

# *A Vision for Sidmouth*



## *A Vision for Sidmouth 2006*

*Produced by the Vision Group for Sidmouth  
On behalf of the residents, visitors and businesses of Sidmouth*

# *A Vision for Sidmouth*

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## *Chairman's summary*

The Vision Group was formed from the volunteers who put their names forward after the 2005 Annual Town Meeting, at which Rev Handel Bennett had spoken of the need for a 'Vision for Sidmouth'. There are about 20 members. One respondent to a questionnaire hoped that born and bred Sidmothians were well represented on the Group: I admit I haven't checked birth certificates, but am reliably informed that the families of some members go back countless generations in the town.

We have met monthly over the last year. We are grateful to the Town Council for their goodwill in giving us a 'home' at Woolcombe House for our meetings, and especially to Cllrs Ann Liverton and Tom Cox who have come along to unlock for us, on what should have been their well-earned nights off, and to give us guidance when required. Our best wishes go to Tom in his recuperation. I am sure he and Ann have not gone along with all our ideas, but they have shown great patience. The members of our group are also to be congratulated on their patience: some have wanted to push on faster, but have agreed to the process of trying to inform and involve the public, and to gauge people's opinions.

Starting on 26 July 2005, we held 9 Conversation Cafés, and attended a similar number of meetings of local organisations, where we both spoke, and listened to their members' opinions. In these ways we have heard first hand the views of several hundred local people.

We have conducted surveys of local commerce, hotels, guest houses, etc., (which generated over 150 responses). We sent out questionnaires to a representative sample of 400 residents of the valley, and were pleased to receive 210 replies.

We have been fortunate to have both Cllr Stuart Hughes, Town and County Councillor, and Paul Wilson, Deputy Local Services Officer, Devon, come to speak to us and answer our questions on traffic and transport. The Corporate Director for Planning at EDDC, Karime Hassan was generous with his time when I went to speak with him at the Knowle last October.

Our group divided into four sub-groups, which looked at the Economy and Tourism, the Environment and Conservation, Port Royal, and Transport and Parking.

## **The Environment**

The March meeting of the Vision Group adopted several proposals for improving the general environment of Sidmouth: reopening the SW Coastal Path on Salcombe Hill: a foot and cycle path through to Sidford; access to Sidbury Hill Fort; extending CCTV; improving public conveniences; and providing a focal point for the town. I must say that the Environment sub-group have considered a wide range of ideas, and those six mentioned are the prime examples, but they could provide plenty more. We are aware of the sterling work being done by Freddie Wedderburn and Jack Shaw to bring about the footbridge at Connaught Gardens, and support their efforts.

## **Transport and Parking**

This debate must have been going on for half a century or more – and it is easy to see why! It seems that any solution proposed has its opponents, or is simply too expensive! Many will tell of golden opportunities that were missed, but we feel we must approach the situation as it is now.

Our debates on this thorny issue were long and sometimes difficult, but we finally adopted the proposal that a park and ride site should be created on the A 3052, so that visitors could avoid the congested town centre. We are aware that not all visitors would use park and ride – families laden down with buckets, spades, lilos, rubber rings,

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picnic baskets and the like might opt for parking in town – but at higher cost. Nevertheless, an out of town parking solution should release parking places in the centre. This would enable the removal of parking in Fore Street. With traffic banned for some hours of the day, this would create a far better shopping environment. We are very aware of the need for deliveries to be made to shops, so there cannot be a total ban on traffic.

The redevelopment of Port Royal is the next issue, and it would itself create a need for extra parking places. We would suggest an extra level of parking be created on the Ham car park as part of that development, and leading directly into it.

### **Port Royal**

A redeveloped Port Royal would of course incorporate the Sailing Club and (unless EDDC sites them elsewhere on the sea front) lifeboat station and toilets.

We understand the area being considered is that from Ham Lane eastward, including the Drill Hall site, and continuing to include the turning circle at the end of the sea front. It seems that the four-storey height of the flats on the opposite corner of Ham Lane would allow any development to be of similar height; this would provide several thousand square metres of floor space.

It has long been suggested, by many Sidmouth luminaries, that Port Royal should house a cultural centre. We suggest a multi purpose hall with the flexible seating arrangements that are now quite common in performance spaces. We see it as a venue for a variety of music – chamber and orchestral, jazz, big band – certainly dance, and it would be an obvious Festival venue. We can foresee weekend music festivals in spring and/or autumn, which would extend the season and bring greater prosperity to the town. Greater prosperity must help to protect the individual shops in the town centre.

We would like to see an interpretation centre, a re-located museum, space for exhibitions, art gallery, and a café/restaurant.

We feel that these uses would be in keeping with the character of Sidmouth and provide well-supported attractions for the residents – as well as attracting visitors.

The alternative we do not want to see is that of the site being sold to developers and turned into another block of flats. When we surveyed residents' opinions, we did not mention this possibility, but again and again respondents voiced the unsolicited opinion, 'No more flats!'

This is a prime seafront site with wonderful views, the keys to which should not be sold off to those wealthy enough to pay the asking price: it is the birthright of the people of Sidmouth.

*Our Vision for Sidmouth is...*

*“To cherish the heritage of our Regency Resort and the surrounding coast and countryside; to seek to improve amenities and facilities appropriate for residents and visitors in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; to encourage a vibrant economy; and to commend our vision to the Local Development Framework.”*

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## *2 Background*

Sidmouth is a town much loved by its residents and popular with visitors. In general, both groups favour keeping Sidmouth as it is. However, it is widely recognised that achieving this requires a vibrant local economy which can only be sustained in a historic setting by continual appropriate change.

There is a current perception amongst many residents and visitors that the town centre requires new investment if it is to take full advantage of the opportunities afforded by designation of its coastline as a World Heritage Site while retaining its unique character.

As a result concerned local representatives have proposed that the community needs to be mobilised to express its concerns and aspirations for the future of Sidmouth in a more concrete form that can be presented to, and recognised by the district council, and that will form a counterweight to pressure from other parts of the district. Such a plan would also provide a focus for local people and organisations to take up particular issues and pursue them to implementation.

The result was a presentation to the Annual Town Meeting in 2005 by the chairman of the Sid Vale Association, Rev H. Bennett, leading to formation of the Vision for Sidmouth Group and preparation of this Plan.

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## 3. Introduction

Sidmouth is a small historic town lying in the valley of the river Sid, on the southeast coast of Devon in South West England. It is within a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty consisting of the Blackdown Hills to the northeast, and a series of Greenstone Ridges extending southwards to the sea. Sidmouth lies in a steep-sided valley between two of these ridges, which effectively separate it from the surrounding country. At the seaward end, the ridges end in spectacular cliffs eroded from the red marl beneath the greenstone. These cliffs form part of the World Heritage Coast (the Jurassic Coast) from Exmouth to Swanage, of which the Sidmouth cliffs display the Triassic period, much older than the Jurassic itself.



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Historically, the fertility of the soil encouraged early settlement in the area, as is shown by remains of several prehistoric hill forts, including Sidbury Hill at the north of the valley. Sidbury itself was a significant Saxon village. By the early Middle Ages, Sidmouth was a sizeable port and market town. Its modern shape was formed at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century when it became popular as a health resort for wealthy patrons from London. As a result the town was substantially redeveloped in the Regency style of architecture, which was fashionable at the time. Further development in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century has been largely to extend the town northwards, and the historic town centre has become an attraction in its own right. Today, it is a popular retirement location.



In the 2001 census (see Appendix 7), Sidmouth had a population of 13,135 of which 5,154 lived in the Town ward, and most of the rest in the Sidford ward. The age structure data show that Sidmouth has an older population than the rest of East Devon, with deficits in all age groups up to 60, and excesses in those above 60. However, this is not reflected in an excess of permanently sick people. Sidmouth also has excesses of all retired and single pensioner households, and of households without a car.

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The main access to Sidmouth is from the A3052 which links it to the regional centre at Exeter, 15 miles to the west, from where the rest of the country may be accessed via the M5 and the motorway network, via the railway network, and, increasingly from Exeter airport. A secondary access link is provided by the A375 to Honiton, giving access to the A30/A303 link to London, and a main railway line to London. The A3052 also provides regional links eastward to Seaton, Axminster and Lyme Regis, and westward to Exmouth.

A national walking trail, the South West Coast Path, passes through Sidmouth in the south Devon section, and a regional trail, the East Devon Way passes through Sidbury.

Sidmouth is part of the County of Devon, administered by the East Devon District Council and the Sidmouth Town Council. Our vision for Sidmouth must sit within a framework of plans at regional and national level. The government has recently introduced a new structure for such plans which is based on Local Development Frameworks: portfolios of plans which dovetail together to cover the range of planning issues.

As part of the new planning process, a hierarchy of consultative planning structures is being created. At the County level, this is represented by the Devon Strategic Partnership, which has developed the Devon Community Strategy, a Local Public Service Agreement and a Devon Local Area Agreement. At District level, we have the East Devon Local Strategic Partnership, which has developed the East Devon Sustainable Community Plan, and a Transport Strategy for East Devon, and will maintain the East Devon Local Plan.

Existing plans of relevance to Sidmouth are the Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10), which was adopted as a Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) in 2004; the Devon Structure Plan 2001-2016, which was adopted by Devon County Council in 2004, and will form part of the LDF until 2007; and the East Devon Local Plan (LP) which has recently been adopted by EDDC and will remain part of the LDF until 2009. The aspects of the Local Plan specific to Sidmouth are quoted in Appendix 1, and the relevant maps are reproduced below.

The Local Plan is extended by Supplementary Planning Guidance Documents (SPG) which deal with specific issues and locations. These may include Town or Village Plans or Design Statements, such as the Sidmouth Town Centre Conservation Area Shopfronts Practice Notes, which was formally adopted as part of the Local Plan in November 1988.

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## *4. The Process*

The vision process was initiated at the Annual Town Meeting in May 2005, following a proposal by Rev Handel Bennett, chairman of the Sid Vale Association, who was concerned that Sidmouth would be unable to cope with the expected increase in visitors following designation of the Jurassic Coast as a World Heritage Site.

A preliminary meeting of interested townspeople held on 8<sup>th</sup> June under the auspices of the Town Council and chaired by Councillor Mrs Liverton (the recently elected Town Council chairman) agreed to form a Working Party.

About 20 volunteers met monthly from June 2005 to September 2006 to formulate a “Vision for Sidmouth”



**Figure 1** Members of the Vision Group in the Council Chamber at Woolcombe House for the meeting on 17th July 2006

The Sid Vale Association was asked to nominate a chairman. Mr Alan Darrant agreed to take on that role. Mr Jeremy Woodward was elected Secretary.

The Town Council supported the group through provision of Woolcombe House for meetings. Councillor Mr Tom Cox and Councillor Mrs Ann Liverton were co-opted to facilitate communication with the Town Council.

Four working groups met through autumn 2005 to develop ideas in the areas of:

- Economy and Tourism
- Environment & Conservation
- Port Royal
- Transport & Traffic



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Nine Conversation Cafés were held to stimulate discussion in the community (Appendix 2). At two of these, straw polls were taken on topical issues. The chairman also gave presentations to several local groups to stimulate interest.

Questionnaires (see Appendices 3-6) were distributed to sections of the community to establish the support for specific aspects of the vision. In all, five questionnaires were distributed:

1. Full surveys of town centre commercial businesses were carried out by distributing 200 copies of two questionnaires: one general and one relating specifically to traffic & parking in the town centre. All businesses from Radway down to the sea front were given a copy, and 129 were returned and analysed. This represents a very good response, and we consider the results to be representative.
2. A full survey of hospitality businesses was attempted by distributing general questionnaires by email to all 49 members of the Hospitality Association. Only seven were completed and these can only be taken as providing an indicative response.
3. A survey of the views of visitors was undertaken by placing 725 questionnaires in hotels, guest houses, caravan sites and the Tourist Information Centre prior to autumn half term week. 84 were completed and returned. This is a sufficient number to give useful analysis, but is biased by the self-selection procedure and by the time of year of the survey.
4. A sample survey of residents was carried out during February/March 2006, with tick-box questionnaires mailed to a random selection of about 400 addresses. 210 completed replies were analysed.

An interim statement was issued by the group in January 2006, relating to the potential development of Port Royal. This was followed by a report was made to the Annual Town Meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2006. The material was then gathered together to form this document

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## *5. Summary of results*

The key components of the Vision for Sidmouth 2006 can be summarised as follows. A full list of proposed actions is given in section 11.

- A renewed emphasis on preserving Sidmouth's unique heritage.
- Develop a new cultural centre at Port Royal, including a large flexible performance space suitable for a variety of music – chamber and orchestral, jazz, big band – and dance. We foresee weekend music festivals in spring and/or autumn, which would extend the season and bring greater prosperity to the town. We propose the Centre should contain an exhibition space/art gallery, a re-located museum and a restaurant. It should also include the sailing club; and the lifeboat house if a more suitable location cannot be found.
- Enable increased numbers of residents & visitors to access the town, while improving the shopping experience in the town centre, by decreasing the number of motor vehicles. We propose a combination of reduced parking in High St/ Fore St, extended partial pedestrianisation, and introduction of a Park & Ride service from the A3052.
- Improve the environment of the town by carrying out the following:
  - Improve access from Manor Road car park by constructing a bridge to the Connaught Gardens
  - Reduce anti-social behaviour through installation of a centrally monitored CCTV system
  - Improve the provision of public conveniences
  - Restore the SW Coast Path to its cliff top route on Salcombe Hill
  - Extend the Byes footpath and cycleway to Sidford and then to Sidbury
  - Create a focal point feature for Sidmouth (see section 6.7)

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## 6 Topic areas

### 6.1 The Coast

*including the cliffs, sea defences, beaches and the near shore marine zone*

#### **Current situation**

The resort of Sidmouth came into being due to a benign micro-climate and the presence of safe, clean bathing waters adjacent to some of the most beautiful coastal scenery in the country. Our forbears have passed on a high level of protection and public access to these assets, and it is of the highest importance that this protection should continue and be strengthened where necessary.

There are four identifiable beach areas in Sidmouth. The main beach adjacent to the Esplanade is of shingle and pebbles, and slopes fairly steeply. It is a highly mobile beach in rough weather, but is constrained by rock groins. At its western end, the rock islands created for defence of the town have resulted in substantial accumulation of sand. This has now reached the stage where “Clifton Beach” has exposed sand for much of the tidal range which seems to be relatively immune to the removal of sand in storms such as occurs at Jacobs Ladder Beach. Since it is sandy and more gently shelving than the remainder of the main beach, this area is very attractive to young children and should be developed with this in mind. In particular, it is inappropriate to permit powered boats close to shore in this area. On the other hand, it might be desirable to make this part of the beach more easily accessible to pushchairs.

The fishermen keep their boats on the hard at the eastern end of the Esplanade, and use winches to draw them up and down the beach. The sailing club keeps its members boats adjacent to the club house also at the eastern end of the Esplanade, and these are manhandled across the road and down the steep beach on trolleys. Visiting boats are kept in the boat park behind the Ham, and are manhandled in similar fashion from there to the sea. The lifeboat has its boat house next to the sailing club, and a tractor is used to tow the lifeboat to Clifton beach where it is launched from the tractor, which is semi-submersible. A passenger tour boat based at Exmouth makes regular visits in summer to pick up passengers from the main beach. This appears to work well, with gangways enabling passengers to board without stepping in the water. None of the small local boats offer tourist outings for sightseeing or fishing, though this could undoubtedly be done from the beach using similar facilities to those at Beer. However an increasing number of privately owned recreational powered boats are visiting the bay.

#### **Issues raised**

The national trail, the South West Coast Path, is currently diverted from its route along the Salcombe cliffs due to rapid cliff erosion in the area known as Pennington Point. There is also concern that the river and the eastern end of the town might be threatened in a serious storm if such erosion continued. Discussions are understood to be



**Figure 2 Line of the missing footpath on Salcombe Hill**

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continuing with Defra, who have responsibility for coastal defence.

A primary area of public concern relates to health and safety of the beaches. For instance cleanliness of the beach, restriction of seagull numbers, segregation of bathing from water sports, provision of lifeguards and provision of toilets are all areas which have prompted concern recently.

Public support for a pier or jetty at Port Royal was found to be very strong and we noted that the Transport Strategy for East Devon refers to the need to exploit marine transport more. Access to boats at Sidmouth is made difficult by the large tidal range – approaching 4m at springs, and by the remarkable mobility of the beach material which can change the characteristics of a particular beach location from a nearly flat sandy strand to a steeply sloping pebble beach over 2m high within a single tidal cycle, even in summer.

There has been a long history of failed attempts to create a harbour at Sidmouth, and any substantial development can be ruled out as requiring too much land. However, if a suitable engineering solution can be found, perhaps as an extension of one of the existing structures, there is clearly strong support for improving access to coastal pleasure boats in some form. The following commercial respondent's feelings were widely echoed, "...feel strongly that a pier would provide facilities for boats to come into Sidmouth and people to spend money". At the same time, other potential solutions should be considered, e.g. at Beer, mobile walkways are used to give access to conventional fishing boats, while trips to the Pembrokeshire islands are provided by semi-rigid boats, able come close to the beach, and the option of a hovercraft has also been proposed.



**Figures 3/4 Natural beach mobility limits the possibilities for boat access: views from York steps taken just 2 weeks apart**

### **Survey responses**

In the resident survey, a large majority (more than 14-to-1) were in favour of reinstating the coastal footpath on Salcombe Hill. In the visitor survey, rural and coastal walks were given second highest priority.

A large majority (more than 9-to-1) of residents were in favour of a pier or jetty at Port Royal. In the commercial survey, 50% of responses felt that a jetty or quay would improve their business.

The Conversation Cafés showed considerable support for a quay, jetty or pier of some sort, with a straw poll showing 3-to-1 in favour on one occasion.

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## **Our vision**

Preservation of the natural beauty of the coastline, protection of the town from coastal erosion & flooding and public access.

## **Proposed Actions**

- Pursue protection of the cliffs immediately to the east of the river mouth.
- Negotiate reinstatement of the SW Coast Footpath on Salcombe Hill
- Seek improved access for pleasure boats including the possibility of a small pier.

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## **6.2 The Historic Town**

### **Current situation**

Sidmouth is known as a Regency Town, and conservation of the historic areas of the town is essential to its future.

The Esplanade is the town's most important hotel frontage and the attractiveness of The Esplanade and the Sea Front is an essential part of Sidmouth's special character. The character and appearance of this area is specially protected in the Local Plan.

The town centre consists of Fore St, Old Fore St, High St and Church Street, together with the alleys leading off them. This area has buildings of very mixed age, some dating back to medieval times and others built in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. It has the attractiveness of an English market town, quite distinct from its contribution to the overall Regency townscape. Indeed, if it were not a seaside town, Sidmouth's current popularity might well be based on marketing the shopping experience of the country market town, as many others have done successfully. In preserving this, it is important to simultaneously maintain the attractive appearance of the historic architecture, the distinctive market town shopping experience based on unique shops, and the commercial vigour based on profitable trading. These aims create a tension which needs to be maintained in an appropriate balance if the successful continuation of the existing centre is to be assured. The existing policies recognise this, and in particular the shopfronts design guidance (1988) is formally part of the Local Plan as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

There are five conservation areas in the town covering Bickwell Valley, Elysian Fields, Sid Vale, Sidford and the Town Centre.



**Figures 5/6 Sidmouth's main shopping streets: Old Fore St and Fore St.**

### **Issues raised**

Many of the concerns raised by the public relate to preservation of the visual impact of the town centre from inappropriate signage, litter and vandalism.

It was noted that the planning guidance on shop fronts was being flouted by some retailers, to the detriment of all and it was suggested that there was a need for the rules to be enforced.

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The new litter bins with lids on the Esplanade have been very effective in preventing seagulls from spreading refuse around. However, there remain problems in High Street, All Saints Road and Old Fore Street (particularly by takeaway food outlets).

Public security is always an important issue and anti-social behaviour culminating in a fatal stabbing in 2005 made this a high priority issue in the survey responses. The main requests were for more police presence and for improved CCTV. A resident commented: "life...would be improved immeasurably & immediately if police patrolled on foot in town & promenade area". The police have also stated that they believe the lack of a centrally monitored CCTV system in Sidmouth has led to it being targeted by troublemakers and petty criminals.

The problem of excessive traffic and parking in the town centre, and the improvements that could flow from pedestrianisation or a parking ban are dealt with in 6.9.

Availability of public conveniences is of importance in a visitor town, and the withdrawal of support by the district council has been very unpopular. The Town Council is praised for maintaining the present facilities, but there is widespread demand for more: notably at the north end of the shopping area, perhaps in Blackmore View; at the coach drop-off point on the Esplanade, perhaps under the cricket field and at Jacob's Ladder beach, recognizing that some people have difficulty climbing to the cliff top.

The poor state of some council notice boards was noted and it was requested that a higher standard of display should be used and that they should be in more locations.

## **Survey responses**

In the responses to the commercial survey, 36% believed that recent vandalism, in summer 2005, had reduced business, and 38% believed that anti-social behaviour, such as boy racers on the Esplanade, also impacted on their business. More than 54% wanted action taken to reduce the impact of seagulls.

From the residents' survey, a large majority (more than 15-to-1) favoured introduction of an improved CCTV system. Nearly 4-to-1 supported new toilets near the coach drop-off point at the Clifton Beach, and more than 10-to-1 wanted action taken on the seagull nuisance.

The same issues predominated at the conversation cafés and in the responses to open questions, with CCTV raised frequently, together with requests for more police presence in the late evening period.

## **Our vision**

Preservation of the historic town: in particular, keeping the unique shopping experience of the town centre and the tourist accommodation on the Esplanade, Peak Hill and surrounding area.

## **Proposed Actions**

- Pursue funding for a centrally monitored CCTV system covering Sidmouth Town Centre
- Review the policy for dealing with seagulls, to ensure that it deals with all of the issues in a coherent manner, including rubbish bins, roof spikes, no-feeding signs, culling or prevention of reproduction, and education.
- Education on the responsibilities of Streetscene and the role of townspeople in making sure that the town remains clean and attractive.
- Carry out a cost-benefit study of possible additional public conveniences.
- Seek increased town centre police presence in the late evening period.

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## *6.3 The East Ham & Port Royal*

### **Current situation**

The area between Ham Lane and the river is known as the Ham and was historically a marsh through which channels of the Sid drained and over which it regularly flooded. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, part of it was occupied by the gas works. The part fronting the Esplanade is currently occupied by the Sailing Club, Drill Hall, Lifeboat House, Toilets and Esplanade Turning Circle. The drill hall is not used and is in a poor state of repair. None of these buildings is of architectural or historic merit, and their general appearance is a poor backdrop to the eastern end of the Esplanade and a particularly poor entrance to the town for visitors approaching from Salcombe Hill across Alma Bridge. Behind these buildings are the old fishermen's sheds and then the modern swimming pool and information centre complex. The Ham Green lies between the pool and the river and is protected as an area of local landscape importance. It was given in trust for recreational use and provides the only children's play facility in central Sidmouth. A Southern Water effluent pumping facility lies beneath the seaward end of the Green, while the top end is used as a boat park.



**Figure 7/8 Existing buildings at Port Royal**

### **Issues raised**

The area has been identified as ready for development, and the district council is understood to be negotiating the purchase of the drill hall site so as to have public control of the whole.

There is a strong feeling amongst residents, in particular, that the site should be developed as a community facility and not be sold for residential development. Indeed there is a strong feeling that Sidmouth already has an excess of flats.

Both Exmouth and Seaton have approval for the development of visitor centres for the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site. A similar centre is felt to be inappropriate competition, though there is strong support for a high profile public building of a similar scale. However, many visitors coming to Sidmouth will expect to find a more substantial introduction to the Jurassic Coast than can currently be provided in the limited space of the museum.

The Local Plan has identified a need for additional community facilities in Sidmouth. In particular, a large performance space has been identified as a need which could be used as a venue for the Folk Festival, and might enable an Arts Festival and other events requiring large indoor spaces to be introduced.

The site could also provide an opportunity to re-site the museum, which is currently chronically short of space and can only display a very small part of its collections. It might also enable co-location of the library, enabling a



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badly needed extension of the health centre. The Information Centre could also be incorporated, enabling expansion of the swimming pool facilities.

Other ideas for inclusion in the development were:

- art gallery
- aquarium
- wide-screen cinema
- Imax Cinema
- exhibitions on local geology, wildlife/flora, renewable energy, the weather etc
- lecture theatre
- panoramic restaurant
- IT suite
- links to web cameras along the coast
- gift shop
- a winter garden

The design of the new building will be critical. It needs to be a distinctive building of the highest quality, but must fit in with the architectural characteristics of the Esplanade, which have a characteristic ratio of vertical to horizontal scales, both in the overall structure and in the windows. It is different from much modern design, and in particular from long picture windows, which in another setting might be appropriate to capture the views along the coast.

### **Survey responses**

There was general support from residents for a development in East Ham that would provide public amenities. A strong majority favoured inclusion of a café or restaurant (more than 2-to-1 in favour). Substantial majorities (but less than 2-to-1) also favoured creation of a cultural venue and art &/or exhibition gallery with a shop, and additional parking. Moving the existing museum and the Information Centre were evenly split, and there was a majority against moving the library.

At the conversation cafés, there was considerable support for redevelopment of the area with a community facility, though with a significant number registering an objection to any move to close the existing Manor Theatre.

70% of commercial respondents to the questionnaire believed a development of the East Ham to provide more amenities, leisure facilities and parking for both residents and visitors would result in a general improvement of the business economy for all.

The visitor responses placed development of cultural facilities near the bottom of improvements they would like to see. They also placed visits to the theatre, museum etc near the bottom of the list of things to do.

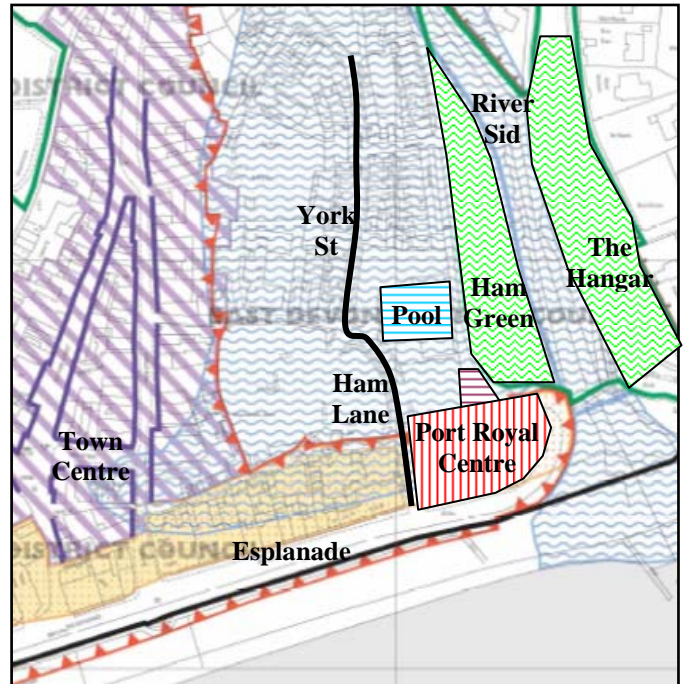
### **Our Vision**

The Vision group concluded that a great majority are in favour of some sort of community development at the Eastern end of Sidmouth in the Port Royal / Ham area. A multi-purpose building or group of linked buildings that can be used for a variety of purposes in all weathers and at all times of the year would be preferred. The space available is about 1800 sq m per floor and with four floors to match the flats opposite, this would give a total floor space of about 7000 sq m. Additional space could be gained by developing below the level of the Esplanade, since the site is a sloping one. However, it may be preferable to reserve this space for parking. Any development must be in keeping with the Regency style of the Sidmouth Esplanade. Some of the potential benefits arise from

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the use to which buildings in other parts of the town could be put if vacated. It is proposed that the Centre might include:

- Performing Space with seating capacity for up to 500 and facilities suitable for orchestras and large bands. We envisage that an effective floor space of 1000 sq m, some of it two storeys deep. It could be used in a revitalised Sidmouth arts festival, as a venue for the Folk Festival, for the Music Society, and for lectures or conferences. The seating should be flexible to accommodate different layouts.
- Exhibition Space with an area of 400 sq m. This could be used for both temporary and permanent exhibitions. An exhibition of historical and current art of East Devon might form a permanent core, perhaps including material from the Museum collection. Exhibitions might include local government plans, touring museum exhibits, local events, art shows etc..
- Restaurant & Bar with an area of 400 sq m., positioned so as to benefit from the view of the sea and cliffs to the East. The bar would support the performing space for pre and post event meals and interval drinks and snacks, so should be easily accessible from that part of the building.
- Library with an area of 400 sq m, slightly larger than the current space. The current library in Blackmore gardens is an excellent facility, though it suffers from lack of parking. However, the adjacent Health Centre needs extra space into which to expand, which could be made available by relocating the library.
- Museum with an area of 400 sq m, slightly larger than the current space, but easier to make good use of. The museum is currently very attractively displayed in Hope Cottage. However, only a very small fraction of its collection is accessible due to space constraints, and Hope Cottage is expensive to maintain. It is proposed that a new museum space be provided in the Port Royal Centre, that the museum's substantial book and pamphlet collection be made available through co-location with the library reading room, that the museum's unique etchings collection be displayed as part of the core collection in the exhibition area, and that other collections be used for temporary displays in the exhibition area.
- Sailing and Sea Angling Club with a floor area of 400 sq m, equivalent to the current space. As well as accommodating club facilities, consideration might also be given to extending the meeting facilities to further support youth activities.
- Information Centre with a floor space of 50 sq m, slightly larger than present. While the Sidmouth Information Centre (SIC) has been very successful in its current accommodation adjacent to the Swimming Pool, it is understood that Pool management would like to make use of the space if it could be vacated. A situation on the Esplanade would provide optimal access for visitors. There is an opportunity to combine the SIC facility with the Box Office for performances, the Museum and Exhibition Entrances, a small Jurassic Coast orientation display, and a shop focussed on local guides and goods related to the functions of the Centre. Such a facility would require a larger floor space of 100 sq m.
- A covered seating and promenade space adjacent to the Esplanade for winter visitors.
- Public toilets, to replace those currently adjacent to the turning circle.



**Figure 9 Map of Eastern Town, showing location of the proposed Port Royal Centre.**

*Background map © EDDC & Crown Copyright*

## *A Vision for Sidmouth*

Such a development would require improvements to access and parking which should dovetail with the proposals in section 6.9. We propose an adjacent tiered car park, possibly with one tier below the current ground level, which would need to cater for at least an additional 100 cars to meet minimum planning requirements for a 500 seat auditorium.

Constraints on the development are the fishermen's sheds and the Ham recreation area, which are held under trust by the Town Council, the swimming pool, and the effluent pumping station. A broad pedestrian promenade between the Centre and the sea wall must be retained. Preservation of the Ham as an open space, including the children's playground, is vital, given the general lack of green space in the eastern part of the town.

Professional studies of the building and access are required prior to any decision to proceed.

### **Proposed Actions**

- Develop the outline proposal for development of a Port Royal Centre into a planning brief for the site.
- Investigate the options for funding the development.

# *A Vision for Sidmouth*

## **6.4 The Built-up area**

### **Current situation**

While it is the historic town centre that attract visitors, the majority of Sidmouth residents live in the remainder of the built-up area. It is, therefore, important that these areas provide a pleasant living environment with access to all required services and amenities. Given the restrictions on development elsewhere in the town, it is inevitable that there will be pressure in these areas. However, given development elsewhere in East Devon, there is no need for substantial growth in Sidmouth housing provision. Indeed, the Local Plan calls for reduced development in East Devon generally except within the new town at Cranbrook.

Victorian developments around the town centre (Eastern Town & Temple Street) consisted of terraces, which are now an attractive part of the townscape, either rendered and painted, mostly in white, or in polychrome brick. 20<sup>th</sup> Century developments were largely of well spaced, often single storey dwellings, which have enabled a park like character to be retained over much of the built-up area. It is important development does not occur at the expense of tourist accommodation in hotels. The Local Plan places specific constraints on non-hotel uses on the Esplanade and in the area to the north west of the town centre, and this vision supports their rigorous enforcement.

Sidmouth lacks specific major employment sites though it does benefit from a number of commercially vibrant smaller sites located around the town. These sites are of importance in meeting the employment needs of the town and its population and are protected from re-use for non-employment purposes under the Employment Policy of the Local Plan.

### **Issues raised**

With the restrictions on further spreading of the urban boundary, recent building has resulted in higher density infilling. While this is acceptable in the right environment, it is important that such higher density development should be focussed around the older centres, where the spacious nature of the surrounding areas will not be compromised and where facilities are within walking distance. A particular concern was raised about Salcombe Hill which, until recently, was protected from high density development in order to preserve an open park-like backdrop to the town. It was suggested that the area should be designated a conservation area in order to protect this visual amenity.

Property values in Sidmouth are high and one implication of this is that young local people who wish to purchase homes in the town are often unable to do so. To meet this and other needs, the District Council acquired land at Woolbrook and it is important that this land is developed to maximise the stock of housing which is suitable for, and available to, local people. The District Council has published a development brief for this area.

Issues raised at the conservation cafés focussed on the need for affordable housing, particularly for local first time buyers and the need to avoid creeping urbanisation.

### **Proposed Actions**

- Review whether the visual amenity of Salcombe Hill justifies special development protection.
- Ensure that available development sites are used for affordable housing wherever possible.
- Oppose infilling where it is inappropriate to the local housing density.

# *A Vision for Sidmouth*

## **6.5 Open Spaces**

*including the river flood plains*

### **Current situation**

The river Sid and its tributaries dominate the scenery of the Sid Vale. The river has been extensively controlled and flooding problems are now very localised. The Byes are a unique and valuable part of Sidmouth's heritage. This is recognised by the Local Plan which places a special designation on the land requiring a specific grant of planning permission for agricultural buildings which would normally be erected as 'permitted development'. In addition the Byes is designated as Land of Local Landscape Importance. The only development permitted in this area is that which will not detract from its amenity, nature conservation and/or recreational value to the town. The Byes provide many recreational benefits. The lower part is publicly owned and maintained as a park with closely mown lawns for recreation, while the next part is owned by the SVA and maintained for biodiversity. Beyond this is privately owned farmland.

Other areas designated as of local landscape importance are: The Knapp (north of Peaslands Road and west of the cemetery and allotments); Glen Goyle; the Cricket Field and adjoining land; round the reservoir at Lower Woolbrook; Sid Meadows adjoining the Byes; Blackmore Gardens and the adjacent playing fields; the Ham; Sidford playing fields; the open land at Stowford Rise; and the Connaught Gardens, which are protected as a County Wildlife Site.

The town's open spaces are an important component of its image as a healthy place to live in and to visit, particularly given the restricted space available on the sea front.

### **Issues raised**

Many of the concerns raised by the public relate to litter and vandalism in these areas.

In the newer areas of the town, opportunities should be sought for additional open space, especially where development is being undertaken. Enhancement of the Ham and the river side as a green area in East Town should be a key component of any Port Royal redevelopment.

Flood prevention works carried out in the 1970s on the lower part of the river Sid have produced a typical urban watercourse, which is scenically unattractive and poor in biodiversity. Modern guidance is to retain a more natural state if possible. A particular concern was the exclusion of sea trout from the river by the high weir at Waterloo



**Figure 10 The River Sid below the ford**

bridge, and the desirability of extending the Ham riverside path northwards to the end of Riverside Road.

Extension of the foot and cycleways through the Byes are raised as issues in 6.10.

# *A Vision for Sidmouth*

## **Proposed Actions**

- Develop, with other stakeholders, an integrated plan for management of the Sid and its flood plain from Cotford to Port Royal, with the aim of improving both biodiversity and public recreation.
- Maintain the current high level of protection of the Byes and seek to extend such protection northwards to Sidbury.
- Discuss options for improving fish access to the Sid with the EA and the River Otter Association, which has had some success in this area.
- The Vision group favoured a management policy which highlighted comprehensive management as a wildlife corridor, with especial attention to biodiversity, both in the river itself and along the margins.

# *A Vision for Sidmouth*

## *6.6 Shopping*

### **Current situation**

Sidmouth town centre offers a wide choice of goods and services to the town and surrounding areas. The centre's retail function is twofold serving the daily and specialist convenience shopping needs of the locally resident population and also tourist and specialist comparison shopping needs. Supermarkets are situated at the northern end of the High Street, in Lower Woolbrook, and at Stowford Rise. There are neighbourhood shopping facilities in Temple Street, at Lower Woolbrook, in Sidford High St, and in Sidbury.

### **Issues raised**

There is a need to balance tourist and resident needs, preservation and commercial profitability. The role of the neighbourhood facilities is more specifically to serve local residents. Given that nearly a quarter of households in Sidmouth are without a car, it is particularly important that the daily shopping requirements of local people continue to be provided locally.

A theme of both the conversation cafés and the surveys was to retain the current distinctive shopping experience by encouraging more independent shops and excluding chain stores such as Tesco and estate agents.

On the other hand, opinions from some young people were that they would like to see more of the chain clothes stores in the town, which they currently have to go to Exeter to find.

There was some support in the conversation cafés and in the commerce survey for a farmers' market in Sidmouth.

One response from the visitor survey asked for a larger indoor market, and another from the commerce survey requested a reduction in the number of charity shops. A commercial view was that a visit to Sidmouth should be made a "shopping experience".

### **Survey Responses**

There were no specific questions on shopping in the surveys, but 33 unsolicited visitor responses (about 40% of all responses) requested "keep things as they are". A straw poll at one of the conversation cafés agreed with this view with 50% of the ten people present wishing to keep the town's shops unique.

### **Our Vision**

A shopping centre that provides good choice and value to residents and a distinctive shopping experience that is an attraction to visitors.



**Figure 11 Fields – part of the Sidmouth shopping experience**

# *A Vision for Sidmouth*

## **6.7 Tourism**

### **Current situation**

Large numbers of tourists visit Sidmouth each year staying in the numerous hotels, bed and breakfast accommodation and on camping sites. A Principal Holiday Accommodation area is defined on the Proposals Map of the Local Plan covering the Esplanade, the eastern end of Peak Hill Road and an area to the north where retention and development of hotel accommodation will be encouraged. The most recent statistics available (from Tourism Trends in Devon) show 1660 bed spaces in Sidmouth in 2003; 2690 if holiday flats and caravan parks are included.

One of the principal concerns that led to initiation of the Vision process was that the World Heritage Site designation of the Jurassic Coast would result in a substantial new influx of tourists for which Sidmouth was not ready. Initial indications are that any impact has been modest so far and within the capacity of the town. Nevertheless, there is evidence of recent changes in the visitor profile, with increased visits out of summer, particularly from the hinterland of Devon and neighbouring counties. This can be expected to increase as Exeter grows and when Cranbrook is built.

### **Issues raised**

Survey responses raised several issues in response to the open questions. The most frequent was that the unique nature of Sidmouth should not be changed. In the responses to the commerce survey, there were requests for additional festival weeks to extend the season (e.g. Early Spring, Jazz, Blues, etc.) and for increased funding on promotion. Linking with results from the Youth Survey in the next section, it was suggested that a temporary open air synthetic ice rink might form an attractive focus for a winter festival on the Ham. The cost of such a rink would be about £2,000 per day. There was also a strong feeling that business would be supported by increasing the number of visitors, and particularly by development at Port Royal and/or a pier or jetty.

Other ideas suggested by visitors included beach entertainment, light entertainment, pitch & putt, ten pin bowling, a better theatre, bingo, reopening of the toy museum in Fields, afternoon concerts in the Connaught Gardens. One reply favoured a visitor tax, while another felt that car park charges were too high. A lengthy response suggested that the number of visitors should be reduced to avoid the pressure of numbers spoiling Sidmouth. Several responses asked for a stop to the trend for hotels being turned into flats. This mirrors the concern in the Local Plan. The Esplanade and the area to the northwest are zoned for hotel use, and the Local Plan places specific constraints on changes of use in this area.

Many towns have a specific focal point that can be used as a selling point. There is a feeling that Sidmouth lacks such a focal point and that one should be created, perhaps as part of the Port Royal development.

### **Survey responses**

In response to the visitor survey, the improvements most frequently identified as top priority were more parking and provision of a park and ride facility. These are dealt with in 6.8. The relative unimportance of visitor facilities may have been related to the good weather at the time.

68% of responders to the Commerce survey believed that attracting more visitors would be good for business. A large number also believed that business would be supported by new facilities such as a Port Royal Centre, additional events such as festivals, and more advertising.

### **Proposed Actions**

- Consider options for additional events, such as a winter festival, perhaps incorporating a temporary ice rink.
- Consider options for a focal point in Sidmouth



# *A Vision for Sidmouth*

## *6.8 Recreation, Community & Youth Facilities*

### **Current situation**

The town has a purpose built sports centre and swimming pool, a theatre and cinema. It has an overall under supply of formal recreation land and the need for a neighbourhood community centre has been identified on the new residential area at Woolbrook. There are many thriving sports clubs. The available open spaces are used for ball games and there is a skateboard park at Woolbrook. In the evenings, Sidmouth has a night club and the Acoustic Café promotes young talent. A wide range of evening activities is offered at the College, at Church House and in many activity-specific organisations around the town.

### **Issues raised**

The issue of youth facilities was seen as important by many respondents to the questionnaires and in the discussions at the Conversation Cafés. This response was reinforced by an outbreak of anti-social behaviour by a few young people at the time. Discussions with leaders of Manstone Youth Club suggested that this minority were more in need of home support than of specific facilities, though there was a need for provision of a suitable meeting place.

Church House is in a poor state of repair and requires nearly £1M to refurbish. The loss of this facility would be a very serious loss for Sidmouth, given the general shortage of community facilities. The trustees had succeeded in raising £665,000 by the end of September 2006, including a grant for half the amount from the Heritage Lottery Fund. They also have the promise of a loan of £200,000 from EDDC. It is hoped that the remaining fund raising can be completed in time for work to start in the summer of 2007.

Sidmouth has a shortfall of community recreation facilities, particularly in the newly developed parts of Woolbrook. The need for additional community facilities at Port Royal has been dealt with in 6.3.

Access to recreational facilities was raised as a major issue in the Youth Survey, particularly for those living in the rural villages away from Sidmouth.

### **Survey responses**

Results of the EDDC East Devon Youth Survey, carried out in September 2005, indicate that the activities favoured by young people in Sidmouth are generally well provided for. The leading requests for additional facilities were: an ice skating rink, requested by about 40 (just under 6%) of the 700 who responded. Next came trampolining and football, requested by about 5%, and then cycling and “a place to hang out” by about 25 (4%).

There was a 2-to-1 response against developing a 10-pin bowling facility or an ice rink in the residents’ survey.

### **Our vision**

That residents and visitors of Sidmouth should have available a wide range of facilities to develop and refresh their physical, mental and spiritual well being.

### **Proposed Actions**

- Pursue the need for a meeting place for young people with social services, existing young people’s organisations and representatives of the young people themselves.
- Support the refurbishment of Church House and its continued provision of community facilities.
- Seek provision of additional recreation land, especially in areas of new development.
- Proceed with development of a new community centre in the new development at Woolbrook.

# *A Vision for Sidmouth*

## *6.9 Transport and Parking*

### **Current situation**

Sidmouth is served by the A3052 coast road from Exeter to Lyme Regis and the A375 from Sidmouth to Honiton. The former gives access to the regional shopping and employment centre at Exeter, to Exeter airport, to the M5 and major roads to all parts of the UK, and to the main railway stations at Exeter which provide links to London and all parts of the country. The A375 gives access to the Waterloo to Exeter railway line and to the A30/A303/M3 trunk road to London at Honiton. In addition to the A375, there are three routes from the A3052 into central Sidmouth: the B3176 from the Bowd, and minor roads through Woolbrook and Fortescue. Public transport runs from the bus terminus at the Three Cornered Plot (Sidmouth Triangle). During the day, hourly bus services run to Seaton and Honiton and half hourly services to Exeter. The Exeter service is heavily used. An hourly service also runs to Budleigh Salterton and Exmouth. A limited stop coastal bus service provides links eastward to Weymouth, Poole and Bournemouth from stops on the A3052. A town minibus shuttle provides access from the Manor Road car park and, at weekends, the Knowle car park, to the Esplanade during summer. In 2006, a second minibus has been introduced to provide links to Salcombe Hill and Peak Hill.

The roads linking Sidmouth to the A3052 are generally narrow with insufficient clearance in several places to enable lorries and buses to pass safely. Buses and coaches are routed to the sea-front via All Saints Road and Station Road. Fore St, Old Fore St Church St and the lower part of High St are restricted to one-way traffic. Old Fore St is partially pedestrianised.

The main car parking facilities are at Manor Road car park to the west of the town and in the Ham car parks to the east. Access to the latter is either via Fore St and the Esplanade or through the narrow residential streets of East Town. The Knowle car park is made available to the public at weekends. In summer it is linked to the sea-front by the minibus, and at other times it is advertised as a Park & Walk facility.

Proposals for upgraded road links in Sidmouth have been considered on many occasions over a long period and have all been dropped.

### **Issues raised**

As a visitor resort, transport access to Sidmouth is of particular importance. Traffic is a significant concern to many townspeople. The Local Plan identifies a shortfall in car parking provision in Sidmouth given the scale of use of the town centre particularly during the holiday season. A parking study of the town centre was completed in January 2000. Measures have been taken to make better use of existing public car parks in the town and the District Council, in conjunction with partner bodies is seeking to identify potential sites for the provision of additional parking to serve the town and include future park and ride.

The free flow of traffic is hampered by narrow stretches where large vehicles cannot pass. Many of these are caused by on-street waiting, much of it illegal. Fore St is frequently blocked by parked cars - when badly parked they can block delivery vehicles. Parking also causes hold-ups in the High St and in All Saints Road. Improvements could be achieved by enforcement of parking restrictions and by reducing permitted on-street parking. This was strongly supported by residents. However, the gains will be very limited if the result is to encourage more cars to drive into the centre.

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Pavements in the town centre are narrow and dangerous, especially with the increased use of mobility aids and electric wheelchairs. This is a particular problem in Fore St. The Market Square, Church St and the lower part of Old Fore St are perceived to be pedestrian areas, and the use of them by cars, sometimes travelling at substantial speed, makes for a dangerous mix. Vehicles need to be either excluded altogether in the main part of the day, or at least a much lower speed limit imposed. If closed to vehicles, the Market Square and surrounding streets could be used much more imaginatively to improve the shopping experience. There was strong support from residents for limited pedestrianisation of the town centre. Some traders were also in favour, including the following: “Pedestrianisation ... would allow ... extra [restaurant] seating on pavements & small stalls / shop displays ... a more continental feel & bring back the idea of a traditional market town.”

Additional car parking was strongly called for by commercial responders and by visitors, a typical commercial responder commenting, “parking, parking & more parking”, though one resident commented “38 years ago parking was considered a problem but it has not kept back the development of Sidmouth...”. A low cost, temporary solution that was suggested was to grass-crete the Ham, providing space for between 150 to 200 cars. However, this was strongly opposed by residents. An expanded Manor road car park, with a second tier, would cope with most of the town’s

requirements for car parking and direct cars away from the town centre. To encourage use, it would need to be cheap and combined with a footbridge to Connaught Gardens and a frequent minibus link to the town centre. Building the main car park here would cause some problems with access but some sort of one-way system could probably solve this. Another possible option would be to locate a car park under the cricket field. This would have the advantage of close proximity to the centre but there would be substantial problems building here. Again there would be access problems. Another suggested location for a new car park was at the Knowle. The existing car parks at Ham East and West were considered in 6.3 in regard to development of Port Royal.



**Figure 11** The Market Square – cars pushing their way through shoppers

There was strong support from residents and visitors for a Park & Ride scheme to address both the parking and traffic flow problems. It would need to be fully signed and with a good, cheap, frequent bus service. The existing summer minibus shuttle was also very strongly supported. Most thought that a seasonal Park & Ride service would be sufficient. One trader’s response was, “Seasonal park & ride works in Dartmouth, Lyme Regis...”.

Issues relating to public transport were raised, especially in the youth survey. The Waterloo railway line is planned to be upgraded so that the current 2-hourly service can be increased to hourly. This will potentially improve the connection to London. However, in order to gain full benefit, it is necessary for the bus link from Sidmouth to Honiton to be upgraded to link with more of the trains, particularly in the early morning and evening, and on Sundays. Currently the first train that can be reached is the 8:40am departure, which reaches London at noon, while the last train connection is the 7:15pm arrival, which left London at 4:25pm. As Exeter airport develops there will also be a need for a public transport link from Sidmouth.

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Industrial traffic to and from the Alexandria Industrial Estate uses the residential Alexandria Road and Pathwhorlands and the latter road is narrow and without footways. An access road from Bulverton Road (B3176) into the estate is needed to relieve these roads of industrial traffic and provide safer access.

Access to the Connaught Gardens from the Manor Road Car Park would be improved by construction of a footbridge. A wooden arched bridge would provide an attractive entrance to Sidmouth from this direction. The deck of the bridge should be smoothly graded and its width adequate for use by wheelchairs. It is understood that plans have been drawn up for such a bridge and costed at £80,000.

Other ideas that have been put forward to ease traffic flow are: -

- Build a relief road over the river from Milford road to the Ham, linking to the Esplanade.
- Widen Station Road at the single track stretch by the Knowle.
- Left turn only into Bedford Lawn car park.
- Pedestrian traffic lights on the Esplanade.
- Restrict Blackmore Drive car park to Emergency vehicles, Doctors and Taxis.
- One way system round the town centre, but with buses and emergency vehicles against the flow in Station Road

### **Survey responses**

Residents (see appendix 3) are strongly in favour of park & ride from the A3052 (more than 4-to-1 in favour) and of banning parking in Fore Street (more than 2-to-1 in favour). They are also strongly in favour of extending the summer shuttle bus to Peak Hill and the Norman Lockyer Observatory (more than 2-to-1 in favour) and of a bridge to the Connaught Gardens (more than 3-to-1 in favour). They are also generally in

favour of a 2 or 3 layer tiered car park, extended pedestrianisation and a pedestrian crossing at the Bedford Hotel. They were strongly against parking on the Ham or Byes (more than 2-to-1) and northward traffic flow in Fore St & High St (nearly 2-to-1). The conversation cafés reflected these concerns with strong support for park & ride, for increased pedestrianisation and for the shuttle minibus. Straw polls showed unanimous support (from 16 present) for Park & Ride and 2-to-1 (from 18) in favour of pedestrianising Fore St at one, and 5-to-1 (from 6) in favour of Park & Ride and 6-to-1 (from 7) in favour of pedestrianising Fore St at another. There was also strong support for the Connaught Gardens bridge (3-to-1 from 16 present), but general opposition to more parking.

The visitor response placed increased parking above park & ride then pedestrianisation as contributors to improving the holiday experience. All of these were given more importance than improvements to town facilities such as the at Port Royal. Individual comments also mentioned banning deliveries during the peak daytime period (10am-4pm), restriction of town centre access to non-polluting vehicles, restoration of the rail link to Exeter, extension of the minibus service to Peak Hill and NLO and introduction of traffic lights at the junction of Radway with Salcombe Road.



**Figure 12 Proposed site of Connaught Gardens footbridge over Peak Road (taken from the car park)**

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The commercial response showed only modest support for Park+Ride, an even split for increased Pedestrianisation, but strong support for increased parking. Individual comments also mentioned widening pavements to allow their use by business (when parking had been moved elsewhere), and better public transport (both to car parks and to neighbouring towns)

The East Devon Youth Survey identified cost as a major issue for young people travelling to leisure activities by public transport. Out of 406 returns that identified problems, more than 20% raised this issue, of whom the majority were female. It also identified lack of public transport for young people in rural areas and more generally in the evenings. In the context of Sidmouth, this would inhibit young people from the surrounding villages from coming into Sidmouth.

### **Our vision**

To enable increased numbers of residents and visitors to access the facilities of the town while improving the environment of the town centre by decreasing the number of motor vehicles. The option preferred by the Vision group would be for a Park & Ride service with a car park near the Bowd on the A3052 and another near Stevens Cross also on the A3052, catching incoming cars from both East and West. However, a single bigger car park on the A3052 at Stowford Rise would be a viable alternative.

### **Proposed Actions**

- Carry out a cost-benefit study for the preferred Park & Ride option
- Ban parking in Fore St
- Introduce partial pedestrianisation of Fore St / Prospect Place/ New Street/ Church St
- Maintain the summer minibuss shuttles
- Support building of the Connaught Gardens to Manor Road car park bridge
- Extend the town centre one way system to the top of High Street
- Seek improvements to the bus link to Honiton at both ends of the day

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## **6.10 Footpaths, Footways & Cycleways**

### **Current situation**

The Sid Vale has an unrivalled network of countryside footpaths which have been preserved by the vigorous efforts of local people, notably through the Sid Vale Association. The SouthWest Coast Path runs along the cliffs providing major walking routes to the east, over Salcombe Hill, and to the west, over Peak Hill. In the north of the valley, the East Devon Way provides a walking route from Sidford, over Fire Beacon Hill to the west and up the Roncombe Valley to the east. The walking routes on Muttersmoor and Bulverton Hill to the west and on Salcombe Hill to the east are of particular importance.

Within the built up area, the Byes footpath is a key walking route, extending from the centre of Sidmouth to Byes Lane in Sidford. A cycleway is also provided at the southern end of the Byes. Other footpaths within the urban area provide links through the Manstone & Woolbrook areas and from the top of the High Street to the Church.

Outside the town centre many of the older roads are narrow and without pavements.

### **Issues raised**

The Byes footpath and cycleway are of considerable value as safe off-road routes connecting different parts of Sidmouth. The northern end of the Byes footpath is unsafe due to recent development in this area, and lack of provision of a path beside the road. A public right of way exists on the east bank of the Sid, which could complete the path to Sidford if a bridge were provided from the back of the Sidford playing fields. Currently there is no safe public path from Sidford to Sidbury. The main road is busy and has no path along it, while Harcombe Lane and Buckley Road are narrow and carry significant numbers of vehicles (see figures). A public footpath linking Sidford to Sidbury is needed, either along the road or following the river. The Byes cycle track extends only to Sid Lane. Cyclists wishing to go further up the valley are forced either to use the busy A375 or the Fortescue Road, both of which are narrow. In practise, many use the Byes footpath, causing danger and inconvenience to pedestrians. A route for a proposed extension of the cycleway to Sidford has been identified.



**Figure 13/14 The currently available walking routes from Sidford to Sidbury: the A375 and Buckley Lane**

There is a general shortage of cycleways in the Sidmouth area and new ones are needed, especially given the narrowness of the roads, making cycling dangerous. In line with the recommendations of the East Devon

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Transport Strategy , the route of the old railway line should be protected from development so that it could be used for a cycleway in future.

There are several roads in Sidmouth which have no pavement or discontinuous pavements. As traffic increases there is an increasing need for improvement to protect pedestrian use. All Saints Road and Station Road are both busy and difficult for pedestrians to cross. Existing footpath provision is discontinuous on both roads. It was suggested that footpaths be provided behind the hedge line from the end of the existing footpath at Cedar Shade to the junction with Station Road, and then up Station Road to Peaslands Road. Other locations identified as needing footpaths were the A3052 and Woolbrook Road at Stowford to provide safe walking access from Stowford to buses and to the supermarket, Waterloo Bridge in Salcombe Road and Millford Road to the footbridge at the ford. Both Bulverton Road and Fortescue Road serve as links between footpaths out of Sidmouth and need improved pedestrian protection.

## **Survey responses**

In the visitor survey, rural and coastal walking came out as the second most important activity selected.

The Local Plan identifies the importance of extending the Byes links to Sidford and Sidbury for both pedestrians and cycles, and of building new footpath links (see Appendix 1)

## **Our vision**

An enhanced network of footpaths and cycleways offering both recreation and safe, convenient alternatives to the car for short journeys around Sidmouth. A through off-road footpath and cycleway from Sidmouth Esplanade to Sidbury.

## **Proposed Actions**

- Extend the Byes footpath to Sidford. A route along the side of the Sidford playing fields to a bridge linking to the existing right of way on the east bank is proposed.
- Create a footpath from Sidford to Sidbury along the river, possibly linking up with the existing right of way from Sidbury to the mill. It is understood that owners of some of the land would be willing to consider such a development.
- Extend the Byes cycleway to Sidford and Sidbury. A route has been identified to Sidford and should be progressed.
- Protect the line of the old railway from development.
- Progressively improve the provision of footways along roads, particularly at Stowford and Waterloo Bridge, as opportunities arise.
- Seek alternatives to walking along busy roads where footpaths are not currently linked.
- See 6.1 for action regarding the coast path.

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## *6.11 The Rural Surroundings*

### **Current situation**

An important feature of the scenery of Sidmouth is the backdrop of green hills all round the Sid Vale. This has been preserved for us through application of strong planning constraints in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which surrounds the town. We reiterate the importance of these restrictions and their application. At the same time, public access to the vale and its surrounding hills has been maintained through an extensive footpath network. Maintenance of access and of the state of the footpaths, remains important, especially with the increasingly “green” outlook of tourists. Muttersmoor and Fire Beacon Hill are important areas of East Devon heathland, being home to rare wildlife, such as the Dartford Warbler. Fire Beacon Hill is a designated Nature Reserve.

### **Issues raised**

Communications masts are a necessary part of modern life, but it was felt that more could be done to make them “blend-in” with their surroundings, particularly those on Salcombe Hill.

Muttersmoor is an important recreation area outside Sidmouth. Suggestions for making it more attractive to visitors and residents included re-creating the Seven Stones Circle, marked on maps, and removed in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and recreating the open vista at Keble’s seat, where he is said to have been inspired to write the hymn “Sun of My Soul”. Prior to growth of the plantation, the Haldon Hills and Dartmoor could be seen from here on a clear day.

Sidbury hill fort is one of the famous iron-age hill forts of East Devon (the other main ones being Hembury Fort, Blackbury Castle and Woodbury Castle). It would be desirable to secure public access to the site.

### **Our vision**

To maintain the undeveloped rural nature of the land outside the current built-up area, and public access to it, while encouraging management practices that support biodiversity.

### **Proposed Actions**

- Investigate improved screening of the Salcombe Hill masts
- Negotiate access to Sidbury Hill Fort
- Negotiate development of the viewpoint at Keble’s Seat



# *A Vision for Sidmouth*

## *6.12 Waste Disposal & Recycling*

### **Current situation**

- Kerbside collections for recycling are fortnightly and include waste paper, newspapers & magazines, cans, clothes, glass bottles and aluminium foil
- Local collection points for these materials are also available at the Ham.
- Sidmouth has a bring site for waste disposal at The Bowd. A wider range of material can be recycled here, including garden waste, batteries, electrical goods.
- EDDC promotes composting of green waste, including the collection service provided by the Otter Rotters.
- The East Devon Sustainability Survey records that East Devon has a recycling rate above the national average

### **Issues raised**

Like all English towns, Sidmouth generates too much waste, most of which currently goes to landfill. In order to support promotion of the town as a “green” destination for visitors, Sidmouth should seek to take a lead in reducing and recycling its waste. Sidmouth has to reduce its landfill waste if it is to become a sustainable community. This is recognised by government policy and cascaded down to the local plan.

Recent changes have improved the situation, in particular with the inclusion of waste paper and aluminium foil in the kerbside collection. These changes were not well advertised, and more should be done to inform the public. Plans to move to a weekly collection and to initiate kerbside collection of plastic bottles are strongly supported.

More could be done to encourage composting of organic waste. An example adopted in other towns has been to offer a free composting bin to residents who will accept a reduced size of wheelie bin for their waste.

An issue related to waste collection that was raised frequently in conversation cafés and questionnaires was the mess created by seagulls opening plastic bags to gain access to organic material inside. We support the recent move to closed bins on the seafront, and would encourage EDDC to extend them to other waste collection sites. We also support the plan of EDDC to move to wheelie bins for household collection and urge them to bring this forward from the currently planned date of 2008. In the interim, we would urge households and businesses that have become regular targets of the seagulls to seek ways of preventing them, for instance by ensuring that organic waste is in closed dustbins, or is taken to closed public bins (the gulls seem to be able to locate which bags have organic waste in them so this may stop them from opening the bags)

We support introduction of regular kerbside recycling collections for plastics and recommend that consideration be given to provision of local facilities for recycling drink cartons and CDs.

### **Survey responses**

Government policy expressed locally through the East Devon Sustainability Strategy requires that recycling rates must be raised to reduce the need for landfill sites and to reduce energy and mineral wastage and greenhouse gas emissions.

### **Proposed Actions**

- Weekly kerbside recycling collection, including plastic bottles
- Centralised collection of CDs and drink cartons
- Increased composting of green waste
- Reduced seagull problems through use of closed bins, including household bins.
- Education of the benefits, including cost, of recycling, composting and reduced energy use.

# *A Vision for Sidmouth*

## *7. The next steps*

The Vision presented in this document is just the start of a process of ensuring that plans for the future of Sidmouth are consistent with the wishes of its residents, businesses and visitors.

The next stage in the process is for a wider consultation to confirm or amend the contents of this document, and in particular to finalise the list of proposed actions, which are summarised in section 11. This will be undertaken through public displays and presentations, with responses gathered by questionnaires.

The Vision will be amended in the light of this consultation and then presented to EDDC as representing the majority view of the people of Sidmouth for adoption into the formal planning framework as supporting guidance.

In parallel with and subsequent to this activity in finalising the Vision report, aspects of the proposals need to be taken up by local champions, willing to put in the effort to bring them to fruition. Some are already well along that road, e.g. Mr. Wedderburn and Mr Shaw are already actively championing the footbridge from Manor Road Car Park to the Connaught Gardens. In some cases, this can be most appropriately undertaken by local organisations, while in others it will be necessary to form new pressure groups to take things forward.

Once the Vision has been adopted by EDDC, it is anticipated that the Vision Group will evolve into a forum for maintaining it and for monitoring progress.

# *A Vision for Sidmouth*

## *8. Acknowledgements*

### **Members of the Vision Group for Sidmouth:**

Mr. Alan Darrant: Vision Group Chair

Rev. Handel Bennett, Mr. Chris Taylor: Vision Group Deputy Chairs

Mr. Jeremy Woodward: Vision Group Secretary

Cllr. Tom Cox and Cllr. Ann Liverton: Vision Group Town Council liaison

Mr. Richard Eley, Mr. Alan Hunt, Mr. Alan Parrish: Chairs of the Port Royal, Environment & Conservation & Traffic and Parking sub-groups, respectively

Mr. Graham Bungay, Dr. Brian Golding, Mr. John Rayson, Mr. Mark Seward, Mr. Ian Skinner, Mr. Kingsley Squire, Mr. Chris Taylor, Mr. Barry Curwen, Mr. Tom Griffiths, Mr. Peter Hand, Prof. Bob Symes, Mr. Peter Whitfield, Mrs. Rosalind Whitfield: Vision Group members.

### **Hosts of the Conversation Cafés:**

Balfour Arms

Dukes

Sidford & Sidbury Flower Show

Conservative Club

Sailing & Sea Angling Club

Old Ship Inn

War Memorial Club

Time Café

### **Others who assisted the process:**

Cllr Stuart Hughes, Town & County Councillor

Paul Wilson, Deputy Local Services Officer, DCC

Karime Hassan, Corporate Director for Planning, EDDC

Sgt Tom Cunningham, Sidmouth Police Station

### **Other sources of information:**

EDDC web site: Material from the East Devon Local Plan; the 2001 Census; the East Devon Transport Strategy; the East Devon Sustainability Strategy; the East Devon Youth Survey

Countryside Agency web site: Material relating to Parish Plans and Town Design Statements

### **Copyright of Photographs**

Frontispiece                      Brian Golding

Figure 1                              Handel Bennett

Figures 2-8 & 10-15      Brian Golding

# *A Vision for Sidmouth*

## *9. Contacts*

Parish Council Chairman: Cllr Mrs A Liverton

Parish Council Clerk: Mrs T M Jarrett

Sid Vale Association: Rev Handel Bennett

East Devon District Council Planning Department: Mr. K. Hassan & Mr. M. Williams

For further information about the Vision please contact: Mr. Alan Darrant (Vision Group Chairman)

# *A Vision for Sidmouth*

## *10. Glossary*

AONB – Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

DCC – Devon County Council

EDDC – East Devon District Council

LDF – Local Development Framework

LP – Local Plan

LTO – Local Transport Plan

P+R – Park and Ride

SPG – Supplementary Planning Guidance

SVA – Sid Vale Association

# *A Vision for Sidmouth*

## *11. Action Plan*

The following specific actions have been identified in the topic sections. Individuals have already indicated that they are prepared to lead the effort to implement particular actions, and it is hoped that individuals and organisations will come forward to lead the remainder.

- Pursue protection of the cliffs immediately to the east of the river mouth.
- Negotiate reinstatement of the SW Coast Footpath on Salcombe Hill
- Seek improved access for pleasure boats including the possibility of a small pier.
  
- Pursue funding for a centrally monitored CCTV system covering Sidmouth Town Centre.
- Review the policy for dealing with seagulls, to ensure that it deals with all of the issues in a coherent manner, including rubbish bins, roof spikes, no-feeding signs, culling or prevention of reproduction, and education.
- Education on the responsibilities of Streetscene and the role of townspeople in making sure that the town remains clean and attractive.
- Carry out a cost-benefit study of possible additional public conveniences.
- Seek increased town centre police presence in the late evening period.
  
- Develop the outline proposal for development of a Port Royal Centre into a planning brief for the site.
- Investigate the options for funding the proposed Port Royal development.
  
- Review whether the visual amenity of Salcombe Hill justifies special development protection.
- Ensure that available development sites are used for affordable housing wherever possible.
- Oppose infilling where it is inappropriate to the local housing density.
  
- Develop, with other stakeholders, an integrated plan for management of the Sid and its flood plain from Cotford to Port Royal, with the aim of improving both biodiversity and public recreation.
- Maintain the current high level of protection of the Byes and seek to extend such protection northwards to Sidbury.
- Discuss options for improving sea fish access to the Sid with the EA and the River Otter Association, which has had some success in this area.
- The Vision group favoured a management policy which highlighted comprehensive management as a wildlife corridor, with especial attention to biodiversity, both in the river itself and along the margins.
  
- Consider options for additional events, such as a winter festival, perhaps incorporating a temporary ice rink.
- Consider options for a focal point in Sidmouth
  
- Pursue the need for a meeting place for young people with social services, existing young people's organisations and representatives of the young people themselves.
- Support the refurbishment of Church House and its continued provision of community facilities.
- Seek provision of additional recreation land, especially in areas of new development.
- Proceed with development of a new community centre in the new development at Woolbrook.
  
- Carry out a cost-benefit study for the preferred Park & Ride option
- Ban parking in Fore St
- Introduce partial pedestrianisation of Fore St / Prospect Place / New Street / Church St
- Maintain the summer minibus shuttles

## *A Vision for Sidmouth*

- Support building of the Connaught Gardens to Manor Road car park bridge
- Extend the town centre one way system to the top of High Street
- Seek improvements to the bus link to Honiton at both ends of the day
  
- Extend the Byes footpath to Sidford. A route along the side of the Sidford playing fields to a bridge linking to the existing right of way on the east bank is proposed.
- Create a footpath from Sidford to Sidbury along the river, possibly linking up with the existing right of way from Sidbury to the mill. It is understood that owners of some of the land would be willing to consider such a development.
- Extend the Byes cycleway to Sidford and Sidbury. A route has been identified to Sidford and should be progressed.
- Protect the line of the old railway from development.
- Progressively improve the provision of footpaths along roads, at the locations identified, as opportunities arise.
- Seek alternatives to walking along busy roads where footpaths are not currently linked.
  
- Investigate improved screening of the Salcombe Hill masts
- Negotiate access to Sidbury Hill Fort
- Negotiate development of the viewpoint at Keble's Seat
  
- Weekly kerbside recycling collection, including plastic bottles
- Centralised collection of CDs and drink cartons
- Increased composting of green waste
- Reduced seagull problems through use of closed bins
- Education of the benefits, including cost, of recycling, composting and reduced energy use.

# *A Vision for Sidmouth*

## *Appendix 1 East Devon Local Plan: Towns of East Devon: Sidmouth*

The following text is extracted from Chapter 13 of the East Devon Local Plan – January 2002, Revised Deposit September 2003, available from the EDDC web site.

### **Overview of Development Potential**

13.94 Sidmouth provides a range of services and facilities to surrounding areas. Over recent years capacity constraints in the sewerage system serving the town have constrained residential development potential in Sidmouth. Following completion of a new sewage treatment works an 'embargo' on residential development was lifted in November 2000. It is envisaged that the lifting of the embargo will allow for further residential development within the built fabric of Sidmouth. However, the tightly defined Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designation, wrapping around the town, acts as a block on outward expansion.

### **Environmental Considerations**

13.95 The Esplanade is the town's most important hotel frontage and the attractiveness of The Esplanade and the Sea Front is an essential part of Sidmouth's special character. Threats to the environment of this area come from advertising (particularly free-standing forecourt displays) and also from seasonal activities requiring temporary structures. The Council will use all available means to maintain and enhance the appearance of the area and will oppose retail uses and other unacceptable activities on The Esplanade and Sea Front.

13.96 There are five conservation areas in the town covering Bickwell Valley, Elysian Fields, Sid Vale, Sidford and the Town Centre.

Policy LSI 1 (Esplanade and Sea Front) Planning permission will not be granted for retail uses and commercial activities which would detract from the character and appearance of the esplanade and sea front.

### **The Byes**

13.97 The wedge of agricultural land and open space along the valley of the Sid, known as the Byes, has a significant amenity, nature conservation and recreational value to the town. Within the Built-up Area Boundary land in the Byes is public open space or owned by the National Trust. The agricultural land outside the Built-up Area Boundary is shown on the Proposals Map as Land of Landscape Importance that should be protected because of its amenity, nature conservation and recreational value. An Article 4 direction has been made in respect of the Byes so that a specific grant of planning permission is required for agricultural buildings which would normally be erected as 'permitted development'. In addition to being protected by Environment Policy in the Plan, Policy LSI 2 applies to the Byes to protect its unspoilt character.

13.98 A section of cycle track has been constructed in The Byes between Sid Park Road and Salcombe Road, and the Council proposes the continuation of this route to Sidford.

Policy LSI 2 (Land at the Byes) Land at the Byes is designated on the Proposals Map as Land of Local Landscape Importance. The only development which will be permitted in this area is that which will not detract from its amenity, nature conservation and/or recreational value to the town.

13.99 There are five smaller areas of land on the west side of the town which are also important amenity areas and are also shown as being of Local Amenity Importance though this designation does not imply that there is public access to these areas. The identified amenity areas are: (i) north of Peaslands Road and west of the cemetery and allotments; (ii) at Glen Road; (iii) at the Cricket Field and adjoining land; (iv) round the reservoir at Lower Woolbrook; (v) at Sid Meadows adjoining the Byes

13.100 Property values in Sidmouth are high and one implication of this is that young local people who wish to purchase homes in the town are often unable to do so. To meet this and other needs, the District Council acquired land at Woolbrook and it is important that this land is developed to maximise the stock of housing which is suitable for, and available to, local people. The District Council has published a development brief for this area.

13.101 The County Council has abandoned the Sidford Relief Road and the previously safeguarded land to the west of the Byes is shown on the Proposals Map as an unallocated site within the Built-up Area Boundary. A number of smaller sites and undeveloped land off Brownlands Road are likely to be developed during the Plan Period.

### **Employment**

13.102 Sidmouth lacks specific major employment sites though it does benefit from a number of commercially vibrant smaller sites located around the town. The town centre, particularly in respect to retail, tourism related work and other service sector work is a major



# *A Vision for Sidmouth*

employment area. The employment sites in the town are regarded as being of particular importance to meeting the employment needs of the town and its population and hence they are protected from re-use for non-employment uses under Employment Policy of the Local Plan.

## **Shopping and the Town Centre**

13.103 Sidmouth town centre offers a wide choice of goods and services. The centre's retail function is twofold serving the daily and specialist convenience shopping needs of the locally resident population and also serves tourist and specialist comparison shopping needs. Two supermarkets are situated in the northern half of the town.

## **Tourism**

13.104 Large numbers of tourists visit Sidmouth each year staying in the numerous hotels, bed and breakfast accommodation and on camping sites. A Principal Holiday Accommodation area is defined on the Proposals Map covering the Esplanade, the eastern end of Peak Hill Road and an area to the north where retention and development of hotel accommodation will be encouraged.

## **Recreation and Community Facilities**

13.105 The town has a purpose built sports centre and swimming pool, a theatre and cinema.

13.106 The town has an overall under supply of formal recreation land. The need for a neighbourhood community centre has been identified on the new residential area at Woolbrook; the proposed location of this facility is shown on the Proposals Map.

Local Proposal LSI 3 (Neighbourhood Community Centre) Land identified on the Proposals Map will be safeguarded for the provision of a neighbourhood community centre at Woolbrook.

## **Transport and Access**

13.107 In 1999 Devon County Council abandoned proposals for the Sidford Relief Road and is proposing to carry out improvements in Sidford to pedestrian safety. As mentioned earlier the District and County Councils support the provision of a cycle track through the Byes and the Local Transport Plan has an objective to provide cycle and pedestrian links from Sidmouth to Sidford and Sidbury.

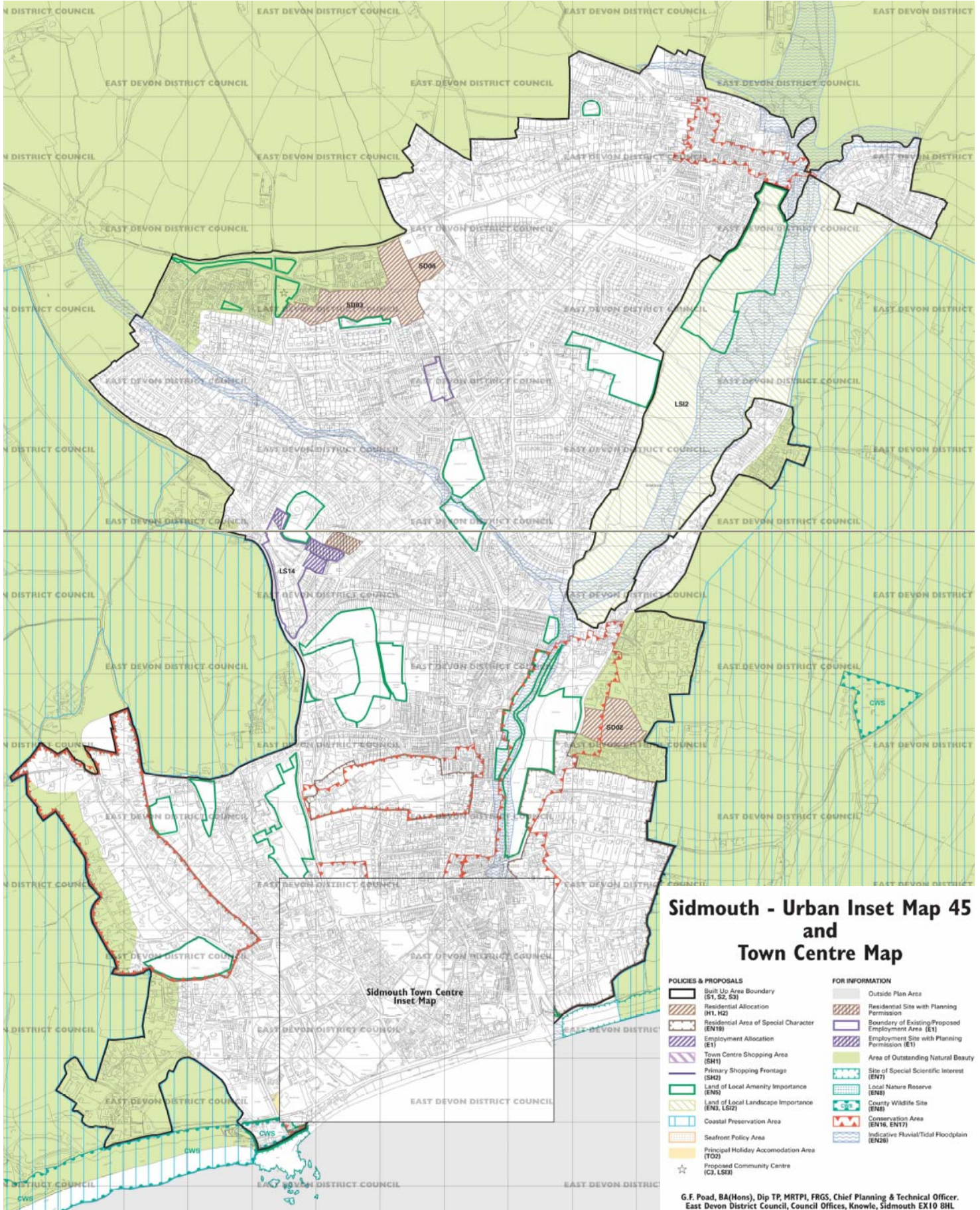
13.108 There is a shortfall in car parking provision in Sidmouth given the scale of use of the town centre particularly during the holiday season. A parking study of the town centre was completed in January 2000. Measures have been taken to make better use of existing public car parks in the town and the District Council, in conjunction with partner bodies is seeking to identify potential sites for the provision of additional parking to serve the town and include future park and ride. There is a 'park and walk scheme' to encourage visitors to the town centre at weekends to leave their cars at the Knowle car park.

13.109 Where possible and/or viable new footway links will be developed in Sidmouth. Developers will be required to link new developments into the footpath network of the town.

13.110 Industrial traffic to and from the Alexandria Industrial Estate uses the residential Alexandria Road and Pathwhorlands and the latter road is narrow and without footways. An access road from Bulverton Road (B3176) into the estate would relieve these roads of industrial traffic and provide a safer access.

Local Proposal LSI 4 (Access to Alexandria Industrial Estate) Proposals which would significantly increase the vehicular use of the substandard Pathwhorlands will not be permitted. Further development of the Alexandria Industrial Estate and adjoining land will require the provision of a new access road to the B3176 Bulverton Road.

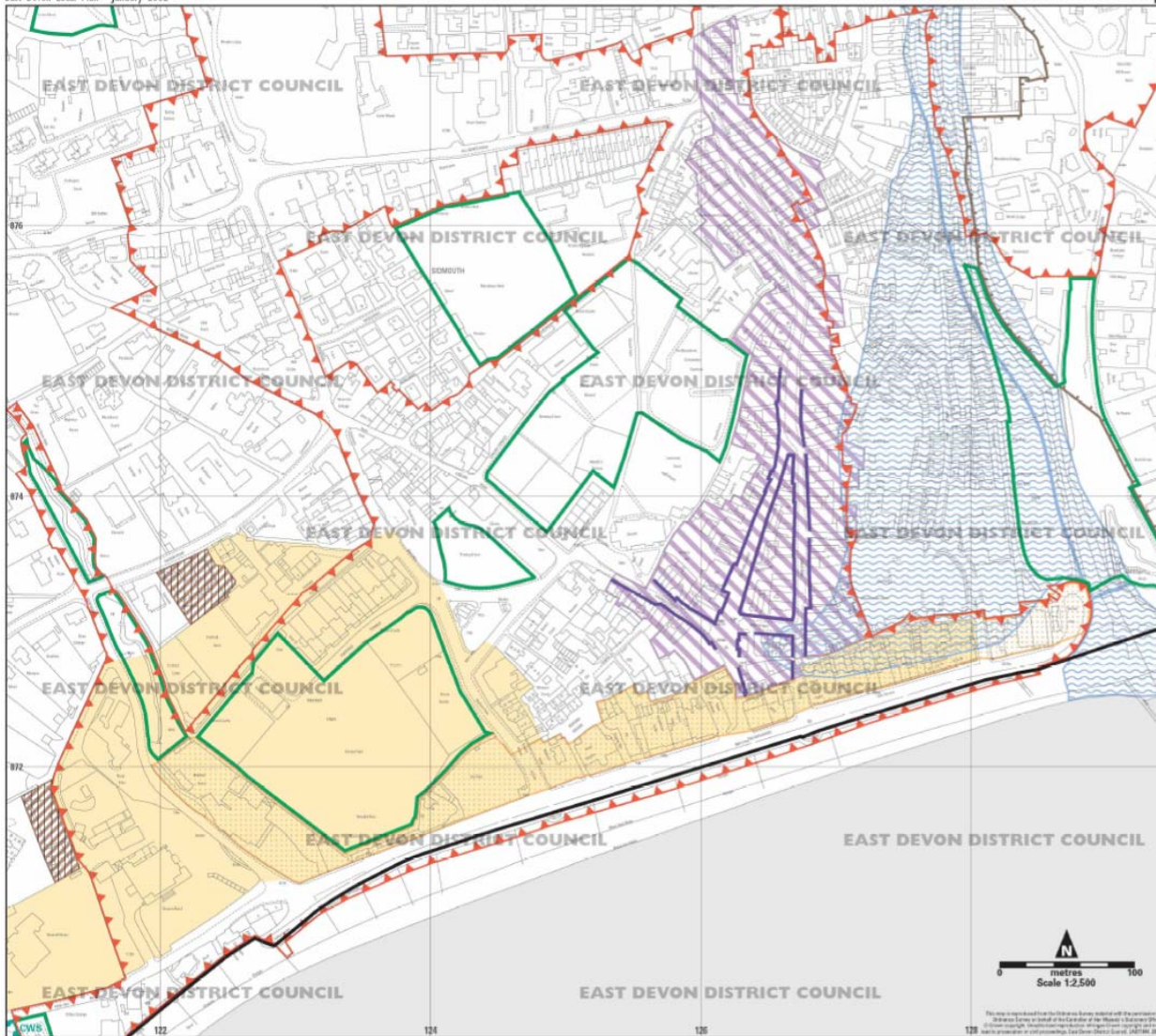
# A Vision for Sidmouth



# A Vision for Sidmouth

East Devon Local Plan - January 2002

Sidmouth Town Centre Inset Map



## Sidmouth - Urban Inset Map 45 and Town Centre Map

### POLICIES & PROPOSALS

- Built Up Area Boundary (S1, S2, S3)
- Residential Allocation (H1, H2)
- Residential Area of Special Character (EN19)
- Employment Allocation (E1)
- Town Centre Shopping Area (SH1)
- Primary Shopping Frontage (SH2)
- Land of Local Amenity Importance (EN5)
- Land of Local Landscape Importance (EN3, LS12)
- Coastal Preservation Area
- Seafront Policy Area
- Principal Holiday Accommodation Area (TO2)
- Proposed Community Centre (C3, LS13)

### FOR INFORMATION

- Outside Plan Area
- Residential Site with Planning Permission
- Boundary of Existing/Proposed Employment Area (E1)
- Employment Site with Planning Permission (E1)
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (EN7)
- Local Nature Reserve (EN8)
- County Wildlife Site (EN8)
- Conservation Area (EN16, EN17)
- Indicative Fluvial/Tidal Floodplain (EN26)

# A Vision for Sidmouth

## Appendix 2: Conversation Cafés & Analysis

Collation from Notes, Informal Surveys and Sidmouth Herald reports

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1) 26<sup>th</sup> July: Balfour Arms [Mr Alan Darrant]

16 attendees

Initially negative, but goodwill at end

Issues:

- Complaints re provision for **Youth**
- 'Nothing happens *out to Sea*'

Herald (29<sup>th</sup> July):

- Need to develop **East Ham**: interest in **jetty, developing Drill Hall**
  - Need to 'engage with' **Youth**; problem of rowdiness
  - **Seagulls**
- 

2) 9<sup>th</sup> Aug: Dukes [Revd Handel Bennett/Mr Kingsley Squire]

25 attendees

Issues:

- Complaints about **rubbish/seagulls**  
[ACTION: Town Council Business Working Party is putting pressure on EDDC; Street Scene cleaned zig-zag/back lane following this Conv Café]
- Mr Brian Swallow: need for **pavement over Sid bridge** and better access for disabled  
[ACTION: Cllr Stuart Hughes will be contacted]
- no demand for **200-seater theatre** (cf: Arts Festival), although new development should replace **East Ham**

Survey:

- 16/16 attendees strongly support **P+R**
- 14/19 support some development at **East Ham** (15/20 for **jetty/pier** and 14/18 for **renovating Drill Hall**); but divided evenly over new **theatre/heritage centre** or replacing **Manor Pavilion**
- 12/18 support **pedestrianization** of Fore St
- 12/16 support **footbridge to Connaught Gdns**
- 11/17 support **one-way system**

Herald (12<sup>th</sup> August):

- Need for more **balanced social mix** (re 'God's waiting room'); need for more **affordable housing/facilities for families**
  - Immediate calls to **clean up** the town/smarten up buildings ('Shabby Sidmouth' comments in press); need for evening rubbish collection
  - **Seagulls**
  - General support for **pedestrianization**; need to restrict lorry deliveries
  - Suggestion to excavate **Bedford Lawn car park**, provide two-storey parking and public plaza roof
  - Fears of '**creeping suburbanisation**' / predisposition for blocks of flats/bungalows
- 

3) 18<sup>th</sup> Aug: Sidford/Sidbury Flower Show [Mr Alan Darrant/Mr John Rayson]

50 attendees as 'captive audience'; split into small groups

Issues:

- **Connaught Garden** ideal for more concerts
- Fears re **Tescos**/Fear of loss of another petrol station
- Compliments on number of quality **restaurants**
- Concerns about sustainability of large number of **churches**
- Opposition from neighbouring towns re **P+R/parking/pedestrianisation**

Notes taken: Immediate calls to clean up the town

- Strong concerns about lack of **Police** at weekends
- Concerns about deterioration in standard of **street cleaning**
- Considerable support for a **heritage centre** on **East Ham**, together with general support for a **concert hall/multi-level car parking** on the East Ham
- Suggestion to make more use of **Connaught Gardens** for concerts/public events
- Support for extending **The Byes footpath** to Sidford/Sidbury
- General support for **P+R/a ban on town-centre parking/pedestrianization** by local people
- Suggestion for multi-storey car **parking**

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(No Herald article for this 'informal' Conv Café, although the Group is being noticed in the press)

---

4) 23<sup>rd</sup> August: Con Club [Mr Alan Darrant/Mr Peter Whitfield]

36 attendees

Notes taken:

- Popular suggestion for **P+R/pedestrianization** of High St
- Considerable concern about the **individual character of the shops**
- Interest in '**an imaginative re-development**' of East Ham, including **pier/jetty** and landing point
- Suggestion re use of **private capital for underground parking** in centre of town
- Considerable criticism of Town Council's veto of **Farmers' Market**

Herald (26<sup>th</sup> August):

- As above
- 

5) 25<sup>th</sup> August: St Francis Flower Show [Mr Ian Skinner/Mr John Rayson]

30 attendees; mature people not looking for changes

Issues:

- **Manor Pavilion/toilets** should stay

Notes taken:

- Concern about lack of activities/facilities for children/**Youth** (eg: special winter garden area; ice rink)
- Concern re traffic on **Station Rd**
- Concern re **toilets** (not enough; closed too early)
- General support for **pedestrianization**
- **Seagulls**

(no Herald article for this 'informal' Conv Café)

---

6) 6<sup>th</sup> September: Sailing Club [Mr Jeremy Woodward/Mr Kingsley Squire]

50 attendees split into 10 small groups; age group not lower than at other Conv Cafés

Issues:

- Mr Tony Golds: addressed wave of vandalism/need to involve **Youth**; plea for premises

Notes made by attendees:

- All groups concerned about **parking/traffic**: 5/10 support **P+R**, but fears of which entrance to town
- Some interest in: '**Dial + Ride**'; use of **private capital for multi-storey parking**; **20m/hr speed limit**; **speed ramps**; **Footbridge** to Connaught Gardens
- Divided evenly over **pedestrianization**, fears re access
- All groups support redeveloping the **East Ham** (**jetty/quay/pier**; but beware of currents)
- Even split over need for a **new centre/keeping Manor Pavilion**
- General concern re **Law&Order/Youth**; calls for more **CCTV**; enthusiastic support for Mr Tony Golds
- Concern for lack of **affordable/social housing**
- General opposition to **Tescos**: 5/10 support for keeping town unique/preserving traditional core which attracts visitors/new residents; suggestion for '**Buy Sidmouth Campaign**'; some support for **Farmers' Market**

Herald (16<sup>th</sup> September):

- Mr Tony Golds: needs help in rehabilitating **Youth**; interest in using former First Aid post as premises
  - Consensus that **Youth** must be consulted: apprenticeships, **affordable housing**, redevelopment projects
  - Concerns re **Law&Order**: suggestion to keep a dated diary log of calls to police
  - Support for **P+R**
  - Opposition to **pedestrianization** from All Saints Rd
  - Call to boycott **Tescos**: fears it would 'clone' the town and 'bleed it of its individuality'
  - Interest in a multi-purpose complex on **East Ham**: not too big, 'to appeal to all facets of the community'; interest in '**some sort of harbour**'/ '**substantial jetty**'; proposal for initial 'tidying up to start with'
  - Reminder of future impact of new town at Broadclyst on Sidmouth: need to identify **P+R** sites
  - Consideration of **self-financing** projects (eg: **NCP car parks**)
- 

7) 20<sup>th</sup> September: Old Ship [Mr Alan Darrant]

10 attendees (7 filled in survey)

Survey:

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- General support for a multi-purpose building on the **East Ham**
  - All in favour of **pier/jetty and slipway**
  - All against replacing **Manor Pavilion**; but open to **new facility on East Ham** if Manor Pavilion is kept
  - 6/7 attendees in favour of **pedestrianization** of Fore St; 4/7 re High St; but many problems foreseen
  - 5/6 in favour of **P+R**; 6/7 support **shuttle bus**
  - Concern re traffic/parking on **Station Rd**
  - General opposition to **more parking in town**
  - Some interest in **Footbridge** to Connaught Gardens
  - **Lido/Sea water swimming pool**
  - Complete updating of whole length of **promenade surface** (hard landscaping: cf Exmouth) well received
  - General concern re **Tescos** and its effect on the 'ambience of the town'
  - Concern re **coach drop-off point**
- 

8) 4<sup>th</sup> October: War Memorial Club [Mr Alan Darrant]

10 attendees (4 filled in survey)

Issues:

- Mr John Govier: Concern that DEFRA would not allow any **jetty** to interfere in present **sea defences**; shallow shore a problem; suggested walkway along sea defence rocks
- General support for **P+R**
- Suggestion to locate **interpretation/heritage centre** at P+R

Survey: General support for:

- Replacing buildings/new **multi-purpose building on East Ham**
  - **Pier/jetty** and slipway
  - **Pedestrianization** of Fore St; but less so for High St
  - **Underground parking** in town; but all against multi-storey parking
  - **P+R: shuttle bus**
  - **Footbridge** to Connaught Gardens
- 

9) 18<sup>th</sup> October: Time Café [Mr Alan Darrant/Rev Handel Bennett]

15 attendees

Herald (28<sup>th</sup> October)

- Shoppers in favour of **pedestrianization**, but traders support **P+R/more central parking**
- Choices for parking = **Ham Green/Knowle/Byes** or **two-storey car park**
- Mr Mike Bennett and Mr Alan Phillips (Lifeboat Secretary): Support for **quay/safe haven for small boats**
- Mr Freddy Wedderburn: Enthusiastic support for **Connaught Gdns footbridge** (est. cost £80k)

# *A Vision for Sidmouth*

## ISSUES RAISED: Frequency

Youth: **11111**

Police: **11**

CCTV: **1**

More balanced social mix: **1**

More affordable housing: **111**

Less creeping urbanisation: **1**

Seafront/East Ham: **11111**

Jetty/pier: **1111111111**

Drill Hall: **11**

Seagulls: **1111**

New Theatre: **11**

Multi-purpose hall: **11111**

Lido/outdoor pool: **1**

Update promenade surface: **1**

Rubbish: **111**

Toilets: **11**

Replacing Manor Pavilion: **1111**

Too much traffic: **111**

Park+Ride: **111111111111**

Dail+Ride: **1**

Pedestrianization: **111111111111**

Town-centre parking: **1111**

One-way System: **1**

Multi/two-storey car parking: **11111**

Underground parking: **11**

Ham Green/Knowle/Byes: **1**

Speed limit/ramps: **1**

Shuttle bus: **1**

Coach drop-off point: **1**

Centre at P+R: **1**

Connaught Gdns for concerts: **111**

Footbridge: **111**

Pavement over Sid Bridge: **1**

Number of Restaurants: **1**

Number of churches: **1**

Extending Byes footpath: **1**

Tescos: **1111**

Concern re individual shops: **11**

Farmers' market: **11**

(Note: This is merely a record of how often issues were raised. There is duplication in this table, as there are double entries from the same date, but from different sources – Issues/Survey/Herald)

# *A Vision for Sidmouth*

## ISSUES RAISED: Strength of feeling

General concern re **Law&Order/Youth**;  
Consensus that **Youth** must be consulted

14/19 support some development at **East Ham** (15/20 for jetty/pier and 14/18 for **renovating Drill Hall**);  
Divided evenly over new **theatre/heritage centre** or replacing **Manor Pavilion**;  
Considerable support for a **heritage centre on East Ham**;  
General support for a **concert hall/multi-level car parking** on the East Ham;  
Interest in '**an imaginative re-development**' of **East Ham**;  
All groups support redeveloping the **East Ham (jetty/quay/pier)**;  
Even split over need for a **new centre/keeping Manor Pavilion**;  
Interest in a multi-purpose complex on **East Ham**;  
General support for a multi-purpose building on the **East Ham**;  
All in favour of **pier/jetty**;  
All against replacing **Manor Pavilion** but open to **new facility on East Ham** if Manor Pavilion is kept;  
General support for replacing buildings/new **multi-purpose building on East Ham**;  
Support for **quay**;

Immediate calls to **clean up** the town

16/16 attendees strongly support **P+R**;  
12/18 support **pedestrianization** of Fore St;  
11/17 support **one-way system**;  
General support for **pedestrianization**;  
General support for **P+R**/a ban on town-centre parking/**pedestrianization** by local people;  
Popular suggestion for **P+R/pedestrianization** of High St;  
General support for **pedestrianization**;  
5/10 support **P+R**;  
Divided evenly over **pedestrianization**, fears re access;  
Support for **P+R**;  
Opposition to **pedestrianization** from All Saints Rd;  
6/7 attendees in favour of **pedestrianization** of Fore St; 4/7 re High St; 5/6 in favour of **P+R**;  
6/7 support **shuttle bus**;  
General opposition to **more parking in town**;  
General support for **P+R**;  
**Pedestrianization** of Fore St; but less so for High St;  
**Underground parking** in town; but all against multi-storey parking;  
Shoppers in favour of **pedestrianization**, but traders support **P+R/more central parking**

12/16 support **footbridge to Connaught Gdns**;  
Enthusiastic support for **Connaught Gdns footbridge**

Considerable concern about the **individual character of the shops**;  
Considerable criticism of Town Council's veto of **Farmers' Market**;  
General opposition to **Tesco**: 5/10 support for keeping town unique;  
General concern re **Tesco** and its effect on the 'ambience of the town'



## Appendix 3: Commerce Survey

**To cherish the heritage of our Regency Resort, and the surrounding coast & countryside,  
To seek to improve amenities and facilities appropriate for Residents and Visitors in the 21st century,  
To encourage a vibrant economy, and  
To commend our vision for the Local Development Framework.**

**You may of course be aware of our aim (above). To assist the work of the Vision Group in obtaining the views of residents, visitors, and the commercial sector, we will value a few minutes of your time, to complete the following Questionnaire. For independent verification we ask you to supply your business name and address, but if you prefer that your business is not identified for commercial reasons, we will apply a code number, which will ensure public anonymity of any disclosure in the questionnaire. The purpose is to try to consult widely in order to find ways of improving Sidmouth to the benefit of all.**

*Please 4 boxes.*

1. Are you happy with the economy of Sidmouth as it is? YES  NO  DON'T KNOW
2. Do your financial returns suggest turnover is Increasing ?  or decreasing?
3. The resident population has increased in the last 5 years.  
Have you noticed an increase in seasonal business as a result of tourism (World Heritage Coast)  
YES  NO  DON'T KNOW
4. Which of the following might be expected to improve your business?

**Pedestrianisation & Parking**  
Questions posed by the Transport  
& Traffic Committee are shown **on**  
**the next sheet.**

- A pier or jetty for pleasure boats.
- Attracting more Visitors to our resort
- Development of the East Ham to provide more  
leisure facilities/parking for Visitors/Residents

### 5. Law & Order.

Have the following had any recent detrimental effect on YOUR business?

- Vandalism  Anti-social behaviour (noise, drunkenness)  Sea-gulls

6. Do you have any suggestion on how the economy of Sidmouth might be stimulated or improved in the next 5-15 years?  
(Attach an additional paper if necessary)

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BUSINESS NAME \_\_\_\_\_ STREET \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person completing the questionnaire \_\_\_\_\_

Are you happy for us to disclose your business name in relation to this Questionnaire? YES  NO

# A Vision for Sidmouth

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain the business community's view on Pedestrianisation of the High Street and Park & Ride.

Pedestrianisation cannot happen without Park & Ride or extra car parking facilities close to the town (it has been suggested grass-crete parking on the Ham or Byes). Full Pedestrianisation will not be possible due to the fact that delivery vehicles will still need access to shops and resident's access to Lake's Court & Leonard's Court and emergency vehicles will still need access to properties. It is envisaged that Park & Ride would entail free unlimited car parking with a frequent low cost bus ride into the town. This it is felt would encourage shoppers to browse around the shops for longer without a time constraint.

Pedestrianisation would be for the entire length of High Street and Fore Street.

Nothing has been decided before consulting the business community. We will be interested in your views as a contribution to a greater *Vision for Sidmouth*.

1. Are you in favour of Pedestrianisation for High St/Fore St Yes  No

2. Would you prefer? a. Park & Ride? Yes  No

b. Extra car parking close to town centre? Yes  No

c. No change at all? Yes  No

3. What effect do you think it will have on your business?

a. Will trade go up or down? Up  Down

b. Will it increase the costs to your business? Yes  No

c. Will trading be made more difficult? Yes  No

d. Do you think it will enhance your business? Yes  No

e. Will it encourage people to shop in Sidmouth? Yes  No

f. Will your staff use park & ride when working? Yes  No

**g. Will people stay in the town longer to enjoy the amenities? Yes  No**

**Business Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Street** \_\_\_\_\_

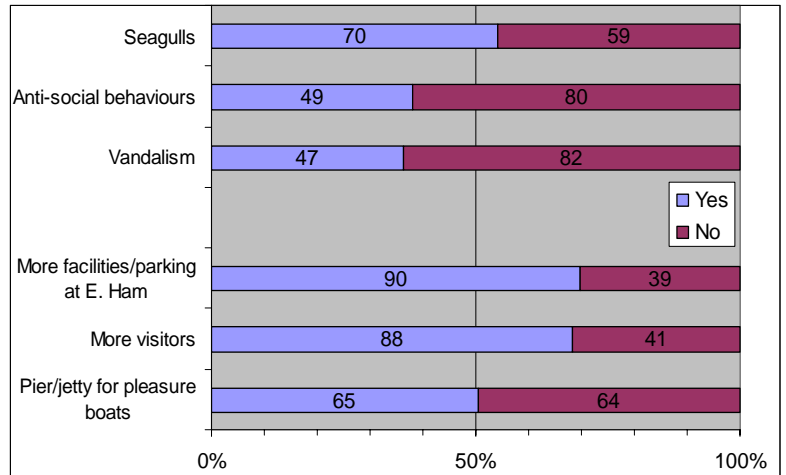
Thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire, we will collect in the next seven days.

# A Vision for Sidmouth

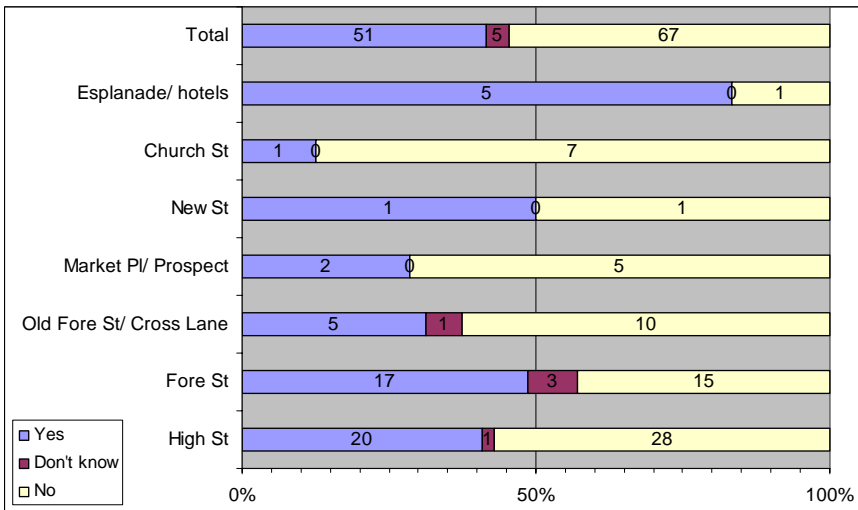
## Responses to Commerce questionnaire

200 questionnaires were delivered to commercial premises from Radway to the Esplanade. 129 responses (64.5%) were returned. This was considered very satisfactory.

The response to the specific general questions, on the first page, is summarised in figure A3.1. Seagulls were perceived to be a greater threat to businesses than vandalism or anti-social behaviour. Businesses believed that increasing the number of visitors would improve business, and that this would be achieved by developing new facilities at Port Royal. However, they were divided on whether a pier or jetty would have this effect.



**Figure A3.1 Percentage responses to questions 4 & 5:**  
**What has recently had a detrimental effect on your business?**  
**What improvements would help your business?**  
 (Numbers of responses are shown in the bars)



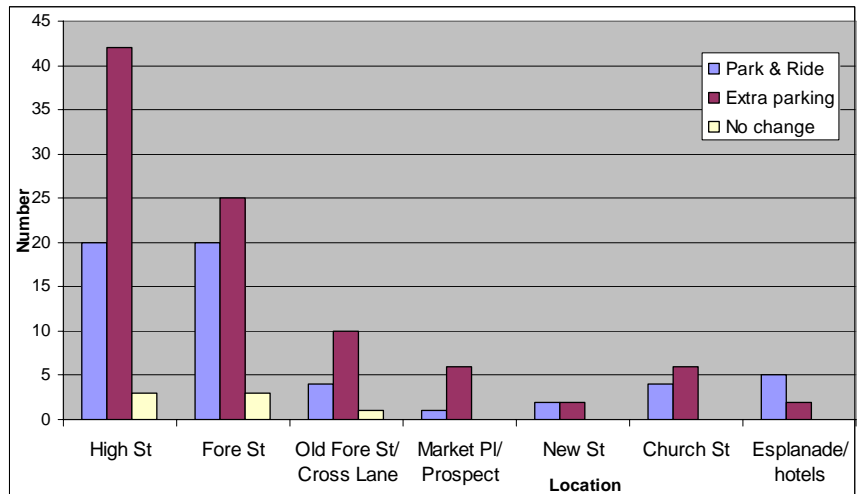
**Figure A3.2 Percentage of respondents in favour of pedestrianisation of High St / Fore St: total & by location.**  
 (Numbers of responses are shown in the bars)

The second part of the Commerce survey was aimed at gauging support for (partial) pedestrianisation of Fore St &/or High St amongst traders. Overall there was a small majority against, but this varied greatly amongst the different streets (figure A3.2).

The survey noted that more parking would be needed if the town centre was pedestrianised, and asked whether responders would prefer park & ride, more town centre parking or neither. The choices were not exclusive. Most wanted more town centre parking, and a substantial number wanted park & ride (figure A3.3). Very few felt that “no change” was an option.

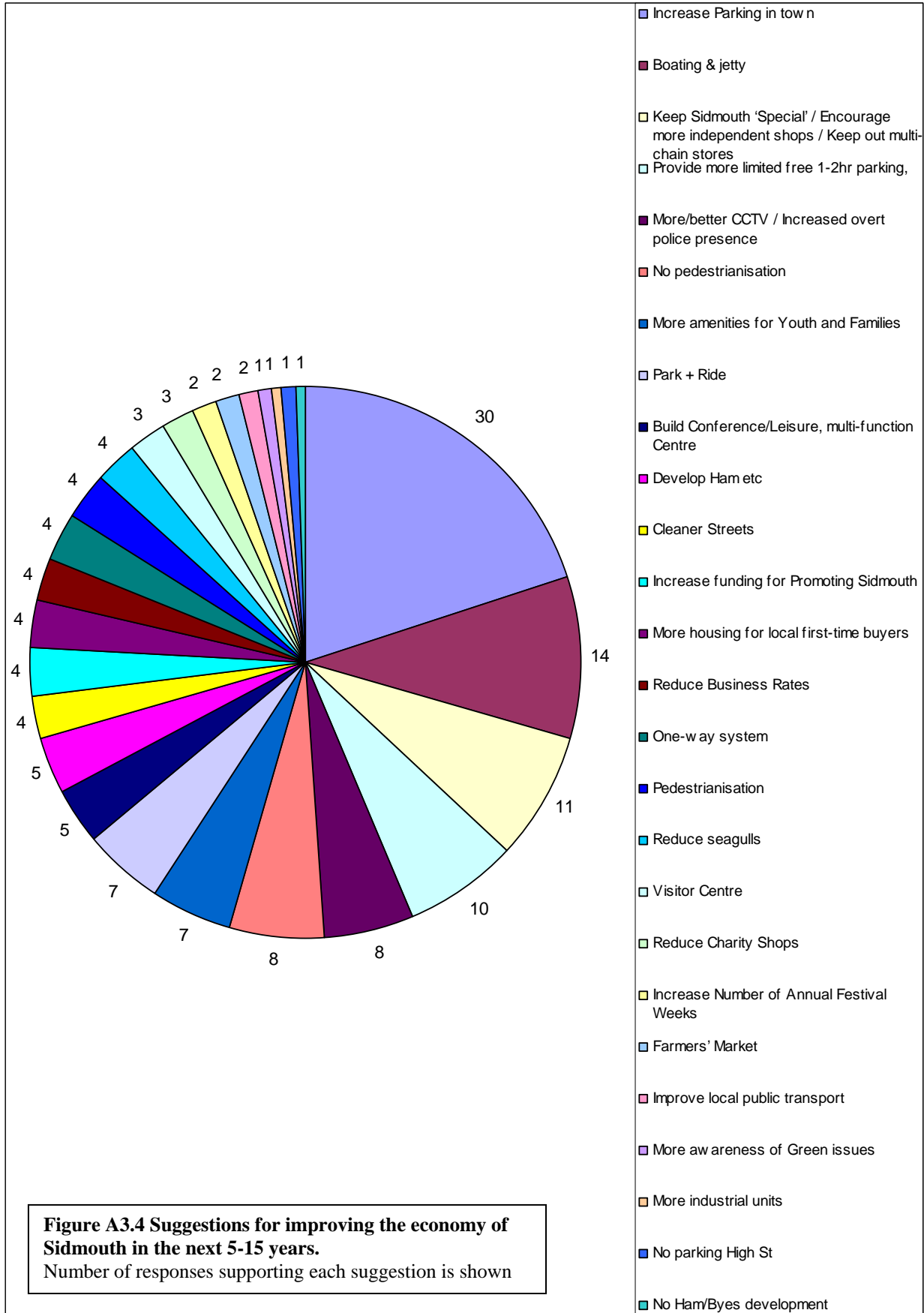
Further questions were asked on the impact, but it was not clear whether responders answered these in response to pedestrianisation or to park & ride / additional town centre parking.

The open question offered the option for opinions to be offered on any other desirable improvements. The pie chart in figure A3.4 summarises these responses.



**Figure A3.3 Numbers of respondents favouring park & ride &/or extra parking, by location.**

# A Vision for Sidmouth



# *A Vision for Sidmouth*

## **Selected quotes from the Commerce survey:**

“...don't take away character of fishing boat area”

“...devise a plan to prevent further cliff erosion...”

“There is a young & thriving community within Sidmouth. More needs to be done to cater for them...family friendly restaurants ...interactive facilities...”

“No pedestrianisation but one way from All Saints to Sea Front...”

“Pedestrianisation ... would allow ... extra [restaurant] seating on pavements & small stalls / shop displays ... a more continental feel & bring back the idea of a traditional market town.”

“Keep the streets cleaner”

“parking, parking & more parking”

“try ‘free’ parking for a few hours”

“... present Sidmouth as an area that is thinking about “environmental issues”

“remain different from other ‘commercial’ resorts”

“Additional parking at northern end of town”

“More housing available for ... first time buyers”

“Pedestrianisation would be a great help”

“I am very strongly against pedestrianisation...”

“A park & ride is the best option...”

“cheaper parking charges”

“publicise what we offer”

“Increase police presence in Sidmouth ... people are being put off coming”

“...feel strongly that a pier would provide facilities for boats to come into Sidmouth and people to spend money”

“Town is overdue a regeneration like Exmouth, Seaton”

“Stop drinking on Prom”

“Reduce business rates”

“pedestrianisation will encourage vandalism”

“provide activities for teenagers”

“promote X53 bus for coastline in town”

“improve cleanliness”

“Need for small (light) industrial units...”

“...a Victorian fair on the seafront?”

“Seasonal park & ride works in Dartmouth, Lyme Regis...”

“Farmers’ market”

“seagull cull – noise/ dirt becoming intolerable Apr-Sep”

“Jurassic Coast visitor centre”

“Old Fore St ... is supposed to be pedestrianised, it has become a car park for all and sundry”; “Increased police presence”

## Appendix 4: Accommodation Survey

To cherish the heritage of our Regency Resort, and the surrounding coast & countryside,  
To seek to improve amenities and facilities appropriate for Residents and Visitors in the 21st century,  
To encourage a vibrant economy, and  
To commend our vision for the Local Development Framework.

You may of course be aware of our aim (above). To assist the work of the Vision Group in obtaining the views of residents, visitors, and the commercial sector, we will value a few minutes of your time, to complete the following Questionnaire. For independent verification we ask you to supply your business name and address, but if you prefer that your business is not identified for commercial reasons, we will apply a code number, which will ensure public anonymity of any disclosure in the questionnaire. The purpose is to try to consult widely in order to find ways of improving Sidmouth to the benefit of all.

*Please 4 boxes.*

1. Are you happy with the economy of Sidmouth as it is? YES  NO  DON'T KNOW   
2. Do your financial returns suggest turnover is increasing ?  or decreasing?

3. Ignoring increases in turnover due to higher prices/inflation, in the last 5 years (2000-05) has your  
(for Hotels, etc.): bed-occupancy rate Increased  Diminished  No significant change   
(Restaurants, cafés): number of customers Increased  Diminished  No significant Change

3. The resident population has increased in the last 5 years.  
Have you noticed an increase in seasonal business YES  NO  DON'T KNOW   
as a result of tourism (World Heritage Coast)

4. Which of the following might be expected to improve to your business?  
(Number in order of importance to you; 1 High; 10 low)

- |                                     |                          |   |                          |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| More Parking spaces in town centre  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Development of the East Ham to provide more       |                          |
| Pedestrianisation of Fore Street    | <input type="checkbox"/> | leisure facilities/parking for Visitors/Residents | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| of part of High Street              | <input type="checkbox"/> | Adding tiers to Manor Road Car Park               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| of the whole of High Street         | <input type="checkbox"/> | Out of town Park & Ride service                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Attract more Visitors to our resort | <input type="checkbox"/> | A pier or jetty for pleasure boats                | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. Law & Order.  
Have the following had any recent detrimental effect on YOUR business?  
Vandalism  Anti-social behaviour (noise, drunkenness)  Sea-gulls

6. Do you have any suggestion on how the economy of Sidmouth might be stimulated or improved in the next 5-15 years?  
(Attach an additional paper if necessary)

BUSINESS NAME \_\_\_\_\_ STREET \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person completing the questionnaire \_\_\_\_\_

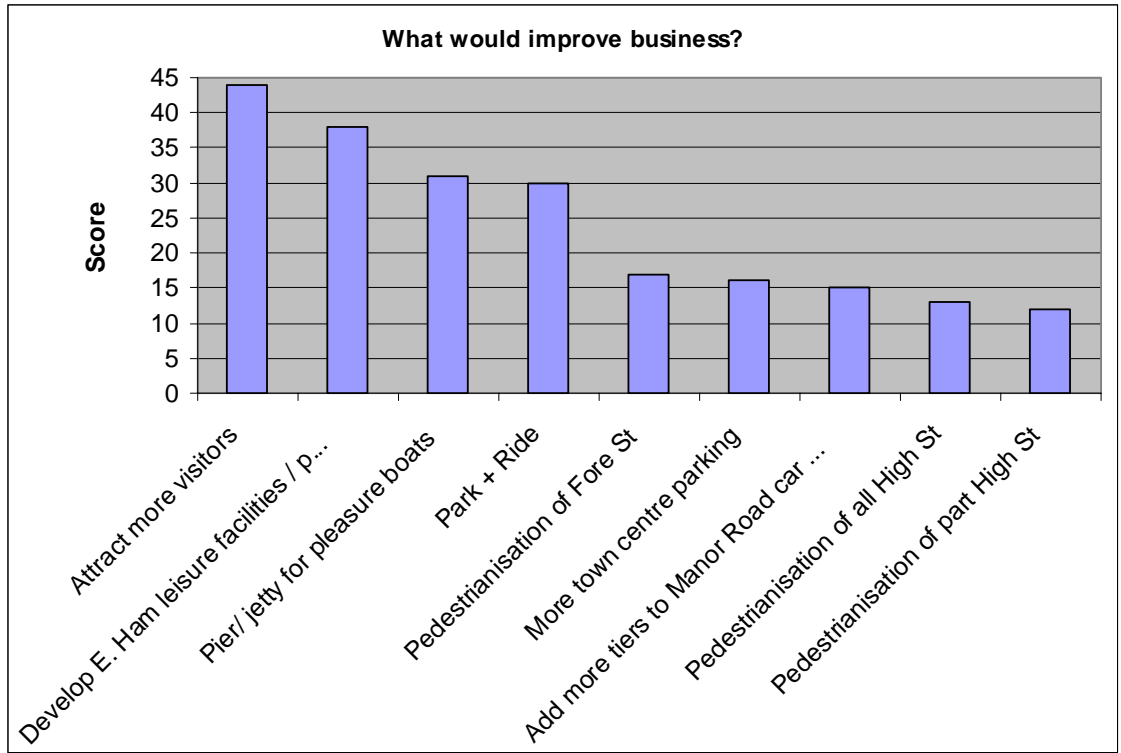
Are you happy for us to disclose your business name in relation to this Questionnaire? YES  NO

# A Vision for Sidmouth

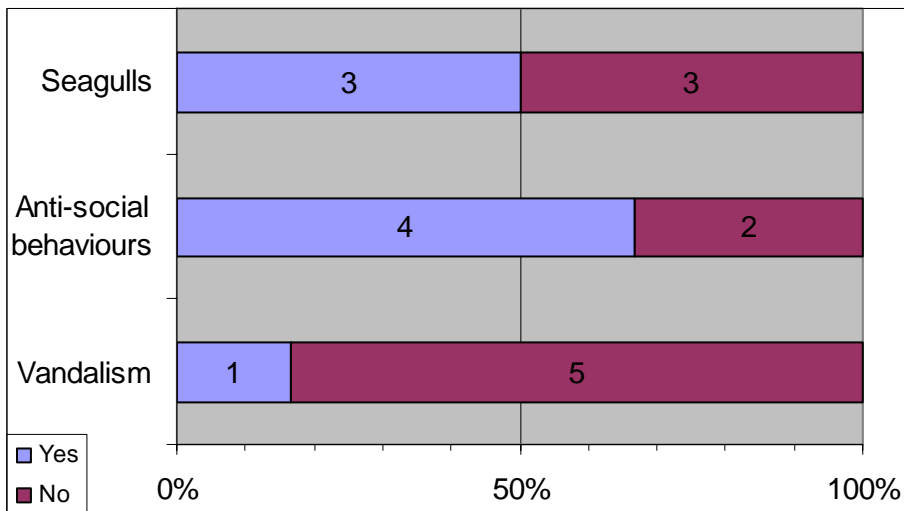
## Responses to the Accommodation Survey

Forty nine questionnaires were sent to members of the Hospitality Association by e-mail. The response was very poor, with only 7 returned forms. The responses are summarised below, but the small number means that they cannot be taken as indicative of overall opinion.

In this survey, recipients were asked to rank options for improving business. Scoring the options from 9 down to 0 gives the total scores for each option shown in figure A4.1.



**Figure A4.1** Scored responses to question 4: which of the following might improve your business: in priority order from 1 to 10.



Respondents showed considerable concern about the impact of seagulls and anti-social behaviour on their business, though only one response cited vandalism as a problem. Results are shown in figure A3.2.

**Figure A4.2** Percentage responses to question 5: What has recently had a detrimental effect on your business? (Numbers of responses are shown in the bars)

# A Vision for Sidmouth

## Appendix 5: Visitor Survey

To cherish the heritage of our Regency Resort, and the surrounding coast & countryside,  
To seek to improve amenities and facilities appropriate for Residents and Visitors in the 21st century,  
To encourage a vibrant economy, and  
To commend our vision for the Local Development Framework.

As a Visitor to Sidmouth, we are pleased you chose our resort in which to spend a few days. Our Group wishes to make Sidmouth even more attractive to Visitors, but without destroying its charm in the process. We ask for but a few minutes of your time, to complete the following Questionnaire. For independent verification we ask you to supply your name and address, but if you prefer that you are not identified, we will apply a code number, which will ensure public anonymity of any disclosures in the questionnaire. The purpose is to try to consult widely in order to find ways of improving Sidmouth to the benefit of all.

*Please 4 boxes.*

1. What influenced your choice to choose Sidmouth for your holiday?

Advertising  Recommendation from a friend/family  Visited before

2. Were you happy with Sidmouth as a resort? Yes  No  Room For Improvement

3. In what ways could Sidmouth be changed to provide you with a better holiday?

*(Number in order of importance to you 1 = High; 8 = low)*

More Parking spaces in town centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pedestrianisation of Fore Street	<input type="checkbox"/>	Development of the East Ham to provide more
of part of High Street	<input type="checkbox"/>	leisure facilities/parking for Visitors/Residents
the whole of High Street	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adding tiers to Manor Road Car Park
A pier or jetty for pleasure boats	<input type="checkbox"/>	Out of town Park & Ride service

5. Law & Order.

Have the following had any detrimental effect on YOUR holiday?

Vandalism  Anti-social behaviour (noise, drunkenness)  Sea-gulls

6. Please indicate in order of preference (1=highest) the leisure activities you most appreciated:

Floral decorations/Gardens  Rural/Coastal Walks  Golf Course  Swimming Pool   
Beach  Shopping  Tennis  Bowls  Museum  Theatre  Cinema

7. If it had been provided, what additional facility would you have liked to use? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Do you have any suggestion on how the resort of Sidmouth might be improved in the next 5-15 years? (*Attach an additional paper if necessary*)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Are you happy for us to disclose your name in relation to this Questionnaire? YES  NO



# A Vision for Sidmouth

## Responses to the Visitor Survey

About 725 sheets were distributed to Hotels, Guest Houses, caravan sites and the Tourist Information Centre prior to the autumn Half Term Holiday week. Visitors were not compelled to complete them. Understandably, it is not therefore possible to say what percentage were completed. We received 84 Questionnaire responses, which are considered an adequate sample.

From the responses, it is clear that many visitors have been returning here for a number of years (up to 45 years) because Sidmouth has not succumbed to the sort of changes brought in by other more 'modern' resorts.

Responses to the question to place in preference order a set of options for improving holidays in Sidmouth are represented in figure A5.1 by scoring on a scale of 0-7 according to the order of preference. There was significant support for all options except adding tiers to the Manor Road car park. The greatest interest was in the options that dealt with traffic and parking, with the highest score going to the proposal to pedestrianise Fore St, and the second highest going to additional town centre car parking.

Contrary to the Commerce survey, few visitors (about 14%) perceived that seagulls or anti-social behaviour had spoiled their holiday, and only one identified vandalism as a concern. The responses are shown in figure A5.2.

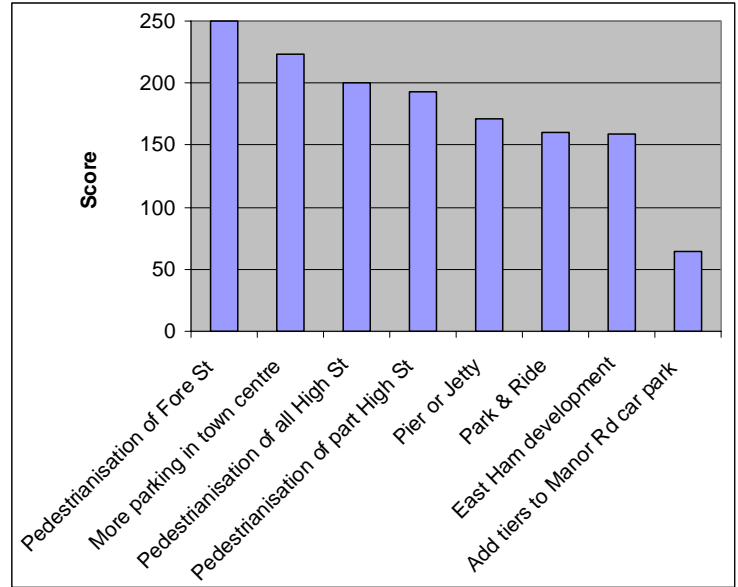


Figure A5.1 Scored responses to question 3: which of the following would improve your holiday: in priority order from 1 to 8

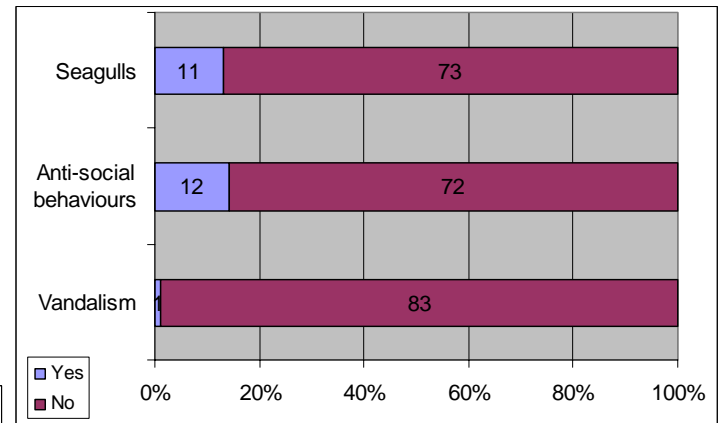


Figure A5.2 Percentage responses to question 5: Have the following had a detrimental effect on your holiday? (Numbers of responses are shown in the bars)

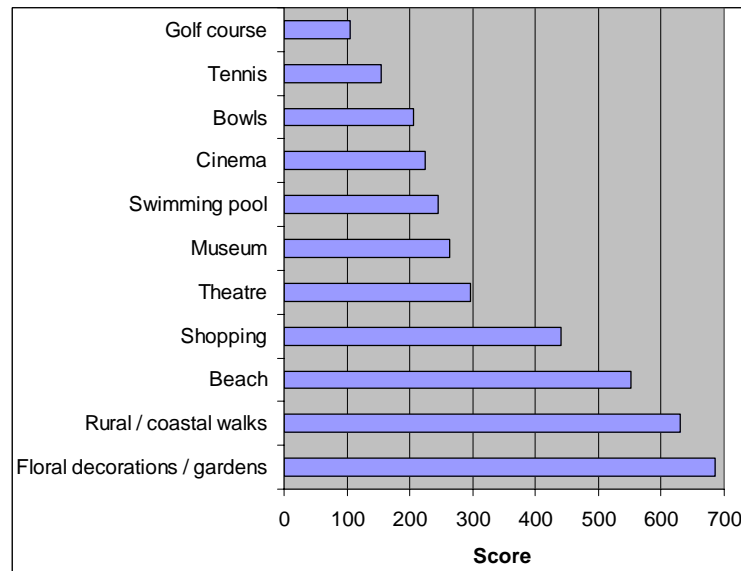
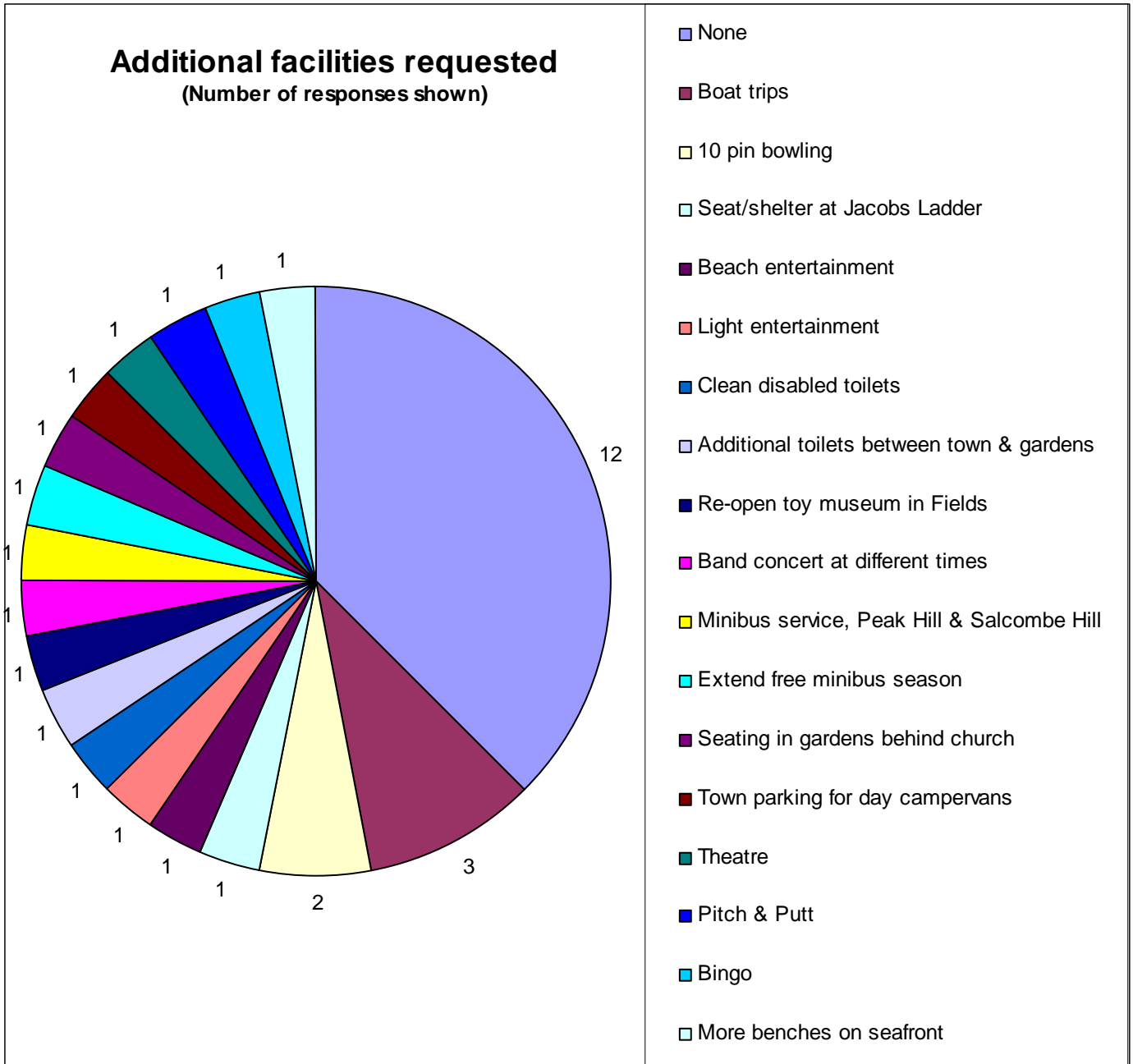


Figure A5.3 Scored responses to question 6: which of the following activities have you most appreciated? - in priority order from 1 to 11

Responses to the question asking for currently available leisure pursuits to be put in order of importance are represented in figure A5.3 by scoring on a scale of 0-10 according to the order of importance. Four of the options come out with a clear priority: floral decorations and gardens, rural & coastal walks, the beach, and shopping. Obviously, one might expect the order to change according to the time of year and prevailing weather.

Responses to the open question to identify additional facilities that would improve Sidmouth as a resort were dominated by requests for no change. However, a variety of facilities, identified in a small number of responses, are reproduced in figure A5.4 on the next page.

# A Vision for Sidmouth



**Figure A5.4 Responses to question 7: What additional facilities would you have liked?**  
Number of responses supporting each suggestion is shown

**Selected quotes from the visitor survey:**

- “Please preserve the true nature of this delightful town, where a holiday is a real treasure”
- “We like Sidmouth as it is...”
- “It is perfect as it is”
- “People with small children and elderly residents & visitors find access [to the beach] difficult”
- “...A minibus to take the elderly up to the top of the hill...”
- “Only real problem is coping with the traffic...”
- “A multi-storey car park would be completely out of character...”
- “Please do not modernise it...”

## *A Vision for Sidmouth*

“Resist too many large houses/ hotels being converted to flats/ apartments...”

“Restore the railway”

“Restrict High St/ ForeSt/ Old Fore St to electric & hydrogen powered [vehicles]”

“No more supermarkets – you must encourage local shops”

“Do something about anti-social behaviour...”

“Improvements = more visitors = more pressure on facilities = reduced quality”

“More undercover shopping / larger market”

“Street cafés in traffic free areas”

“If it’s not broken, don’t fix it”

“More police presence at night”

## Appendix 6: Residents Survey

*Dear Sidmouth Resident,*

Whilst I regret this cannot be a personal letter, it comes with my personal assurance — that **your views** on developing a Vision for Sidmouth, are valuable to our Group. The Vision Group has listened to the views of several hundred residents (through Conversation Cafés and local associations). Now it has commissioned this Survey of Residents to assess your views on our town's future. This is **your opportunity** to voice the views of your family and neighbours. We ask for only a few minutes of your time to tick the boxes. Please include all members of your family in your choices.

*Alan Darrant, Chairman, Vision Group for Sidmouth*

*For independent verification we ask you to supply your name and address, but if you prefer that your views are not identified for personal reasons, we will apply a code number, which will ensure public anonymity of any disclosure in the questionnaire. Our purpose is to try to consult widely in order to find ways of improving the economic viability of Sidmouth, both as heritage town and holiday resort. A viable economy increases employment opportunities!*

*Please tick boxes as applicable.*

### 1. What was the your **main** reason for choosing Sidmouth as your permanent residence?

Born / grew up here

Employment

Retirement

### **THE FOLLOWING ARE SUGGESTIONS. PLEASE INDICATE YOUR PREFERENCE**

*It is recognised that these suggestion will require detailed negotiations with existing land owners, and site users, etc.*

### 2. A new Traffic Management Plan

- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| (a) Increase of in-town parking through the provision of a 2 or 3 layer car-park at York Street | <b>YES / NO</b> |
| (b) Cleaner and safer shopping environment by no parking in Fore Street.                        | <b>YES / NO</b> |
| (c) One way traffic flow Northwards in Fore Street, High Street, and Mill Street                | <b>YES / NO</b> |
| (d) Park & Ride   | <b>YES / NO</b> |
| (e) Pedestrian Crossing opposite Bedford Hotel and/or Bedford Lawn Car-park.                    | <b>YES / NO</b> |
| (f) Some form of Pedestrianisation in Fore Street/High Street                                   | <b>YES / NO</b> |
| (g) Summertime Grass-crete parking on Southern end of the Byes and/or The Ham                   | <b>YES / NO</b> |

### 3. Development of Port Royal\* to provide more leisure facilities for Residents/Visitors.

This is a unique site and development could include some, or all, of the following:

- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| (a) A multi-purpose <b>Culture Centre</b> for use by local organisations, choral – dance- drama groups, musical concerts, opportunity for weekend music festivals (jazz, Glen Miller, classical, etc.) | <b>YES / NO</b> |
| (b) Café/restaurant with views of the river and east coast scenery   | <b>YES / NO</b> |
| (c) Art gallery, exhibition space, shop  | <b>YES / NO</b> |
| (d) Library (to relieve pressure on Health Centre)   | <b>YES / NO</b> |
| (e) Re-located Museum and Jurassic Coast Interpretation Centre   | <b>YES / NO</b> |
| (f) Re-located Sea-front Tourist Information Centre  | <b>YES / NO</b> |
| (g) Linked additional parking facilities   | <b>YES / NO</b> |

*\* (i.e. The area to the East of Ham Lane and South of the Swimming Pool)*

**OUR AIM**

To cherish the heritage of our Regency Resort, and the surrounding coast & countryside,

To seek to improve amenities and facilities appropriate for Residents and Visitors in the 21<sup>st</sup> century,

To encourage a vibrant economy, and

To commend our vision to the Local Development Framework.

# A Vision for Sidmouth

## 4. Additional new amenities

- (a) A pier or jetty for pleasure boats and anglers. *(To complement resort facilities for residents and visitors, and encourage visits to Sidmouth by boat instead of by car.)* YES / NO
- (b) Summer shuttle-bus from Norman Lockyer Observatory/Salcombe Hill to Peak Hill YES / NO
- (c) More wooden seats + shelters on sea front YES / NO
- (d) New Public Toilets near Visitor Coach Park (& accessible from Jacob's Ladder beach) YES / NO
- (e) New Public toilets near to Lidl supermarket. YES / NO
- (f) Family facilities in 10 pin Bowling or Ice-skating Complex YES / NO
- (g) Pedestrian Bridge between Manor Car Park & Connaught Gardens for mobility access YES / NO

## 5. Environment

- (a) Restoration of SW Coastal Path on Salcombe Hill YES / NO
- (b) Reduce Sea-gull droppings, fouling of property/clothing and attacks on adults/children YES / NO
- (c) Improve CCTV to reduce anti-social behaviour - vandalism, violence, vomit YES / NO

## 6. Please express your order of priority for the above (1, 2, 3. 1= Highest)

New Traffic Management Plan  East Ham Culture Centre  Additional New Amenities  Environment

7. Whilst retaining our Heritage, do you have any other suggestion to the Vision Group on how life in Sidmouth might be improved in the next 5-15 years? *(Attach an additional paper if necessary)*

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Title/Name \_\_\_\_\_ of person(s) completing this Questionnaire.

Address \_\_\_\_\_ PO Code \_\_\_\_\_

Are you happy for us to disclose your name in relation to this Questionnaire? YES  NO

How many persons are represented by the answers given above? *Please Circle :* 1 2 3 4 More

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.**

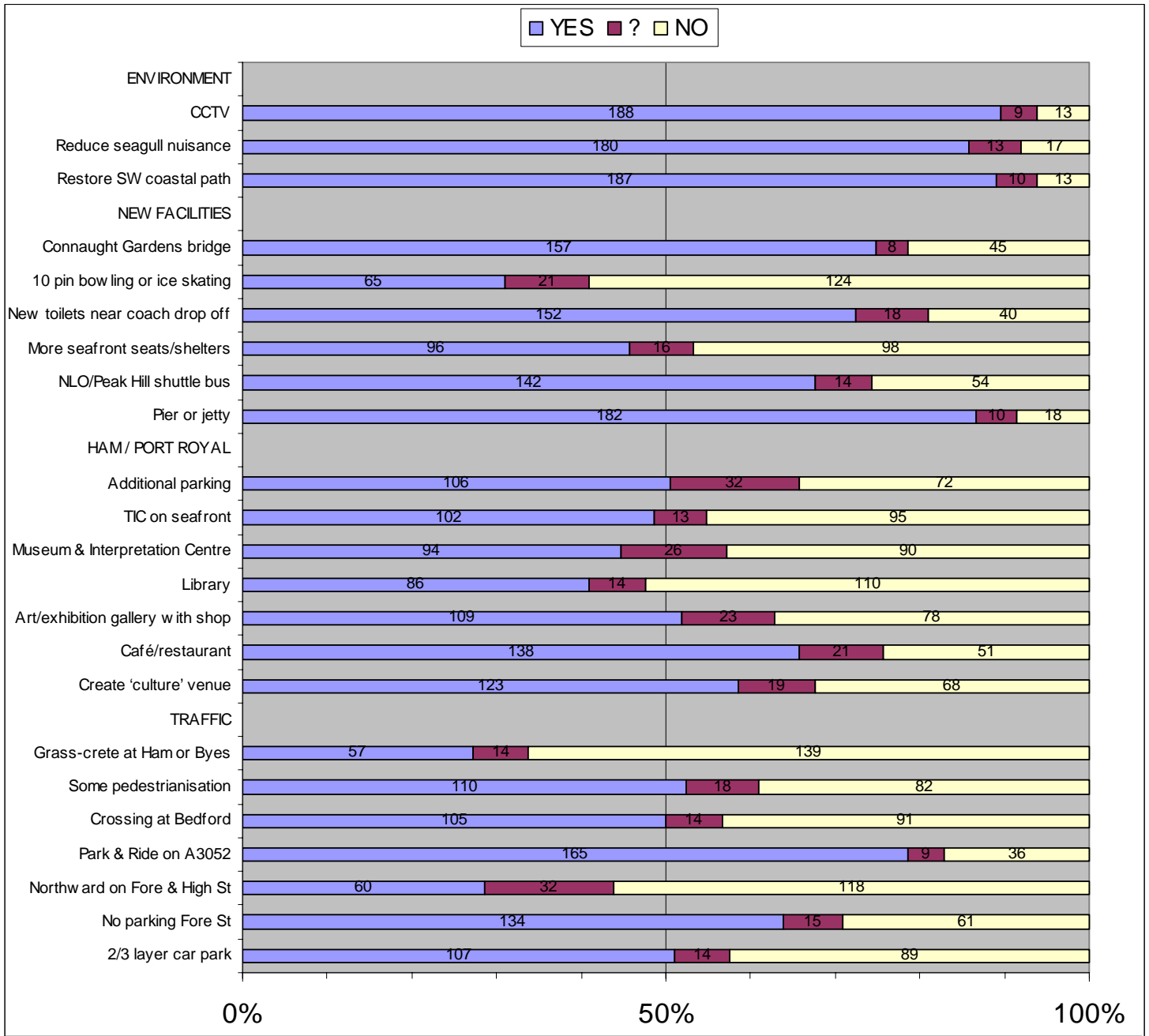
**Completed questionnaires should be returned BY February 14, 2006;**

**EITHER by hand to the Museum, Church Street, Sidmouth;  
OR posted to Mr. Alan Darrant, Group Chairman, Trent Cottage, Kestel Road,  
Sidmouth, EX10 8JJ**

# A Vision for Sidmouth

## Responses to the Residents Survey

About 400 questionnaires were distributed by post to randomly selected addresses in February 2006. 210 were returned. Results are depicted in figure A6.1. Where the blue bar extends to the right of the 50% vertical line, the majority favour the proposal; where the yellow line extends to the left of the vertical 50% line, the majority oppose the proposal.



**Figure A6.1 Percentage agreement with suggested development options**  
Numbers of responses are shown in bars

## *A Vision for Sidmouth*

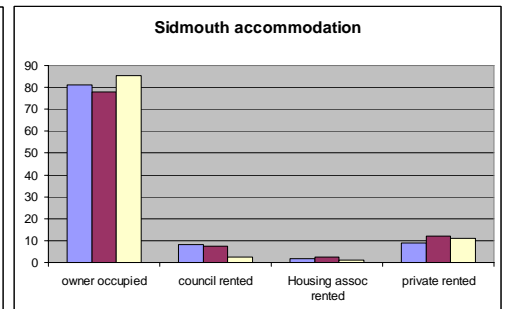
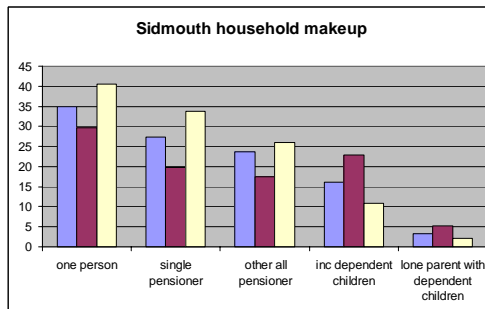
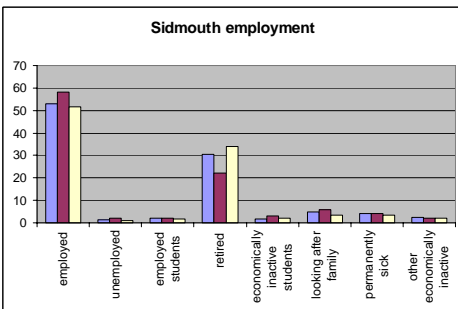
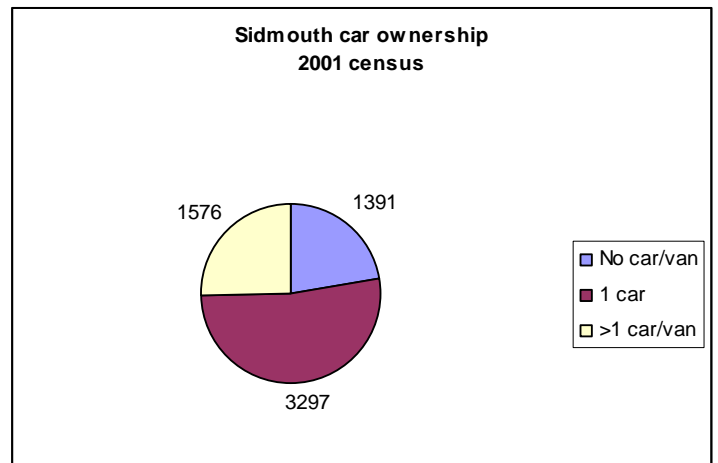
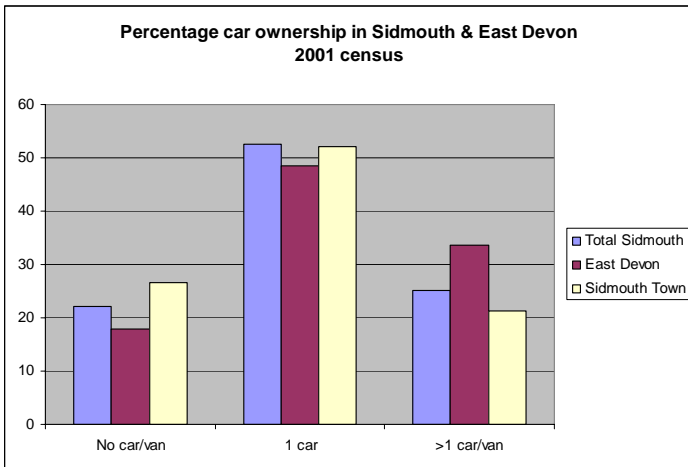
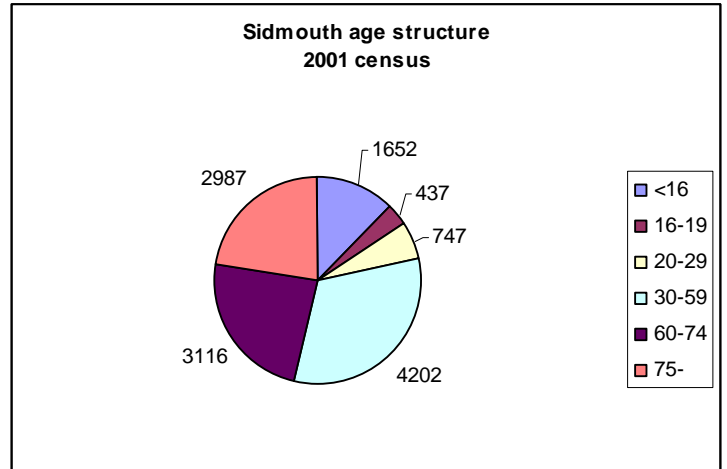
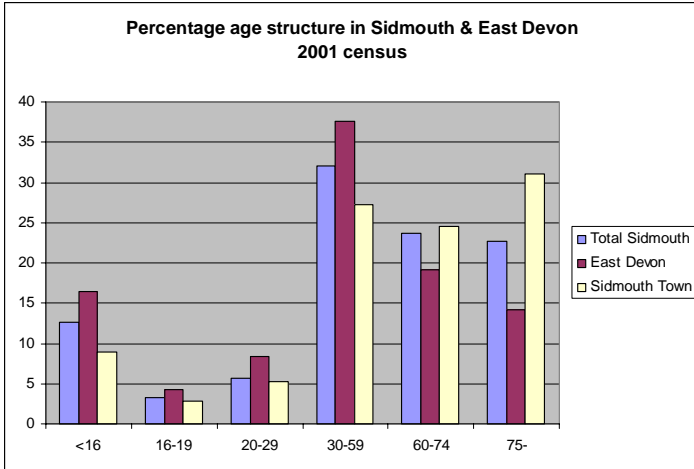
### **Selected quotes from the residents survey:**

- “We must be careful not to over commercialise Sidmouth”
- “Some sort of park & ride might help and ... a tramway through the Byes”
- “38 years ago parking was considered a problem but it has not kept back the development of Sidmouth...”
- “A 20mph speed limit from the north end of High St”
- “Street cleaning should be given more time”
- “cars parked legally ... help to slow the traffic”
- “it would be great to see more open spaces purchased & protected for all time”
- “the only practical answer is a multi-storey car park on the Ham west car park”
- “there must be toilets at Jacobs Ladder beach”
- “life...would be improved immeasurably & immediately if Police patrolled on foot in town & promenade area”
- “need stone defence to save Alma bridge”
- “toilets under cricket field”
- “children’s indoor facility next to baths”
- “park & ride essential”
- “the town cannot take any more cars”
- “develop: yes – but be sympathetic to the neighbouring buildings”
- “bridge at ford”
- “a ban on demolishing perfectly good homes ... to make way for ... flats”
- “praise for town’s gardeners”
- “more for children on beach like paddle boats and fishing trips as there used to be”
- “regular washing of promenade”
- “marina at Port Royal”
- “a small harbour would be ideal”
- “ensure culture centre has high quality evening activities”
- “more police on patrol”
- “restore model boat lake at Ham”
- “Don’t try to be everything to all men”
- “Extend the cycle track to Sidbury”
- “more affordable housing”
- “redesign river area - less concrete”
- “more policemen on the beat, especially Friday/Saturday nights”
- “I am not happy about extra parking being introduced”
- “no more festivals”

# A Vision for Sidmouth

## Appendix 7: 2001 census data for Sidmouth

The following data are derived from 2001 census results tabulated on the EDDC web site. In the bar graphs and the car ownership pie chart, results are given for the whole of East Devon (brown bar), the whole of Sidmouth, encompassing the three wards of Sidmouth Town, Sidford, and Sidmouth Rural (blue bar), and for Sidmouth Town only (cream bar). The age structure pie chart is for the whole of Sidmouth.





# *A Vision for Sidmouth*

## *Appendix 8: Initial responses from the Town Council and EDDC*



WOOLCOMBE HOUSE  
WOOLCOMBE LANE  
SIDMOUTH  
DEVON  
EX10 9BB

TOWN CLERK: MRS T. M. JARRETT B.A. (Hons.), Dip. H.E. (LCA)

Telephone: 01395 512424

Fax: 01395 512425

Email: [enquiries@sidmouth.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@sidmouth.gov.uk)

Website: [www.sidmouth.gov.uk](http://www.sidmouth.gov.uk)

Tourism Website: [www.visitsidmouth.co.uk](http://www.visitsidmouth.co.uk)

VAT Reg. No. 142 3103 24



Our Ref: TMJ/JKH/ V.1

22nd May 2006

Mr. A. Darrant,  
Chairman,  
Vision Group for Sidmouth,  
c/o Woolcombe House,

Dear Mr. Darrant,

### **VISION GROUP FOR SIDMOUTH PROPOSAL**

I understand that you have a meeting of the Vision Group to be held at Woolcombe House this evening. May I take this opportunity to report to you and the Group that at a meeting of Sidmouth Town Council held on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May it was resolved to accept your proposition in that "Sidmouth Town Council will use its best endeavours to ensure that any future development at Port Royal should not be predominantly residential and that it should incorporate a multi-purpose cultural/ facility for the benefit of the residents of and visitors to, Sidmouth

I hope that this can be reported to tonight's meeting.

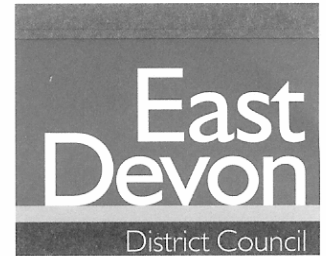
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Trina Jarrett'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

**TRINA JARRETT  
TOWN CLERK**

# *A Vision for Sidmouth*

Date: 26 June 2006  
Contact number: 01395 517408  
Fax: 01395 517507  
E-mail: [mwilliams@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:mwilliams@eastdevon.gov.uk)  
Our Reference: MW/JH  
Your Reference:



East Devon District Council  
Knowle  
Sidmouth  
Devon  
EX10 8HL  
DX 48705 Sidmouth  
Tel: 01395 516551

[www.eastdevon.gov.uk](http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk)

Mr A Darrant  
Chairman, Vision Group for Sidmouth  
Trent Cottage  
Kestell Road  
SIDMOUTH  
Devon

Dear Mr Darrant

Thank you for your letter dated 23 July 2006.

I understand that in due course the Council will be preparing a draft Planning Brief for the Port Royal area. I would expect that when this is being prepared there will be a need to consult with appropriate organisations regarding its contents.

Accordingly, I have forwarded your letter to Mr John Maidment who will be the officer, I believe, charged with preparing the Planning Brief with a request that he note your request.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Williams".

Mark Williams  
Chief Executive

Copied to: John Maidment, Policy & Conservation Manager