

SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council's
Environment Committee
held at the Council Chamber, Woolcombe House, Sidmouth,
on Monday 13 July 2020 at 6.30 pm

Councillors present: Denise Bickley (Chair)
Chris Lockyear (Vice Chair)
Ian Barlow
Emma Murdoch

Invited Reps: Jon Ball, Sidmouth Arboretum
Dave Bramley, Sidmouth Science Festival
Richard Eley, Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce
Graham Hutchinson, Sidmouth Arboretum
Rachel Perram, Sidmouth Plastic Warriors
Richard Thurlow, Sid Vale Association & Sidmouth Arboretum
Jeremy Woodward (Vision Group of Sidmouth)

Apologies: Charissa Evans, Di Fuller (Sid Vale Association), Stuart Hughes, Marianne Rixson
Peter Endersby & Lynette Talbot (Sidmouth in Bloom),
Diana East (Sidmouth Arboretum)

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 7.56pm

PART 'A'

33 Minutes

The minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on Monday 13 January 2019 were confirmed and agreed as a true record.

34 Declarations of Interest

Name	Item Number	Type	Action Taken	Details
CLlr Denise Bickley	All items	Personal	Remained in the Meeting during discussion and voting	Member of Sidmouth Extinction Rebellion Member, Surfers Against Sewage SW Representative and Chair of Sidmouth Plastic Warriors and Sidmouth Biodiversity Group
CLlr Chris Lockyear	All items	Personal	Remained in the Meeting during discussion and voting	Member of Sidmouth Biodiversity Group

35 Matters of Urgency and Report

The Chair of the Committee asked Members to consider the planned planting for the Knowle Parkland which was due to be implemented as part of the Devon County Council scheme to create increased surface water flooding resilience. It was also agreed that planting should not prevent or hinder the future extension of the grasscrete car park.

RESOLVED: that East Devon District Council's Streetscene team would advise DCC on the appropriate planting mix particularly around the swale area and that this would be the formal response of Sidmouth Town Council. It was also agreed that planting around the amphitheatre and amphitheatre slopes needed to be of hardwearing grasses to cope with audiences walking.

36 Exclusion of the Public

There were no items required to be dealt with under Part B.

37 Vehicle Charging Points Project

Members considered the report of Councillor Chris Lockyear detailed below:

Origin Plan

To install 2 charging points in the car park of Woolcombe House as quick win

Activity

Contacted

- Chargemaster
- EO Charging
- EV Charger
- Sungift Energy

Some providers were not interested as their business model requires large turnover of users

Had site visit by Chargemaster to survey Woolcombe House and Knowle Car Park

- Woolcombe House was not suitable as the Consumer Unit did not have sufficient capacity
- Knowle Car Park – Cost estimate of £21,438 (ex VAT) for two 7kW charging units installed
- Also organised for Chargemaster to visit the Royal Glen and Harbour Hotels who were interested in installing charging units – outcome unknown

Next steps

Need a strategic review of location of charging points in Sidmouth in conjunction with EDDC

Cllr Lockyear also pointed out that there was a website available which attempted to document the position of charging points in the United Kingdom: www.zap-map.com

Members agreed that a far more strategic approach to the implementation of charging points in the town and that the Devon County Council survey of users being carried out would be a useful and more accurate way to establish need: www.devonnewscentre.info/drivers-can-help-shape-devons-low-carbon-future-in-electric-vehicle-questionnaire/

RESOLVED: that the results of the DCC survey of electric car users be used as a basis for a more strategic approach to determining need in the Sid Valley.

38 Carbon Footprint Project

Members considered the report of Councillor Chris Lockyear detailed below:

Origin Plan

- 10 week campaign raising awareness of individual carbon footprints starting at the beginning of August.

