

Sidmouth Science Festival Trustees'

Annual Report

06 April 2023 to 05 April 2024

Sidmouth Science Festival, also known as SSF
Registered Charity No. 1168115
Bickwell Gardens,
Stadway Meadow,
Sidmouth
EX10 8TB

Trustees

Michael Pincock- Chairman
Rita Hedley - Treasurer
David Bramley
Peter Daniel
Robert Miles
Christopher Lockyear
Alan Clarke

Introduction

The twelfth Sidmouth Science Festival was held from 6th to 15th October 2023.

This report provides an overview of the festival activities as part of the annual submission of accounts to the Charity Commission. In addition to this event, it should be noted that Science Festival related activities were held throughout the year with the wider community.

It is also written to acknowledge that the festival demands some 1.5 man-years of effort from over 100 volunteers. The organisers are grateful to all of the sponsors, volunteers, friends and attendees who made the events possible by giving their time and skills freely. This year some 34 local and national groups took part.

Structure, Governance and Management

Sidmouth Science Festival is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation governed by a Constitution (adopted 28 June 2016) for which the only voting members are its charity trustees ("Foundation" model).

The Trustees are supported by an overarching committee that is responsible for organising the main festival and complementary events throughout the year. This, in turn, is supported by three subgroups that focus in detail on the festival programme, funding and communications.

Trustees are appointed or reappointed as set out in the Constitution at the Annual General Meeting. This year a number of changes were made. The role of Chairman was changed to Michael Pincock. The previous Chairman, David Bramley remains a Trustee. Pamela Burt stepped down from the trustees, including her role as Secretary. The Secretary duties have been taken up by the Chairman.

Whilst the SSF has no formal relationship with other organisations it works in close collaboration with the Norman Lockyer Observatory, Exeter University, Sid Vale Association, Jurassic Coast Trust, the Met Office, Local Councils, Devonshire Association, Art Society of Sidmouth, Institute of Physics, Institution of Mechanical Engineers, East Devon Schools and many other local and national scientific organisations.

All trustees and subgroups give their time voluntarily and receive no remuneration or other benefits.

Objectives

The objectives of the Sidmouth Science Festival, as outlined in the SSF Constitution, are as follows:

- to inform, to inspire, to promote and to advance the education of the public in science, technology, engineering and mathematical (STEM) disciplines. The aim is to show how these disciplines impact on our everyday lives by integrating science, art, music, comedy and drama with serious technical events.
- The aim of the festival is to reach out to all parts of the community, particularly those who would not normally engage with STEM subjects such as the more socially disadvantaged or those less confident with respect to this subject matter.
- In addition, Sidmouth Science Festival aims to play a part in promoting STEM subjects as a career option for young people and reinforce the importance of STEM subjects to our society.
- While the emphasis is on the - currently annual - festival itself, Sidmouth Science Festival also organises STEM focused events all year round.
- Sidmouth Science Festival will focus its activities on the Sid Valley and East Devon

In planning and carrying out activities, we keep in mind the Charity Commission's Guidance on public benefit.

Activities

The 2023 Sidmouth Science Festival, the twelfth, attracted 3,200 attendances across 80 events with most people coming from the East Devon area but some from much further afield. This number does not include those who have watched the talks on YouTube after the Festival. It was promoted locally on Facebook, X and Instagram.

We asked attendees for three words to describe their experience. The most common were Fun, Great, Interesting, Amazing, Exciting, Educational, Creative and Informative.

Super Science Saturday

Super Science Saturday was, as usual, held on the first Saturday of the Festival. This year it benefitted from good weather with 1,400 visitors and 49 volunteers on this day alone. Hands-on activities were well attended and further enhanced by the Make and Take marquee on the lawn at Kennaway House.

The day provided an opportunity for the public to engage with a whole range of schools, institutions, university outreach and other public bodies in a wide variety of STEM related activities. Contributors included the Met Office, University of Exeter Optics and Photonics, Exeter Science Centre, Exeter Maths School, Exeter School, University of Exeter Outreach, Royal Geographical Society, Geologists Association, Devonshire Association (Geology Section), Institute of Physics, Institute of Civil Engineers, Royal Society of Chemistry, Exmouth U3A and Colyton Grammar School.

The Geology Hub continued to be very popular with talks as well as hands on activities. Subjects of talks included The Giant Granite Boulders of Huelgoat, Sea Level Changes and Cave Records in South Devon, The Great Giant Clam Hunt and New Fossil Discoveries from the Triassic Red Rocks of Sidmouth.

In addition, the Methodist Church Hall was a hub for making things to take home with Technology for Fun. Darth Vader was also to be seen wandering around between the venues and around town.

Family Fun Day

The Family Fun Day was, as usual, held on the final Sunday of the Festival at the Norman Lockyer Observatory (NLO). This year the day was sunny and the event was especially well attended. There was plenty to do with Space Detectives, Sciencedipity, Science Boffins, Leonardo Helicopters and the ever-popular jet car races, as well as access to the Historic Domes, Planetarium and Storytelling. A talk on Interstellar Tours was given by Brian Clegg.

Other Activities During Festival Week

There was a wide variety of activities held throughout the week at a range of venues around the town.

Talks during the week at the various venues were again of a high calibre with over 20 speakers: Science in the Pub took place at the Blue Ball in Sidford with fascinating talks from the University of Exeter and the Science Festival Team. Emily Summers, Project Development Engineer with Simply Blue Group gave the Ada Lovelace Day talk on Floating Offshore Wind Projects on behalf of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers: Dr Andy Middlebrook gave us the lowdown on the Pros and Cons of the latest sports' technology: Stonehenge was the subject of the Art Society of Sidmouth talk given by Dr Julian Richards: a visit to the Knowle Flood Relief Scheme was preceded by a talk about the flood defence by Paul Hargreaves and Gloria Rugual Munoz from Jacobs Engineering. This was followed by another local topic from Professor Brian Golding on Severe Thunderstorm Warnings. Professor Ashe Toye gave a particularly interesting talk on Lab Grown Blood and Freya Thomson-Alberts talked about conservation at the National Marine Aquarium Plymouth.

An Environment Day was held on the first Sunday which was based around food and food production. The day was enhanced by presentations from a group of Italian students from Sidmouth International School.

On the final Saturday, Colin Walls ran a very popular robot workshop. In Kennaway House there was a successful Biodiversity Day with well-attended talks about Pine Martens, Butterflies, The Rivers Sid and Camel and the very topical River Sewage Pollution Scandal.

Visits this year were to the Energy from Waste plant at Exeter, walks were fungi recognition and a Harvest Mouse Nest Survey as well as History walks around the Norman Lockyer Observatory. The Observatory also provided two evenings of live streaming of their telescopes.

The Festival has a very strong Schools' programme too with over 800 primary school pupils benefitting from the workshops, comprising 11 hands-on activities across 12 local schools. EDDC countryside rangers led workshops in kick sampling and bug hunts in the Byes in Sidmouth and on the River Otter in Newton Poppleford with Sidmouth CE, St John's International and Newton Poppleford Primary Schools. Year 5/6 from St John's International School and Sidmouth Primary took part in a tree search provided by Sidmouth Arboretum and Year 5/6 from St John's International School also did stream flow measurement in the Sid.

This year's Schools' Art competition was on the theme of Weather. This resulted in 1400 hexagons from 11 schools being produced by the schools and exhibited at Kennaway House. The Primary schools contributing were: Awliscombe, Feniton, Newton Poppleford, Offwell, Payhembury, Sidbury, Sidmouth, St. John's, Tipton St John, West Hill and Whimble.

Sidmouth College benefitted from a visit from Engineer Hannah Nobbs, Dorset and Somerset Air ambulance and Years 7 and 8 had a Science Magic Show with Ian Dunne who also gave a performance at the Youth Club.

Financial Review

Monies are raised each year to finance each festival and are spent on running costs. We do not have property, or assets or salaried staff to support on an ongoing basis. Any surplus money raised in any given year is used as a float to support the running costs of the following year's festival. There are no funds in deficit. Our annual Accounts are shown as an Appendix to this Report.

This year the SSF received more income than in previous years, and the float currently stands at about one year's expenditure. This is higher than the target outlined in our reserves policy but we expect this to be temporary. We continue to be heavily reliant upon grants but anticipate increased expenditure due to higher cost of facilities hire, higher payments to professional presenters and increased use of paid 'back office' support in response to technology and social media developments.

Reserves Policy

The SSF is highly dependent on grants and on donations from attendees at the Science Festival, levels of which are uncertain from year to year. Financial commitments are required well in advance of the festival and before the status of grants is known.

A further consideration is to make sure there is a minimum level of funds available to meet commitments in case the charity had to be wound down unexpectedly at a time of maximum financial exposure (eg just before Festival Week).

In practice, this means holding enough funds to cover the following year.

Future Plans

We aim to sustain an annual Sidmouth Science Festival and related activities, keeping its tried and tested format whilst incorporating innovation and current scientific research. Where possible we will reach out to new audiences in the Sid Valley and East Devon.

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

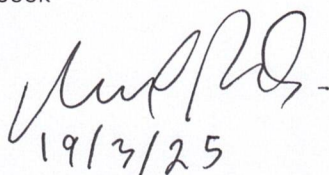
Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Name: Michael Pincock


Position: Chairman

Signature:

Date:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Pincock", is written over the signature line. Below the signature, the date "19/3/25" is handwritten in black ink.

Annual Accounts submitted to the Charity Commission

 CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES	Sidmouth Science Festival			No (if any)		CC16a
	Receipts and payments accounts					
	For the period from	6 April 2023	To	5 April 2024		
Section A Receipts and payments						
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year	
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	
A1 Receipts						
Grants and sponsors	9,718	8,000	-	17,718	8,238	
Advertising	0	-	-	-	-	
Donations	2,566	-	-	2,566	1,509	
Ticket sales	2,656	-	-	2,656	2,437	
Other	550	-	-	550	976	
	-	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-	
Sub total(Gross income for AR)	15,490	8,000	-	23,490	13,160	
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).						
	-	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-	
Total receipts	15,490	8,000	-	23,490	13,160	
A3 Payments						
Communications	382	5,970	-	6,352	3,471	
Venues and hospitality	4,371	795	-	5,166	4,165	
Speakers, presenters, events	3,742	1,000	-	4,742	9,551	
General and admin	1,314	235	-	1,549	1,075	
	-	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-	
Sub total	9,809	8,000	-	17,809	18,262	
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)						
	-	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-	
Total payments	9,809	8,000	-	17,809	18,262	
Net of receipts/(payments)	5,681	-	-	5,681	- 5,102	
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-	
A6 Cash funds last year end	-	-	-	11,837	16,939	
Cash funds this year end	-	-	-	17,519	11,837	