

**Minutes of a Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council's  
Tourism and Economy Committee  
held in the Council Chamber, Woolcombe House, Sidmouth  
on Wednesday 11 June 2025 at 6.30 pm**

Councillors present: Edward Willis Fleming (Chair)

Ian Barlow

Paul Dodds

Jo Dodds

Hilary Nelson (Vice Chair)

Kevin Walker

Chris Lockyear

John Loudon

Bernie Davies

Invited Reps: Tim Shardlow - TIC Manager

Ian Gregory – Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce

Tina Veater - Ignyte Ltd (Visit Sidmouth Tourism Promotion)

Louise Cole & Coco Hodgkinson - Sidmouth Coastal Community Hub

Apologies : Lorraine Brown, Rachel Perram, Francetta Bridle & John Nicholson

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.45pm

## **PART 'A'**

### **1 Minutes**

The Minutes of the Tourism & Economy Committee meeting held on Wednesday 19 March were signed and approved as a true and accurate record.

### **2 Declarations of Interest**

Name	Item Number	Type	Action Taken	Details
Ian Barlow	15	Personal	Left the meeting for the duration of item discussion	Trustee: Sidmouth School of Art

### **3 Matters of Urgency and Report**

There were no matters of urgency.

### **4 Tourism & Promotion Advisory Group Update**

Councillor Edward Willis Fleming welcomed as new Chair of Tourism & Economy Committee.

### **5 Tourism Information Centre Summary of Activities**

Tim Shardlow, Tourist Information Centre Manager, gave an update of TIC activities and reported that:

- The Giant Deck Chair and Beach Matting were in place for the season, and it was noted that the matting for wheel chair users was on the beach as intended.

- Sidmouth In Bloom were selling tickets for 'Passports to Gardens' via the TIC. 8 gardens would be open for visitors from June 28-29, 2025.
- Sidmouth Carnival Programme was available at the TIC for a donation

**RESOLVED:** That:

- a) The Sidmouth Information Centre report be noted.
- b) A letter of thanks be sent to the Management Team at Streetscene for their help and support for delivering and installing the Deck Chair and Beach Matting.

## **6 Tourism & Promotion Finance Report**

The Chair presented the Tourism & Promotion Finance report for the period to March-April 2025. To help raise additional revenue for TIC, it was suggested that the Town Council request Festival Organisers to route ticket sales through the TIC.

It was suggested that festivals could donate VIP tickets for prizes in competitions in order to create publicity for those events.

**RESOLVED:** That:

- a) The Tourism & Promotion Finance report be noted.
- b) Consideration to be given to the Committee's suggestions regarding Festival tickets at the next Tourism Action Group (TAG) meeting.

## **7 Tourism & Promotion Contract Update**

- Tina Veater of Ignyte, presented the Visit Sidmouth promotional contract summary report. She commented that May Half-term had been positive for the town. Many Accommodation providers had good occupancy rates. Last minute booking was still a trend, alongside requests for discounts and deals.
- The revised marketing approach to split the existing package into separate available services was working well – 3 new members had joined as a result.
- The 'Visit Sidmouth' team are working with EDDC on an East Devon Micro site. Tina reported that Sidmouth had a prime position on the site. The team were working with EDDC regarding additional budget for the tourist shoulder season.
- Tina raised concerns regarding the Town Council tourism 'Visit Sidmouth' and the Town Council resident's 'Live Sidmouth' webcam webpages were effectively competing with other on Google searches. Google's latest algorithm seemed to have given priority to .gov.uk sites taking traffic away from the 'Visit Sidmouth' website.

**RESOLVED:** That:

- a) The Tourism & Promotion contract update report be noted.
- b) The Town Clerk to be asked to investigate the popular webcam links provided for both residents and visitors.

**8 Community – Loos to use**

Councillor Davis presented a case study on Community loo provision in Penzance. This was a council funded scheme in partnership with local businesses. The scheme worked very well and the possibility of implementing a similar scheme in Sidmouth was discussed.

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Davis and the Chamber of Commerce would meet again to discuss taking the idea to local businesses. Councillor Dodds volunteered to be involved and was happy to engage with local businesses to gauge interest.

Councillor Davis would also distribute her presentation and Penzance pamphlet to Members.

**9 Sidmouth Regatta**

Members were asked to consider the purchase of additional card readers, in readiness for Sidmouth Regatta Airshow fund raising. The readers could also be used for other future town events.

**RESOLVED:** That:

- a) Officers should research Wi-Fi solutions such as Starlink and ask the PA providers for their input in to increased connectivity.
- b) Members agreed in principle to the purchase of additional card readers and ancillary equipment up to the sum of £1,500 (to be funded from T&E promotion budget).

**10 Sidmouth Mobility Scooter Grand Prix**

The Chair asked members to consider a new event to add to the Sunday programme over the Regatta weekend.

A Sidmouth Mobility Scooter Grand Prix could showcase Sidmouth as a town with a ‘Sense of Humour’, attract national media coverage and attention. It was suggested that a local charity could organise and run the event with assistance from STC if needed.

**RESOLVED:** That providing adequate insurance is in place, members were in favour and will look at developing the idea of a Mobility Scooter Grand Prix further for the future.

**11 Jazz and Blues Festival 2025**

A written report had been received from Ian Bowden on this year’s Jazz and Blues festival.

**RESOLVED:** That the Jazz and Blues report on the recent success of the event be noted.

**12 Sea Fest 2025**

The Chair and members took the opportunity to congratulate Louise Cole for the special recognition award she had received from East Devon District Council for her outstanding contribution to arts & culture.

Louise and Coco of Sidmouth Coastal Community Hub (SCCH) gave a presentation on the success of this year’s Sea Fest. Despite the change in venue and the challenges they faced, the event had been an outstanding success.

The Chair asked that both Louise and Coco be congratulated and thanked for all their hard work, bringing Sea Fest to Sidmouth and for creating such a vibrant atmosphere to the town.

**RESOLVED:** That:

- a) The Sea Fest report and success of the event be noted.

b) Louise Cole to share photos of the event with 'Visit Sidmouth' for promotional purposes.

**13 Sidmouth Festival of Flags**

Members were asked to consider a request for funding from Sidmouth Coastal Community Hub in partnership with Sidmouth School of Art. Funding was required to help support Sidmouth Flag Festival display which will place from 14 July to 15 September 2025. Members expressed their support for the event and the impact it had on the town.

**RESOLVED:** That the sum of £1,250 be made available towards the event.

**14 Sidmouth & East Devon Walking Festival**

Councillor Walker provided an update on the Sidmouth and East Devon Walking Festival. He extended his gratitude to the Committee for their support in helping to keep the festival going, after some uncertainty last year.

In turn, the Committee thanked Councillor walker for his dedication towards and support of the festival. A new brochure is available through the TIC and was distributed to members.

**RESOLVED:** That the Walking Festival update be noted.

**15 Matters Raised by Invited Representatives**

Ian Gregory of the Chamber of Commerce gave a brief report of the Chamber's activities also highlighting a recent feature interview with 'The Telegraph' about Sidmouth.

**RESOLVED:** That the report from Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce be noted and closer collaboration between the Chamber of Commerce and Sidmouth Town Council be encouraged.

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CHAIR OF THE TOURISM & ECONOMY WORKING GROUP