

**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 on 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