr Lockyear reported that the Council Resources Working Group met on Monday 14 July 2025 and discussed the year ahead. A further meeting had been scheduled for 14 August 2025 with a focus on Community Assets.

24.5 Youth Provision Committee

Cllr Perram Chair of the Youth Provision Committee updated Members on the current status of Youth Provision. Cllr Perram reported that the Committee had scheduled an extraordinary meeting for 14 August 2025 to discuss new contracts with new providers, for services starting in September 2025.

25 Reports from Members with Special Responsibilities

25.1 Finance Report

Finance Officer Cllr Lockyear presented the June report.

Cllr Blakeway asked if the Town Council could research other financial institutions that offer higher interest rates. Cllr Lockyear had been researching interest rates paid at alternative financial institutions and reported that he would discuss this further with the Town Clerk.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and agreed.

25.2 South West Water

Cllr Lockyear reported that SWW had drilled two exploratory holes on The Ham to determine tank installation methods. The results dictated the need for a vibration method. SWW would consult with residents later in August, as there would be a need for structural surveys to be carried out on all houses within a 100m radius of the tank installation zone.

Cllr Barlow reported that SWW had been surveying sewers and testing water in Salcombe Regis. The samples had been taken from water that had been through the treatment plant. SWW reported that there were several unauthorised connections within the system. A meeting had been scheduled for 20 August 2025 at Salcombe Regis Church.

25.3 Parish Paths

Cllr Dodds distributed a report on some time he had spent recently with the Parish Paths Partnership P3.

The report highlighted the dedication displayed by this group and that the group had been maintaining PROWs, bridleways, replacing gates and bridges.

26 Change of Meeting

Members are asked to note that the Environment Committee meeting scheduled for 20 October 2025 will be changed to Monday 29 September 2025.

RESOLVED that the change to the Environment Committee meeting be agreed.

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CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL