

Draft report on *How are things in Lockdown?* Questionnaire

5th May 2020

summaries of bar graphs; representative comments; representative proposals in respondent's own words.

TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT

Most people are appreciating there being less traffic – over 80% said they “like less traffic”.

Comments:

- *It's wonderful to have the streets back! No noise, no pollution. We can hear the birds sing!*
 - *Where have all the bikes been hiding?*
 - *Less vehicle impact and air pollution has been welcome*
 - *It's nice to have less traffic, but we all need our cars.*
 - *It's lovely to wander around in town with little traffic.*
- *Good to be able to walk about without worrying about traffic close to narrow pavements*
 - *It might be the time to review if my wife & I need two cars!*
- *It's nice having less traffic but we know it is temporary: hopefully we'll be back to normal*

- Proposals -

- Restrictions on cars/deliveries:
 - Barnstaple system: you can only drive down between 10am and 4pm if you have a business permit; daily deliveries have to be to businesses before 9am.
 - To make social distancing possible in the high street where it is currently not possible due to narrow pavements and high traffic, it would be ideal to pedestrianise the high st and limit traffic to (1) delivery vehicles only - with limited hrs and (2) disabled car users. Use ANPR camera to take image of the reg; if they do not have blue badge they get a fine
- Reroute traffic to avoid going through the town
- Improve bus services which could reduce reliance on cars
 - Have a regular 'flag down' Hopper Bus route on main roads into and out of the Triangle (possibly free or small charge) for local/short journeys.
 - This might mean the No.9 could be single deck for those with longer journeys.
- More park and walk or ride schemes so we can have visitors and less traffic.
- Reduce traffic in the town:
 - Restrict access to the seafront turning circle at the Ham to:- lorries, coaches and council vehicles ... ban cars.
 - Close the ford (expensive to maintain and unnecessary)
 - Extend the Byes path from Toll House downstream Rd and give bikes / pedestrians priority at Toll House, so linking Byes with sea front.
 - Redesign Fore Street:- remove parking spaces (put in carpark), move unloading bay to widest part of the road ... all with the aim of widening the pavements.
- If same day Home Delivery were an option at the till I wouldn't need to drive.
- Investigate one-way systems where feasible.
- The future of motorised transport as being the hailing/hiring of driverless electric vehicles through a mobile device.
 - The vehicles will have different specifications depending on the journey required, eg no. of passengers, luggage, haulage, length of journey etc.
 - These will need out of town 'resting places'.
 - Private car ownership will be significantly reduced, leading to much less parking requirements and freeing up garage space.
 - This model will encourage the local delivery of food as highlighted in subsequent questions. In both models a drop off point for passengers in the center of town will be needed while maintaining a pedestrian thoroughfare.

Of those who answered, well over half said they had always walked and/or cycled, but a further quarter said they had been doing so more during lockdown and almost the same number said they'd be doing more walking and cycling afterwards.

Comments:

- *I cant walk to the shops as the bags are to heavy to bring home by foot*
- *Can't walk far but will try to walk more in future.*
- *It's great but difficult to do when you're a parent of young children with disabilities*
- *I found that walking isn't as bad as people make it out to be; I'll probably walk to places*
 - *Lockdown has given me the opportunity to find more out about the area I live in*
- *One of the positives has been the frequency of walks taken into the immediate countryside.*

- Proposals -

- Promote cycling:
 - More bike parks so people can cycle in and leave biked.
- Promote walking:
 - Further develop the footpath and cycling network
 - With good publicity, this is an area that could boost Sidmouth's tourism image.
 - Develop provision of the network of bridleways,
- The development of 'social distancing tourism', where hotels and tourist accommodation is opened up where social distancing is embedded in the activities enjoyed
- A map highlighting Sidmouth's 'hidden' pathways away from roads for locals and visitors.

When it comes to spending on transport, there have been savings for half the respondents.

Comments:

- *I work a lot from home anyway but it has been a better experience this time. We've been so busy/high pressured; working from home means we all support each other virtually.*
 - *My partner and I really like it and don't miss the daily commute*
 - *Wish we had better Broadband!*
- *Home working has meant my daily commute has disappeared- hopefully for good*
- *I love it! No commute, no gossip, no unpleasant colleagues to have to pretend you like.... Just get on with work in the hours that suit you. It's the future for as many as can.*
 - *Work from home or The Lighthouse workhub in Mill St anyway*

- Proposals -

- Make high-speed and reliable broadband available during periods of high demand:
 - Pressure on govt to create better fiber optic network in Sidmouth so more people / businesses can work from home and reduce traffic into / out of area.
 - Having more locals working at home would mean more locals use cafes, sandwich shops etc day to day thus driving up local economy and less reliance on tourism
 - People will still need/enjoy social interaction in the workplace, but might appreciate more variety, combining home working time where this fits with the nature of employment with workplace days.

SHOPPING & RETAIL

Most people are managing to do their own shopping, but about a quarter are getting deliveries from small local shops and there's been quite a lot of frustration over not being able to shop online.

Comments:

- *I have made use of growers' delivery services in the lockdown.*
- *HELP and independent kind neighbours organise many deliveries where needed.*
 - *The Food Bank organises 60 deliveries of free food a week.*
 - *We've got a great local network here!*
- *I cannot see it being an economic proposition for small local shops to continue delivering.*
- *Many thanks to friends and local businesses who have turned up trumps with home deliveries. I've found service from local shops to be fantastic and would urge those businesses to continue deliveries where possible.*
 - *Saved a fortune planning ahead and buying what I need with lots less waste*
- *Feel this has shown we need to support local food businesses as they have supported us.*
 - *We are really lucky still have small retailers eg veg/ baker /fish/ butcher*
 - *Small businesses in the town have been brilliant. Really brought us together and appreciate what a great town we live in.*
 - *The largest supermarkets are hard to get slots*
- *There are many local pubs and restaurants offering deliveries: we have tried to support*

- Proposals -

- *A local delivery service available to shopkeepers:*
 - *It would allow them to subscribe to a 'shop and we'll deliver' service.*
 - *People would not then need cars to carry home heavy bags, but still contribute to maintaining footfall.*

As for the service that the smaller shops and smaller supermarkets have been offering, eighty percent of respondents have been very impressed

Comments:

- *I think the shops that will survive are the ones able to adapt and think on their feet.*
- *Those that have remained open - baker, greengrocer, health food shop, delicatessen, butcher & supermarkets - have adapted very quickly and offering a remarkable service.*
- *As a community, we should rally round to support our local independent retailers and those operating from our town centres and village high streets.*
 - *All local Sidmouth shops have been excellent and well stocked.*
- *Smaller shops very efficient. We are very fortunate to have such high quality food shops.*
- *I am surprised that so few shops/restaurants and pubs are making online deliveries available. Many that are seem swamped with orders. I particularly think that pubs & restaurants could be doing better to help the community, although there are some notable exceptions, kudos to them.*

When it comes to changing shopping habits, it's been a third-way split between those who will be changing these, those who will not and those who are not sure as yet.

Comments:

- *I'll continue to support my local shops as I have throughout. Without them Sidmouth's centre would be as busy as Seaton in winter.*
 - *I hope people now understand the value of shopping locally.*

- Proposals -

- Deliveries:
 - For the less mobile and less technically literate, the simplification of online ordering processes and home deliveries could be of comfort, and a reflection of an age where local deliveries were made by young boys with basket-laden bikes.
 - I'm worried going forward what will happen once the lockdown relaxes. The disease will still be with us, so I will be reluctant to go shopping if there's more people out and about so would welcome an option to use deliveries if it's offered.
 - Concerned that people will keep on relying on deliveries and online and abandon shopping in town altogether. Not good for the small independent businesses
 - If same day Home Delivery were available from Supermarkets and local shops etc. I would leave the car at home more. Shopping is a social experience for a lot of people so outdoor and in-shop events might encourage more people back to our town and shops.

Asking people if they would make use of a newly formed local delivery service if it continued after lockdown , about half said definitely they would, whereas the other half said they would not be able to make use of any such service

Comments:

- *This option would be welcome for many of Sidmouth's less mobile residents and those experiencing hardship, perhaps through being on UC or reliant on food bank supplies*
- *I understand why some might prefer that but chatting to a delivery guy for a few minutes is no substitute for the camaraderie and courtesy of Sidmouth shops.*
 - *I prefer to physically shop and will do after lockdown.*
- *Before lockdown we had local deliveries relevant to our business and will continue to have them when it is over (if that business is still available!).*
- *The newly formed delivery services are great for those that need it - and we may one day.*
- *I prefer to go out to eat or to collect food rather than have it delivered. However, if local shops cafes and restaurants were to introduce a delivery service in order to survive in the Post-Coronavirus world I would wholeheartedly support them.*

Of the shopkeepers and producers who responded, most have had to cease trading. Of those who were able to continue, there has been enough interest/demand in their services, although considerable changes had to be made.

Comments:

- *Even when lockdown finishes, there will still be social distancing in place: small shops will have to restrict the number of people in the shop and most won't be bothered to wait outside.*
- *We've changed seminars from in person to online, and they seem to work well, and in some cases attract a bigger audience.*
- *All my work is now online, I'm a counselling therapist. I've lost nearly half my income as many clients are concerned about their loss of income.*
- *Since we don't know how long holiday accommodation will be banned from operating, I'm unable to look at adapting how the business operates (e.g. providing rented accommodation to locals in need of housing rather than holiday accommodation).*
- *Had we been approached, we would have considered offering our service to key workers.*
- *As a medium sized hotel impossible to offer any sort of service have to have a certain no of people staying to be viable overheads high*

- Proposals -

- Post-lockdown safety measures:
 - We are about to restart now: we have very safe procedures in place and supplies are available

For those businesses which had started offering delivery, half said they would not consider offering the same sort of delivery after lockdown – but the other half did express either keen or some interest.

Comments:

- *We have delivered products to clients, but probably won't carry on when we reopen*
 - *It will no longer be needed*

Both suppliers and consumers were very positive about services offered:

Comments:

- *We are very fortunate that we can offer 90% of our services remotely and will pick up the deferred jobs once lockdown is over.*
- *I think that the town traders that have been able to get involved, have performed well.*
- *I think it's great that some businesses have been able to adapt to serve the community in different ways, enabling them to maintain a source of income at the same time.*

- Proposals -

- Maintain and develop the network of at least 300 volunteers providing free services in the community regularly during lockdown.
- Keep open and manage at least one public toilet.
- Keep the operation of electrical and plumbing services working: Have had some work done on house by a local builder who worked alone kept social distance and had a reader that checked out and his temperature each day by shining a red dot on forehead. Seemed very forward thinking and it's a shame others aren't doing more

Most businesses have not needed to cooperate with other businesses, but a few have.

VIRTUAL CONNECTIVITY

Both individuals and businesses have enjoyed broadband that has worked well for them. Apart from having a lot of social meetings, it's clear that Sid Valley residents have been using the internet considerably for work – and that generally these type of meetings have gone well – although under the strain, broadband has been unreliable.

Comments:

- *Broad band usually OK but not always*
- *If this is the future, then broadband needs to be better in Sidmouth!*
- *I was already supporting dozens of people in the UK, Ireland and a handful of countries via online apps. Using Zoom has expanded my client base into the US and elsewhere.*
- *Great if it stops people flying half way round the world for a meeting when they could all stay at home.*
- *It is something that will be used more regularly in the future. Pleased you mention mobile coverage, which is poor in Sidmouth: we tend to always concentrate upon broadband*

IDEAS FOR HOW SIDMOUTH MIGHT BOUNCE BACK FROM LOCKDOWN

Take positive lessons from this time and plan how to maintain these sustainably - like **pedestrianising** areas of town, but with public transport improved such as **Park and Ride**, more regular **Hopper bus** with affordably priced tickets. Please Local Government (with the help of reasonable central funding!) get on and make safe **cycle routes** as promised as quickly as possible, so people can exercise more, and get to school/work without needing to use cars.

I would love to see a **celebration** similar to folk week and regatta weekend for the locals to come together to thank the nhs+ keyworkers throughout this pandemic in some way

Maybe shops could have different **opening hours** so that the volume of people shopping is spread out over a longer period of time each day.

