

**SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of Sidmouth Town Council's**  
**Environment Committee held in the Council Chamber,**  
**Woolcombe House, Woolcombe Lane, Sidmouth**  
**on Monday 14 2025 at 6.30pm**

Councillors: Ian Barlow (Chair)  
Stephen Blakeway  
Bernie Davis  
Kelvin Dent  
Paul Dodds  
Mike Goodman  
Chris Lockyear  
Rachel Perram  
Kevin Walker (Vice Chair)

Invited Reps:

|                  |                       |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| Ed Dolphin       | (Sidmouth Arboretum)  |
| Jon Ball         | (Sidmouth Arboretum)  |
| Diana East       | (Sidmouth Arboretum)  |
| Jan Metcalf      | (River Sid Project)   |
| Charles Sinclair | (River Sid Project)   |
| Lyndsay Hooper   | (River Sid Project)   |
| Dave Bramley     | (CAPS)                |
| Denise Molyneux  | (Chamber of Commerce) |
| Hannah Loxton    | (Sidmouth Library)    |

Apologies: Cllr Hillary Nelson

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.30pm

**PART 'A'**

**90 Minutes**

The minutes of the Environment Working Group meetings held on Monday 14 April 2025, were agreed as a true record, and signed.

**91 Declarations of Interest**

| Name                | Item Number | Type     | Action Taken                                         | Details                                                               |
|---------------------|-------------|----------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cllr Chris Lockyear | All items   | Personal | Remained in the Meeting during discussion and voting | Member of Sidmouth Biodiversity Group<br>Member of Sidmouth Arboretum |
| Cllr Ian Barlow     | All items   | Personal | Remained in the Meeting during discussion and voting | Member of Sidmouth Biodiversity Group<br>Member of Sidmouth Arboretum |

|                  |              |          |                                                      |                          |
|------------------|--------------|----------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Cllr Kelvin Dent | 95.1<br>95.2 | Personal | Remained in the Meeting during discussion and voting | Resident of Knowle Drive |
|------------------|--------------|----------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|

## 92 **Matters of Urgency and Report**

None reported.

## 93 **Budget**

Members considered the 2026/2027 budget. It was agreed that the next Environment Committee meeting would be bought forward to the end of September, to allow for the new budget. This should be agreed at the next Council meeting.

The Committee also took the opportunity to thank Cllr Stephen Blakeway for serving as Vice Chair and particularly his work on the new Environment Committee policy.

## 94 **Engagement**

- 94.1 Councillor Bernie Davis gave an update on the trial of the Eco Hub in Sidmouth and responded to questions from Members regarding the report. The Committee discussed the Eco Hub as a flexible and adaptable initiative that had the potential to be replicated in other areas, as it promoted community cohesion.

Hannah Loxton from Sidmouth Library expressed that the library had been very keen to continue its involvement with the Eco Hub. She noted that the project had helped the public to recognise the library as more than just a traditional lending space. The library planned to move forward by incorporating directories as part of the initiative.

Members also noted that the Eco Hub had clear links with the Council's new Environment Policy.

The Committee congratulated Cllr Davis on the continuing success of the project.

- 94.2 The Committee considered the report from Councillor Kevin Walker on the levels of support for volunteer recruitment for environmental groups in the Sid Valley.

It was noted that an interactive web page would help by providing a facility to request specific skills and volunteers needed in Sidmouth. This would allow people to easily find out where they could volunteer, what was needed, or if there was anything that matched their skill set.

**RESOLVED:** A budget of up to £1,000 was approved to proceed.

- 94.3 The Committee noted the report from the Vision Group Sidmouth which outlined the current state of its projects. The Chair thanked all the Environmental Groups and applauded their success.

## 95 **Built Environment**

- 95.1 The Committee noted the Knowle Parkland Bramble Management report from Ed Dolphin.

**RESOLVED:** The Town Clerk had agreed the necessary work with the contractor for cutting and removing the bramble in the autumn.

- 95.2 Councillor Kevin Walker updated the Committee about the ongoing work by the Friends of the Knowle. The Chair gave thanks to the Members and Volunteers on their significant improvement of the gardens.

- 95.3 Cllr Rachel Perram reported on behalf of the Sidmouth Plastic Warriors regarding 'Operation Butt Bins 2025'. Significant numbers of cigarette butts had been collected during each clean-up, with many found in drains, posing a particular concern for Sidmouth as they lead directly to the sea. The issue was notably worse in the Summer months.

Plastic Warriors had begun trialling portable ashtrays and could fund new butt bins but required volunteers or Council support to empty them monthly. Improved signage for existing bins was also suggested.

**RESOLVED:** That Sidmouth Town Council would investigate allocating resources emptying butt bins, subject to receiving the necessary permissions from East Devon District Council (EDDC) and Devon County Council for mounting spaces and reception of the waste material. The Committee expressed full support for the initiative.

- 95.4 Cllr Paul Dodds presented a PowerPoint presentation to the Committee outlining the work undertaken to improve the roads in Sidmouth. It was reported that repairing a pothole cost Sidmouth Town Council approximately £6–£8, compared to £180 when carried out by Devon County Council. Cllr Dodds was nearing completion of his Chapter 8 training and anticipated being able to carry out more repairs independently. The Committee thanked Cllr Dodds for his efforts and acknowledged the significant positive impact his work had made in Sidmouth.

- 95.5 The Chair gave a report on a proposed initiative to plant trees within the built environment in Sidmouth and outlined possible next steps. The Chair had been working alongside Cllr Willis Fleming with the It was noted that approval from Devon County Council would be required. Mapping would be undertaken to identify the location of underground services at potential planting sites. This initiative was recognised as a new challenge for Sidmouth Arboretum, which would need to determine suitable planting methods for each location—ensuring the right tree was planted in the right place at the right cost.

**RESOLVED:** that the Council working with Sidmouth Arboretum, aims towards the planting of 250 trees in urban areas over the next three-Year period.

## 96 **Natural Environment**

- 96.1 Charles Sinclair and Lyndsay Hooper (River Sid Project) received questions regarding the report from the River Sid Catchment Group about displaying an interchangeable, informative sign at School Weir. They discussed the different stages of the project, which would involve one location and three boards.

**RESOLVED:** It was confirmed that East Devon District Council owned that section of The Byes. The Town Clerk was instructed to write a letter of support on behalf of Sidmouth Town Council. A grant of up to £250 was approved towards the project.

- 96.2 Ed Dolphin from The Sidmouth Arboretum updated the Committee on the recent Tree Survey. There had been a significant increase in young trees with Sidmouth's canopy cover being 25% under trees and shrubs.

- 96.3 After considering the proposal from the Sid Valley Biodiversity Group for the implementation of an Early Detection Rapid Response protocol, it was decided that although the Committee supported the concept, more information was required.

**Date of Next Meeting**

Members confirmed their preferred date for the next meeting as Monday 29 September 2025.

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CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE