

# Trading on the seafront?

**SIDMOUTH residents have been asked to speak out on whether street trading should be allowed on the seafront.**

These areas are currently designated as prohibited.

However, during folk week, traders set up on the street obstructing the Promenade.

This came to a head during last year's festival, prompting a number of complaints.

East Devon District Council's executive has agreed to consult on whether traders should be allowed.

Speaking at Wednesday night's meeting, Councillor Graham Liverton said: "We have been having problems and this consultation would be a step in the right direction."

EDDC chairman Paul Diviani asked whether, depending on the outcome of the consultation, could any decision be implemented in time for this year's festival? An EDDC officer said, although the time scale was tight, she believed it would be possible.

Residents are now being asked to give their opinions as to whether the street trading is a joy or a hindrance.

Paul Duriez, new chairman of

Sidmouth Chamber of Commerce, said: "Street trading during Folk Week should be encouraged, but regulated so they are only in set positions. I think that adds to the experience of the visitors, which is the most important thing.

"Having people who are licensed is much fairer on business. What is very unfair is people just pitching up there and selling their wares in competition with the local shops.

"I think, personally, I would rather see street trading established during Folk Week first and, once we see how that works, possibly roll it out to other events such as the Regatta."

An EDDC spokesman said: "Every year during Folk Festival week, a number of traders set up their stalls and trade illegally. Some people have complained to the council about their presence, whilst others feel it is an inseparable and enjoyable element of the festival.

Licensing officers will liaise with Sidmouth Town Council, the chamber and Devon County Council, but they also want to hear from the people of Sidmouth and shopkeepers.

● Have your say: use the coupon on page 38.