Pedestrianisation, electric buses, e-bike hire, more bike racks, a cafe area in the market sq, car free days, street markets, soap box derby, make sidmouth Eco friendly and really at the front of economic sustainable growth

... **close all the roads** in the town centre (High St, Old Fore St, Fore St, Church St, etc ... and make these car free ... this then allows lots of people to walk round town, while keeping their distance. Allow cafes / restaurant to put tables / chairs on pavements / roads. Obviously need enough space for emergency services. Deliveries allowed only outside 9:00-5:00.

Street parties. Support for and thanks to local businesses. Hope for continuation of what Sidmouth represents.

Create and publish a **Vision for the Future**, stimulate comment, get community buy in for implementation. Short term, capitalise on the 'buy local' provision in the NP, with a short term emphasis on 'Support our Local Economy'

I think the most important thing that everyone should consider is to not tackle this alone. Businesses should join forces and reap the benefits of a collaborative approach. Create working groups or use the Chamber of Commerce, but **coordinate** and work together.

Think the need for **social distancing** would make celebrations difficult

Would be great for business and support groups to **meet regular** with anyone from the general public who wish to get involved to discuss ways of improving services, looking after the isolated elderly, improve the number of business in the area to draw more tourists all so look after the youths making sure they have plenty of activities

Reinvention. Without an immediate return to the big events we must give other reasons to visit. Typically we have rolled out a program of predictable offerings yet often I hear they are well down on former numbers. Doing any mass event with social distancing would imply a need for higher income per head. Examining each segment we usually serve would then need to identify events that higher paying customers would value. I don't propose to go more elite than might have been the case when the Yorks' followers set the tone - Sidmouth has rightly provided an inclusiveness which I certainly treasure. If we can't entertain thousands then we have to be pragmatic for a year or two and go **'boutique'** for a while. Not having a folk festival is a challenge. A virtual folk festival with a global audience paying a small fee via eventbrite say would take us into a future age. Higher technical setup and planning overhead but if the national youth orchestra can do virtual performances then it's plainly possible.

More support for **local producers**, a platform (Facebook?) for local and small producers to make known their products (including people who have a seasonal surplus, gardeners, allotment holders, bee keepers etc). A co-operative or similar of small, local producers providing a delivery service

organised shop local afternoon **events** similar to Christmas shopping night, both to say thank you to local shops who have been brilliant and to get money in the tills of those forced to close

Close the high st to traffic permanently. Get local shops to coordinate deliveries with one firm doing collection and pickup from shops. Invest in green solutions to become beacon for other towns.

Look at creating a **harbour / marina** to help regenerate the town.

Wildlife **information signs** around town, on the sea front, in the Byes etc.

Ban traffic from the main street. Have a coordinated **delivery service** around town

I love seeing less traffic and in particular would love if there could be a **traffic-free zone** along part of the seafront to enable greater social distancing and pedestrian enjoyment of that area once tourism starts back again.

I think there needs to be a campaign to support **local independent businesses**

Let the restaurants **stay open longer** to re-coup loss income.. Table spacing might and should be changed!!! Free parking for 2 hours in town to get things back to normal

1. A party! 2. Discussion forums about new directions (already very good). 3. Communication of new thinking throughout the population of Sidmouth. 4. Nationwide **publicity** about the image Sidmouth wishes to project. The existing 'retirement' image maybe accurate but largely negative in character. 5. Both Sidmouth as a Festival Town and The Greenest Town in Britain have very positive messages and are very commendable goals.

With the likelihood that foreign travel will be restricted for several years aggressive tourism **promotion** could do much to revive the towns fortunes.

Discuss **'Mini festivals'** with organisers for scaled down versions; * Local street concerts to replace the folk festival music and dance, * Pop up food festivals * Town Centre and street parties for community groups to showcase their arts and talents * Organised Celebration picnics on the beach and in parks when open and not inhibited by social distancing restrictions * Poetry readings in Market Square and competitions * Replace the Folk Festival Torch Light Procession with one

organised for Residents to participate * Provide Suggestion Boxes encouraging people to submit their ideas for recovery and regeneration * Have 'traffic Free' special days every week (might not work if tourist traffic resumes). *Design and Print High Street Banners eg 'LOVE SIDMOUTH'

Greater spaces for **walking, cycling** - pedestrianise spaces- see above, create longer cycle route Sidmouth to Sidbury as per long awaited plans that still haven't happened. Business rate relief to get businesses back on their feet in next 6 months.

