

SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of Sidmouth Town Council's
Environment Committee held in the Council Chamber,
Woolcombe House, Woolcombe Lane, Sidmouth
on Monday 28 September 2026 at 6.30pm

Councillors: Ian Barlow (Chair)
Paul Dodds
Mike Goodman
Stuart Hughes (Vice Chair)
Chris Lockyear
Hillary Nelson
Kevin Walker

Cllr Denise Bickley

Invited Reps:	Ed Dolphin	(Sidmouth Arboretum)
	Stefan Drew	(Food Forest)
	Diana East	(Sidmouth Arboretum)
	Chris Khan	(Environment Agency)
	Jan Metcalf	(River Sid Project)
	Charles Sinclair	(River Sid Project)
	Paul Stevens	(East Devon District Council)
	Peter Rose	(SVA Trustee)
	Stuart Webster	(Friends of the Byes)

Apologies: Cllr Bernie Davis

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.20pm

PART 'A'

7 Minutes

The minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on Monday 15 June 2026 were agreed as a true record and signed, subject to the correction of Brian Golding's name (CAPS, Vision Group Sidmouth).

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 Trustee of Sidmouth Arboretum
Cllr Ian Barlow	All items	Personal	Remained in the Meeting during discussion and voting	Trustee of Sidmouth Arboretum

Cllr Kevin Walker	All items	Personal	Remained in the Meeting during discussion and voting	Member of the Vision Group Sidmouth
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8 Matters of Urgency and Report.

None received

9 Items to note

The Committee noted the Red, Amber, Green (RAG) reports submitted by the Environmental Community Groups, along with an update from the River Sid Catchment Group and the Food Forest.

RECOMMENDED: That:

Sidmouth Town Council endorses the work of the Food Forest and the activities it is undertaking

10 Items for Action/Funding

- 10.1 Cllr Kevin Walker speaking as a representative of the Climate Awareness Project Sidmouth (CAPS) requested funding for £200 towards publicity and venue hire for forthcoming community projects and workshops.

RESOLVED: That a contribution of £200 be made to CAPS, subject to receipts/invoices and a breakdown of expenditure being provided to the Committee.

- 10.2 The Chair reported that he had been approached by Robin Goodman regarding the ongoing Batiquick water quality testing. Testing was currently taking place every Saturday and all results had so far been green.

Members noted that the only recognised testing was undertaken by the Environment Agency and discussed whether the additional local testing would provide reassurance to residents and visitors or not.

It was also suggested that a link to the swimming beach water-quality data be included on the Town Council website, alongside a link to the Environment Agency. Members discussed whether there was a need for further additional testing.

RESOLVED: That links to the available swimming beach water-quality information and Environment Agency information be added to the Town Council website and that no further additional tests be purchased at present.

- 10.3 Members received an update on the Pothole Repair Project. It was reported that a local resident had donated a compactor to the project and that Devon County Council had agreed to fund the required road signs. The Committee was still awaiting the necessary traffic cones.
- The supporting report recorded that the Pothole Posse had filled a total of 630 holes, with recent work including Roselands, Heydon's Lane, Blackmore Gardens, Newlands Close and Woolbrook Meadows.
- Members expressed their appreciation for the continued work of the volunteers involved in the project.

RESOLVED: That

the Chair write to Devon County Council thanking them for working with and supporting the Pothole Repair Project and for the major resurfacing that they have undertaken in the Sid Valley.

10.4 Flood Risk and Community Resilience

The Committee welcomed Paul Stevens, Emergency Planning Officer at East Devon District Council, and Chris Khan, Flood Risk Engagement Officer, who gave a briefing on flood risk and community resilience. This item had been included on the agenda to consider how community flood resilience could form part of the Town Council's emergency planning.

Members discussed emergency flood risk within Sidmouth, including whether residents were sufficiently aware of the risks and the importance of developing nature-based solutions. Reference was also made to the need for work relating to the Sid and the wider catchment.

Discussion highlighted the need for the Town Council's Emergency Plan, including its flood risk provisions, to be reviewed and updated as a matter of urgency. Members also discussed the value of looking at examples of best practice from other community flood plans.

RESOLVED: That

all Members of the Council be advised of the urgent need to update the Town Council's Emergency Plan and that the matter be put to full council and progressed accordingly.

10.5 Alma Field

Members considered the report on the future care and management of Alma Field. The report highlighted the biodiversity value of the site and the success of the existing meadow management regime, which involves cutting the sward in late August/September and removing the arisings.

Members supported the continued management of Alma Field for biodiversity and discussed the need for appropriate signage to explain the management of the site and its environmental benefits to visitors.

RESOLVED: That the current management approach for Alma Field be continued, with the site managed as a wildflower meadow to support biodiversity, and that appropriate interpretative signage be provided.

10.6 Wildlife Pond, Woolcombe House Garden

Members considered the proposal to create a permanent wildlife pond within the rear grounds of Woolcombe House. The proposed pond would provide an additional habitat to support biodiversity, with the Friends of the Byes providing the plants, labour and ongoing maintenance. The anticipated cost to the Council would be £450 for the pond liner.

Members discussed the possibility of using modelling previously undertaken by the Friends of the Byes and noted that encouraging biodiversity was one of the principal aims of the project. It was also suggested that a water diverter could be fitted to the downpipe to provide a source of water for the pond.

RECOMMENDED: That the Council be asked to be approved the proposal to create a wildlife pond within the grounds of Woolcombe House subject to operational requirements.

10.7 Members discussed the need for the green corridor's, it was agreed that the Green Groups would come up with a suitable plan of action.

11 To note:

Memorial Benches:

Members were informed by the Friends of the Byes that memorial benches had been vandalised. It was agreed that the incidents should be reported to the Police so that they were aware of any pattern of antisocial behaviour and could respond appropriately.

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CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE