

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Community Resilience Working Party

Notes of the virtual meeting held at 1400 on Wednesday 9 September 2020 via Zoom

Present

Cllr Tony Woodward (Chair)	TW	Exmouth Town Council
Chetna Jones	CJ	Exmouth Town Council
Natasha Smart	NS	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Maddy Chapman	MC	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Tim Dumper	TD	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr David Poor	DP	Exmouth Town Council

Apologies

Lisa Bowman	LB	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Brian Bailey	BB	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council

1. Welcome and Apologies

1.1. TW welcomed attendees to the meeting and noted apologies.

2. Notes of Last Meeting

2.1. Members approved the notes of the last meeting on 30 October 2019 without issue.

3. Matters Arising from Last Meeting

3.1. TW referred to an action at the last meeting regarding registering our volunteers with the Red Cross. TW updated the meeting that he had been in touch with the Red Cross as advised, but they had explained that they had no facility to keep a register of volunteers. No representative attended the Volunteer Meeting in January. There has therefore been no Red Cross participation in our plan to date.

3.2. Members agreed that the Volunteer Meeting in January had been very successful.

4. Devon Communities Together (DCT) and Public Health in Devon Presentations and Impact on Exmouth Emergency Plan

4.1. TD, TW and LB had attended and produced reports (circulated separately with the agenda) highlighting any points relevant to the Exmouth Emergency Plan from the DCT sessions (relating to the Local Outbreak Management Plan and Community Covid 19 Response) and Public Health in Devon presentation which they had respectively attended. This led to a broad discussion about points to note which may be relevant for Exmouth's Emergency Plan, as follows:

- **Pandemic Risk.** This was a risk area which hadn't been previously considered in any depth, but in 2020 has clearly emerged as a major risk which should be included in the Plan (see para 5.1);
- **Vulnerable Residents.** TD highlighted the expansion of the vulnerable residents category which had become apparent during Covid-19, to include not just those with health issues but also those who do not have much money and whose personal finances may drastically change. Providing access to funding was therefore important, as was a friending/listening scheme (he had volunteered for one which was about to start);
- **Funding for Community Groups/Organisations.** MC highlighted the good example of Brixington Church (one of the Incident Control Points), which set up a committee to help residents as soon as the pandemic started, to provide support such as food boxes, getting prescriptions and helping with hospital appointments. She cited that at one point 35 food boxes a week were being issued, and funding was being provided to help residents with electricity bills, all of which was paid for by the church. MC had therefore pushed for the church to receive a grant. She therefore wanted to highlight the need to support community groups and organisations who were themselves supporting others by helping to secure funding for them. CJ explained that this had been the case with the Exmouth Mutual Aid group, when ETC had engaged with EDDC and organised funding to have leaflets delivered and sent out to every household. TD commented that, at the start of the pandemic, Finance Committee had set up an emergency aid grant scheme, which he thought was still open, and it might be relevant to publicise this again;

Action 1: CJ to contact Finance Committee to repromote available funding

- **Devon County Council (DCC) Lead Role During the Pandemic.** Members noted that DCC was very much in the lead in responding to the pandemic in Devon, with an enforced responsibility for public health, although had not provided much guidance in the early months of the pandemic for local plans such as Exmouth's. CJ explained that DALC is pushing for higher level authorities to be more aware of the role of local town councils and to communicate with them more. Our Local Resilience Forum has recognised this but not the higher authority tiers, and actions for Town and Parish Councils still need to be clearer;
- **ETC Role During the Pandemic.** Chetna reiterated that ETC's role should focus on aspects like communications, coordination and support, such as grant funding, and suggested expanding the explanation of this in the Plan, to which members agreed;

Action 2: CJ to expand section in the Plan explaining ETC's role

- **Activating the Plan.** MC sought clarification on how the Plan would be activated. TW explained that it would be activated by one of the four LERT Coordinators or LB;

- **Sandbags and Sand Procurement.** MC wanted to highlight the need to be ready with sand to fill sandbags, which may become a problem if the town is in lockdown due to Covid-19. She recommended that ETC put in an order for sand before the winter. CJ explained that the WP has a small budget which could be used to purchase sand, but equally important was the issue about where it would be kept. MC was tasked to speak to DCC Councillor Jeff Trail to check what Devon Highways advise on this and to clarify the locations of any local drop-off points;