Hopefully with a greater sense of creating **local collaborations** and community activity to create a Sidmouth that is more resilient

Wouldn't it be nice if there remained fewer cars on the road after lockdown! Make access to the town harder and possibly implement a park and ride, or a **local town minibus** to reduce traffic. No deliveries between 9 to 5. No parking on the high street, only drop off.

We could become more of a community! When this ends, we could have a few fundraises to get money for the businesses who have lost huge amounts of money during this time. And/or for charities who may have collapsed during this time. Either way, we should become a better community and have some **fundraiser events** for all ages and families.

Amazing **cycle opportunities**. Keep cars to single track with pull in places let the bikes have the other lane and a good provision for pedestrians.

Ban take out coffee unless you take your own cup.

Keep it local.

Provide **enclosed dog park** area large enough for dogs to run safely.

Start some sort of hub for learning and demonstrating environmental friendly ways of living buying etc. Look at supporting micro businesses.

I think it's really important to acknowledge all the GOOD things that have happened during this very stressful time and for me that would mean having a '**Thank You**' Day to celebrate all the businesses/shops that stayed open and adapted, and the 'good neighbours' and other volunteers who have demonstrated the value of community and showed us what 'care in the community' REALLY looks like. There has been so much kindness and goodwill in the town that I feel blessed to live here in Sidmouth. I would also include the Homelessness and Housing staff at EDDC who have continued to provide a service under very difficult and unusual circumstances. [I work for Gateway (Homelessness Action Group)]

Close some small lanes to traffic so people can enjoy walking and cycling and breathing clean air

A **shop/spend local campaign** might help once shops & catering establishments are open. As soon as possible get the Festivals going again. Maybe expand some to include food/art/dance/music to make up for lost events this Spring/Summer. Organise a Winter Festival of some description to bring people back to Sidmouth. Get that new 'Visit Sidmouth' brochure out there.

I think if **home deliveries** continue for older people that can only be a good thing. I think a media campaign urging people to use or continue to use local businesses would help get smaller businesses back on their feet

Perhaps we should have a big blowout 'do' once we're allowed something of that scale? We could use only **locally sourced** stuff from the indie shops and suppliers, awards for the people and businesses that helped the most in various ways, memorial for those that passed, live music from local bands etc.

I hope people appreciate local business more, and not expect miracles. We businesses have been in lockdown too. A **leaflet** outlining opening up and what people should expect from shops etc , would be good. A reverse leaflet from the lockdown version would help all.

I think one thing Sidmouth lacks is **outdoor market** yet we have lots of excellent suppliers. I know the farmers market is held in Kennaway House but going in somewhere isn't same as browsing a market outdoors and who doesn't buy something. We also have lots of talented local crafters so what about an outdoor craft market.

Taxi, food apps. Local services **apps**

What about some **late night shopping events** over the late summer/autumn (like the Christmas shopping night but without the food stalls as businesses will need all the custom available). This could help those businesses who haven't been able to open or adapt during lockdown (card shops/gift shops/ clothes shops/Fields/art shops/East Devon Art etc, as well as the pubs and eateries).

I think a **trail for visitors** would work. They have it in Ilfracme in north Devon. The trail takes you to all different parts of Ilfracme encouraging footfall through quieter areas, and the people doing it learn cultural things about the town. More wildlife interpretation that is novel (not just a boring info board...) Sidmouth has honeycomb reef worms on the beach, visiting terns, the odd seal etc make fun and interactive interpretation

I truly believe we need to put our shops cafes and restaurants first. We will all suffer from the effects of this crisis. In order to encourage people to go out in such difficult time, how about if restaurants cafes and eateries etc offered **lower prices** to start with and gradually increased as things begin to recover. It could take years but I believe that serious changes need to be made. Money maybe scarce si businesses need to recognise that people will need to recover. Things cannot return to as they were because circumstances are different. This must be reflected in prices.

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on behalf of the Vision Group for Sidmouth

ref: <https://visionforsidmouth.org/learning-from-lockdown/>

