

Sidmouth Science Festival Trustees' Annual Report

06 April 2024 to 05 April 2025

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 thirteenth Sidmouth Science Festival was held from 4th to 13th October 2024.

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 about 100 volunteers. The organisers are grateful to all the sponsors, volunteers, friends and attendees who made the events possible by giving their time and skills freely.

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 no changes were made.

Whilst the SSF has no formal relationship with other organisations, it works in close collaboration with many national and local scientific organisations including 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, All Saints Church, The Sid Valley Biodiversity Group and many others.

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 2024 Sidmouth Science Festival, the thirteenth, attracted about 4,000 attendances with contributions from over 30 local and national groups providing 31 'hands-on' activities and 23 talks through the week. Most visitors come from the East Devon area but some were from much further afield. This number does not include those who watched the talks on YouTube after the Festival. It was promoted online with 7,200 web site users and 27,000 page views. Social media activity included 55 TikTok videos watched 42,850 times, 740 X and 369 Instagram followers and 89 Facebook posts with 1019 followers..

We asked attendees for three words to describe their experience. The most common were Fun, Interesting, Inspiring, Exciting, educational, accessible and Informative.

Super Science Saturday

Super Science Saturday was, as usual, held on the first Saturday of the Festival. It was held at four main locations: Kennaway House and marquee, All Saints Church (Geology Day), Parish Church and the Sid Vale Association HQ. This year it benefitted from good weather with 2,135 visits and 51 volunteers on this day alone for a mix of hands-on activities and talks.

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 University of Exeter, Exeter Science Centre, Exeter School, Colyton Grammar, Sid Valley Radio, Institute of Physics, Met Office, Exeter College, Petroc College, Exeter Maths School, the National Trust Supporters group, Plymouth University, Exeter Community Energy, Southampton University, Geologists

Association, Lyme Regis Philpot Museum, Devon Wildlife Trust, Charmouth Heritage Coast Centre, Royal Geographical Society, Devonshire Association, Paleo Games and a many local volunteers running a wide range of 'hands-on' activities.

Family Fun Day

The Family Fun Day was, as usual, held on the final Sunday of the Festival at the Norman Lockyer Observatory (NLO). It was a busy day with 610 attendees and 100 volunteers. Contributors included Space Detectives, Space Exe, Leonardo Helicopters, Blue Streak Rockets, Devon Science, and the ever-popular jet car races, as well as access to the Historic Telescopes and Domes, Planetarium and Storytelling.

Other Activities During Festival Week

Talks were held throughout the week at a range of venues. They included a talk commemorating Ada Lovelace Day about renewable domestic energy. Panel Discussions included farming practices and how to become a Citizen Scientist. An evening of 'Science in the Pub' at the Blue Ball Inn covered subjects such as magic mushrooms, bird song and climate change.

Outings included a Geology Walk along the Sidmouth Seafront, Field Trips in collaboration with the Sid Valley BioDiversity Group to Mutters Moor to look at Ferns and to Knapp Orchard to look at lichens. Local businesses were also involved by hosting parts of a "Chemical Elements Quiz" which required members of the public to identify different elements of the periodic table.

Local schools were actively involved in the week's activities. This year's Schools' Art competition was on the theme of 'Things We Throw Away'. The Primary schools contributing were: Awliscombe, Feniton, Newton Poppleford, Offwell, Payhembury, Sidbury, Sidmouth, St. John's, Tipton St John, West Hill and Whimple. Additional school activities included Bug Hunting, Tree Identification and Stream Flow Measurements in the Sid River. Exhibition contributions came from Colyton Grammar, Exeter School, Exeter Maths School and Sidmouth Scouts

Financial Review

Monies are raised each year to finance each festival and are spent on running costs. SSF does 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. The annual Accounts are shown as an Appendix to this Report.

This year the SSF received 30% less income than the previous year, and the float currently stands at about one year's expenditure. This is in line with the target outlined in our reserves policy.

Reserves Policy

The reserves policy is to hold enough funds to cover the following year.

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).

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:



26/8/2025

Annual Accounts submitted to the Charity Commission

 CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES		Receipts and payments accounts		CC16a	
For the period from		To			
Section A Receipts and payments					
	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Grants and Sponsors	10,600	-	-	10,600	17,718
Advertising	- 0	-	-	-	-
Donations	3,017	-	-	3,017	2,566
Ticket sales	2,626	-	-	2,626	2,636
Other	225	-	-	225	550
	- 0	-	-	-	-
	- 0	-	-	-	-
	- 0	-	-	-	-
Sub total(Gross income for AR)	16,468	-	-	16,468	23,470
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	- 0	- 0	- 0	-	
	- 0	- 0	- 0	-	- 0
Sub total	- 0	- 0	- 0	-	- 0
Total receipts	16,468	- 0	- 0	16,468	23,470
A3 Payments					
Communications	3,733	-	-	3,733	6,352
Venues	4,968	-	-	4,968	5,166
Speakers, presenters, events	6,526	-	-	6,526	4,742
General and admin	1,791	-	-	1,791	1,529
	- 0	-	-	-	-
	- 0	-	-	-	-
	- 0	-	-	-	-
	- 0	-	-	-	-
Sub total	17,018	- 0	- 0	17,018	17,789
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	- 0	- 0	- 0	- 0	
	- 0	- 0	- 0	- 0	- 0
Sub total	- 0	- 0	- 0	- 0	- 0
Total payments	17,018	- 0	- 0	- 0	17,789
Net of receipts/(payments)	550	-	-	550	5,681
A5 Transfers between funds	- 0	-	-	- 0	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	17,519	-	-	17,519	11,838
Cash funds this year end	16,969	-	-	16,969	17,519
Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period					
Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £	
B1 Cash funds					
		-	-	-	
		-	-	-	
		-	-	-	
	Total cash funds	-	-	-	