Action 3: MC to explore sand availability points and DCC guidance

CJ raised the point that empty sandbags are held at the Town Hall and by Councillors. Sandbags also used to be held by AJ's Taxis, but now that they have moved premises it was important to find another town location with longer opening hours to hold stock of these;

Action 4: All to email Reception with suggestions for new locations to hold empty sandbags

- **Snow and Salt/Grit:** DCC replenishes salt/grit boxes on major roads for heavy snow use, which residents can access for use on minor roads. MC explained that Exmouth did not sign up to the Snow Warden Scheme because this would have required training of specific individuals, when it was found that residents were happy to help themselves to the salt/grit boxes;
- **4x4 Vehicles.** MC wondered whether there was a list of 4x4 drivers who could be called on in the event of heavy snow. TW explained that there was not, as keeping a set list might imply that those on the list were acting on behalf of the Council rather than their own behalf which would create an insurance issue. However, there were organisations (listed in the Plan) who maintain details of volunteers who could be called for help on this;
- **Community/Support Groups.** TW explained that that he had suggested some additions/updates to the list in the Plan (details circulated separately with the agenda, see para 5.2). Several members discussed having a list/leaflet ready of a wider range of local support groups which could be shared with residents in a crisis. This could include NHS volunteers/support groups. DP offered to go through the WEB board to find out more about these.

Action 5: DP to explore local NHS volunteers/support groups

- 4.2 CJ thanked members for their comments and suggestions, which would be included in the Plan as appropriate.

5. Additional Amendments to the Emergency Plan

- 5.1. **New Annex L Covering Pandemics.** TW proposed a new Annex L covering pandemics for inclusion in the Plan (draft text circulated separately with the agenda). Members approved this with the following amendments: change the use of the word 'virus' to the broader term 'disease' (para 2);

and expand the reference to 'shielding' to 'vulnerable and shielding' (para 4).

- 5.2. **Risk Triggers/Support Groups.** TW had also suggested amendments to the triggers and support group sections (draft text circulated separately with the agenda), which members approved.

Action 6: NS to update amendments to the Plan

- 5.3. Members discussed the fact that only the Emergency Services can declare an incident, with the Police taking the primary role in coordinating them. The non-Emergency Services response would be likely to be led by EDDC (who has a statutory duty to respond), with ETC getting involved in a support capacity if asked or at the start of an incident before lead agencies are able to deploy in situ. CJ commented that ETC works closely with EDDC's Dave Whelan, who is aware of our Plan and has provided feedback on it.

- 5.4. **Any Other Actions.** None raised.

6. Update on Grant Application/Emergency Boxes

- 6.1. CJ updated members on the DCT grant application, which had initially been lost by DCT but was resent and quickly approved to the maximum sum of £1,500. At the working party's request, CJ intends to use the funding to create 8 emergency boxes (containing the Plan and emergency equipment and held by the ICPs and coordinating centres, ready for LERT Coordinators to access when necessary). The cost estimates for the boxes amount to c £2,000-2,500.

7. Update on ID Badges

- 7.1. NS updated members on the LERT Coordinator ID badges (to include name and photograph). ETC has now had a response from the contractor who provides ETC with ID badges, so hopes to have these ready soon along with the emergency boxes.

8. Any Other Business

- 8.1. TD mentioned that he was going to a DALC Committee meeting the following week. If members would like him to put any questions to DALC, please email him.
- 8.2. TW reminded members that there is another DCT Local Outbreak Management Plan session on 28 September, details of which have already been circulated.
- 8.3. CJ reminded members of the upcoming Flooding and Land Drainage Special meeting for Exmouth Tidal Defence Flood Gates on 22 September and hoped all Community Resilience WP members would attend because of the particular relevance of this issue for the Plan.

9. Date of Next Meeting

9.1. The date and time of the next meeting will be **Wednesday 2 December 2020 at 1400**, held virtually via Zoom.

The meeting finished at approximately 1520.