- Encourage people to measure their carbon footprint and report this to a central organisation.
- Each participant gets a raffle ticket for a prize draw to be drawn during the Science Festival. Significant cash prizes to be awarded (e.g. 1st £250, 2nd £100, 3rd £20).
- Ask individuals how they personally could reduce their footprint and collate these answers.
- Each week take the message on one area (e.g. food, transport, housing, clothing) to organisations in Sidmouth who meet regularly (e.g. Churches, Sports Clubs, U3A, SVA, National Trust, Women's Institute, Scouts) giving a presentation on how to reduce carbon footprint in this area.
- Provide resources in the Library to help people measure carbon footprint and give links to our preferred calculator.

Activity

Project put on hold as a result of Covid 19

Next steps

Review whether cut down version of this plan would be of value at Science Festival

39 Biodiversity Group

Members considered the report of Councillor Chris Lockyear as detailed below:

Sid Valley Biodiversity Group – created June 2020

Aims

- To understand, preserve and enhance the biodiversity of all of the Sid Valley's disparate habitats through the development and implementation of a local Biodiversity Action Plan,
- To work with the people of the Sid Valley, to educate and inform about local and wider biodiversity issues, and
- To encourage more members of the community to take an active part in conservation and biodiversity enhancement.

Structure:

- Sub-groups responsible for specific stages and areas of the Project:
- Mapping the biodiversity of the Sid Valley: The Investigation Phase (see below)
- Producing a programme of surveys: The Intervention Plan (see below)
 - Integrating Horticulture into all stages and areas
- Engaging the public through Publicity and Outreach activities, at all stages and areas
- Funding

Plan

Investigation Phase to produce a base line evaluation of current activity and species

Biodiversity Intervention Phase:

- To develop and document a Biodiversity action plan to preserve or enhance habitats and biodiversity of the Sid Valley and secure funding to deliver the plan.
- To put survey results, plans and reports in the public domain.
- To engage the major land owners.
- To engage volunteers to support the aims including planting and managing habitats

40 Litter and Street Cleansing

Members considered an update from Sidmouth Plastic Warriors who had recently declared their disappointment with particularly beachgoers and the dropping of litter in large amounts by temporarily ceasing their clear ups in protest. The Committee expressed their desire for EDDC to increase the number of litter bins available, particularly in areas where these had been removed and to increase general street cleansing. It was agreed that the STC contractors had improved much of the town with regard to weeds but could not be expected cover all areas which were experiencing an increase in littering.

It was accepted that the litter issue was exacerbated by a minority of visitors and residents but that something needed to be done to help keep the Sid Valley tidy. Members were supportive and it was agreed that a renewed campaign to not only help clear up litter but to help re-educate and change people’s behaviour was needed.

RESOLVED: that a small independent Working Group be convened to help encourage and coordinate the clearing of litter with EDDC and volunteers and to help re-educate and change people’s behaviour. Initial Working Group membership to be: Cllrs Denise Bickley and Ian Barlow with Rachel Perram, Jeremy Woodward, Dave Bramley and Richard Thurlow.

41 Pedestrianisation / Temporary Traffic Restriction Order Update

Members considered the recently emergency measures put in place by Devon County Council Highways working with Sidmouth Town Council and Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce. It was agreed that the scheme had worked very well so far and that comments from some had been that the scheme did not go far enough. However, it was also acknowledged that the scheme had resulted in a number of negative comments and a huge amount of work for officers to implement. It was agreed that if anything was to be done of a similar nature in future to alleviate parking problems and to improve traffic flow, it could only be effective long term after a much promised and vital comprehensive traffic study of the town was carried out by Devon County Council Highways. Such a study was urgently needed.

A comprehensive and full-scale Traffic Plan had been promised after the completion of the Neighbourhood Plan now long complete, however it was understood that a was not likely to be implemented by Devon County Council in the near future after they had experienced serious problems with the implementation of a scheme in Totnes and due to limited resources. However, it had recently been suggested by the County Council that a ‘Round Table discussion’ leading to a possibly traffic study could be organised and this was very much welcomed by the Committee.

RESOLVED: that Devon County Council Highways be asked to convene a ‘Round Table’ discussion regarding traffic in Sidmouth as a matter of urgency.

42 Items raised by invited representatives

Members noted that Sidmouth Plastic Warriors would be carrying out a large-scale Beach Clean on 18/19 July 2020.

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CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE