

SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting of Sidmouth Town Council's
Environment Committee
held at the Council Chamber, Woolcombe House, Sidmouth,
on Monday 30 September 2019 at 6.30 pm

Councillors present: Denise Bickley (Chair)
Chris Lockyear (Vice Chair)
Ian Barlow
John Rayson
Charissa Evans

Also present: Jon Ball & Ed Dolphin, Sidmouth Arboretum
Lin Bennett, Sidmouth College
Dave Bramley, Sidmouth Science Festival
David Cook, Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce
Peter Endersby & Lynette Talbot, Sidmouth in Bloom
Rachel Perram, Sidmouth Plastic Warriors
Jeremy Woodward, Vision Group of Sidmouth

Apologies: Stuart Hughes, Emma Murdoch

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.50pm

PART 'A'

11 Chair's Welcome and Introductions

The Chair of the Committee welcomed all those present including invited representatives and asked each to explain a little about their organisation.

12 Minutes

The minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on Monday 8 July 2019 were agreed and signed as a true record.

13 Declarations of Interest

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

14 Exclusion of the Public

There were no items to be considered as matters of urgency or to be reported.

15 Exclusion of the Public

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

16 Draft Sidmouth Town Council Environment Policy

Members considered a draft Environment Policy for the Council. The draft policy had been drawn up using examples from other councils and organisations as a basis and formed a broad strategic level document for the committee and Council to adopt.

***RECOMMENDED:** That the Council adopts the Environment Policy as drafted and amended by the Environment Committee (Appendix A).

17 Initial Action Plan

Members discussed the initial draft of the Committee's Action Plan. This had been drafted to reflect the aims of the environment policy and committee:

• **Short Term**

Council to switch to Green Energy supplier when possible and publish energy usage figures.

- Improve Council recycling, reduce wastage and monitor usage.
- Take in account environmental commitments of potential contractors.
- Encourage and enable the wider community to measure and review their own carbon footprint (engaging Library and Information Centre).
- Achieve Blue Flag status for Sidmouth main beach.
- Commence an ambitious project of tree planting to improve the Sid Valley area and help offset carbon emissions (£2,000 worth in first planting)

Longer Term

- Encourage the completion of the Sidford to Sidbury shared pathway and support the creation of a Sidmouth to Feniton cycleway along the old Sidmouth Railway line

RESOLVED: That the action plan be noted.

18 Endorsement of Devon County Climate Declaration

Members considered the Devon County Council Climate Declaration which was endorsed on the 22nd May 2019 by members of the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group. The declaration had been prepared by a consortium of public, private and voluntary organisations collaborating through the Response Group. It set out an ambition to tackle climate change that covered all of Devon.

Members noted that the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group would engage Devon's residents, businesses and visitors to develop and implement a plan to facilitate the reduction of Devon's production and consumption emissions to meet IPCC recommendations. It had been acknowledged by the group that such a transformational change would be challenging and would need to include:

- Deploying more renewable, decentralised and smart energy systems
- Retrofitting energy-efficiency measures into our existing buildings
- Constructing zero-carbon new buildings
- Travelling less and using improved walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure more often, and using electric and hydrogen vehicles
- Changing our consumption to use less, re-use more and choose low-carbon options
- Challenging all economic sectors to review their practices and the values of those they do business with
- Divesting from fossil fuels
- Changing our dietary patterns and reducing food waste
- Changing agricultural practices to reduce emissions associated with farming operations, manage soils sustainably and replenish soil carbon

- Encouraging carbon storage such as through tree planting, the use of wood in construction and peatland restoration
- Empowering the people of Devon with the knowledge and skills to act collectively.

The Devon Climate Emergency Response Group had also made clear that local organisations and communities could not achieve these things alone as national government played a key role in many of the policy areas that were vital to reducing emissions and adapting to climate change. The group had called on government to prioritise decarbonisation and adaptation within decision making and work by using its powers to provide the resources and funding necessary to accelerate the transition to a low-carbon and resilient economy and society.

***RECOMMENDED:** That the Council endorses the Devon County Council Climate Declaration as a signatory.

19 Additional Litter Bins and Street Cleaning

Members discussed the lack of litter bins which had resulted from their removal by East Devon District Council a number of years ago. It was understood that many of the public bins had been removed due to misuse for domestic household waste. It was agreed that any bins in the town should be general bins which could accept general and dog waste with a recycling bin incorporated. Members suggested that East Devon District Council should be asked to consider an offer that if the Town Council bought replacement bins, the District Council empty them.

RESOLVED: That the Chair of Council and Town Clerk discusses with East Devon District Council, the possibility of providing extra bins to be emptied by Streetscene.

The untidy and poor condition of many streets, pavements and public areas was also discussed. Though Members accepted that budgets and resources were under extreme pressure, it was suggested that a further conversation should be had with East Devon District Council over the provision of street cleansing and cleaning. It was also suggested that existing Town Council contractors could be tasked to target certain areas as and when needed. In many cases the areas were the property of the District Council and there was a responsibility on the part of the Council to keep them clean and safe.

RESOLVED:

- 1)** That the Chair of Council and Town Clerk discusses with East Devon District Council, the possibility of providing extra street cleansing
- 2)** That the Council's grass and verge cutting contractor team be asked to consider taking on more cleansing of areas which could be specifically targeted by the Council.

20 Items raised by invited representatives

Members noted that Sidmouth Plastic Warriors had been chosen by Waitrose to benefit from their 'green tokens' scheme for a share of £1000. It was also noted that a questionnaire to local hotels and care homes was being sent out asking them to show what they were doing to reduce the misuse of the drain and sewerage system to help prevent another 'fatberg'.

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CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Sidmouth Town Council Environment Policy

Sidmouth Town Council is committed to transforming Sidmouth and the Sid Valley area into a cleaner and greener town and a more prosperous place to live and work. We commit to making Sidmouth a low carbon town and a healthy and active town - with a high quality built and natural environment.

Our Environmental Policy supports these goals. Through it, we will use our powers and influence to protect and enhance the environment, and make continual improvement in our own environmental performance, as set out below.

Natural Environment

- Protect, and where possible enhance, the designated green spaces and corridors, conservation areas, and views, as laid out in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Support and encourage the creation of a sustainable built environment through the planning process.
- Consider impact on biodiversity and sustainability of the management and use of the Sidmouth Town Council estate.

Low Carbon Town

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Sidmouth Town Council activities year on year until carbon neutrality is achieved and promote the same in the community.
- Support the appropriate generation and use of renewable and low carbon energy.
- Encourage use of public and shared transport, bicycles, and walking for both residents and visitors by provision, or promotion with others, of appropriate assets.

Sustainability

- Practice recovery, reuse, repair, remanufacturing and recycling in Sidmouth Town Council's activities and promote the same in the community.
- Preferentially engage local contractors who demonstrate alignment to the Sidmouth Town Council's Environmental Policy.
- Consider the impact of future climate change, such as sea level rise, intensity of storms, and drought, on all decisions.

Engagement

- Inform and engage Sidmouth's residents and businesses, schools and event organisers of the Council's environmental activities and respond and react to feedback.
- Support individual, business, charity, and event organiser behaviour change and adoption of low environmental impact practices.
- Set biannual targets and report on progress, undertaking periodic audits of the Sidmouth Town Council's environmental management system.