

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL Festival and Events Working Party

Notes of the virtual meeting held at 1400 on Monday 7 September 2020 via Zoom

Present

Cllr Joy Whipps (Chair)	JW	Exmouth Town Council
Lisa Bowman	LB	Exmouth Town Council
Chetna Jones	CJ	Exmouth Town Council
Carla Hiley	CH	Exmouth Town Council
Natasha Smart	NS	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Aurora Bailey	AB	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Brian Bailey	BB	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Frank Cullis	FC	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Olly Davey	OD	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Cherry Nicholas	CN	Exmouth Town Council

Apologies

Cllr Alex Sadiq	AS	Exmouth Town Council
Trevor Huggons	TH	Festival Volunteer

1. Welcome and Apologies

- 1.1. JW welcomed attendees to the meeting and noted apologies.

2. Notes of Last Meeting

- 2.1. AB proposed, seconded by FC, that the notes of the last meeting on 12 March 2020 be approved, with no matters arising.

3. Festival 2021 Update

- 3.1. CH explained that the programme for the Festival 2021 is already in place, as she has moved 2020's cancelled line-up to next year, however she is waiting for more detailed government guidance on the likely future Covid-19 situation before being able to start going firm with plans. As it currently stands, mass gatherings can go ahead (but not live music venues/theatres), but it is unclear what additional Covid-safe requirements will also need to be in place. PL1 Events has advised that the Festival should be considered as a 'touring venue' since many of the artists will be moving around venues, so clearly there will be a lot of safety implications to consider.
- 3.2. CH is keeping an eye on what similar event providers are planning and has noted, for instance, that Glastonbury and Reading Festivals are already intending to go ahead for 2021. This is because they are ticketed events so it will be somewhat easier for them to monitor attendees (eg with temperature readings and Track and Trace) and therefore manage their

safety. Unfortunately CH believes that introducing ticketing for the Exmouth Festival would not be viable. Capacity-wise, she has also looked at how many people could attend the Festival if the 1m social distancing rule has to be adhered to, which would reduce the 8,000 crowd capacity to 1,000, which would again make it difficult to create a viable event.

- 3.3. In the event that the Festival 2021 cannot go ahead, CH has been considering alternatives such as picnic-style concerts and standalone music events which could be ticketed and thus use Track and Trace. Different areas could be marked out to keep people more contained in set pods. CH will therefore continue to keep an eye on the government guidance, as well as what other event providers are planning for 2021. She thinks that the Festival would still be able to go ahead if, by c January 2021, we knew what the guidance was and what additional measures needed to be put in place. JW therefore suggested revisiting this agenda item later in the year.

4. Christmas 2020 Plans

- 4.1. **Strand Christmas Tree.** CJ explained that she has been in contact with Richard King of Kings Garden Centre who has offered to provide and sponsor a tree for Exmouth Town Council (ETC). Nick, his tree supplier, would also deliver and install the tree in the Strand. In return, Richard has asked that we do some early promotion of his involvement, such as including a photo story of the tree (from it being selected to being lit in the Strand). ETC has social media accounts and contacts with the press which could be utilised to help promote this, which would provide good support for these local businesses.

CJ also outlined some other initiatives which Richard King has offered to provide: use of a Father Christmas around the town; and smaller Christmas trees for the primary schools' tree decorating competition.

- 4.2. **Town Christmas Lights.** LB explained that there is a separate ETC working party dealing with Christmas lights, so she did not plan to go into any depth on the subject here. In brief, however, she has been in touch with our usual contractor, James at Sound Events, re adding to (and replacing as necessary) our existing lighting scheme at low cost using some funds left over from last year. The aim is to make the town look as festive as possible. In response to a query from FC about taking ETC's climate change targets into consideration when purchasing new lights, LB explained that all ETC's existing lights are LED low-wattage/low-usage. CH mentioned that both Exeter and Plymouth City Councils have cancelled their Christmas lights switch-on events. LB explained that a town-wide lights switch-on would never be possible in Exmouth because all the sets of lights are hooked up separately.
- 4.3. **Holy Trinity Church Advent Event, Sunday 29 November.** CJ explained that she has been contacted by the new Rector of Holy Trinity Church, Reverend Steven Jones, who is extremely keen to work with ETC on community events. He is proposing to hold a community lantern parade to

mark the start of Advent on Sunday 29 November 2020. The parade could start at the Strand, walk along Rolle Street and into the church grounds (which would be closed to vehicles/parking) for a short service. The church would then be open for families to go inside, where there could be smaller Christmas trees on which decorations could be added in remembrance of a loved one. The trees could also be used for the primary schools' tree decorating competition which ETC has held for the last 2 years. ETC would partner with the church for the event, focusing on liaising with the primary schools re their involvement and sourcing the schools' Christmas trees and lantern-making materials, whilst the church would provide vital support in manning the parade safely with volunteers. CJ was keen to hear members' views on this event overall and whether, for instance, the start of the parade could be tied in with the Strand Christmas tree lights switch-on.

- 4.4. **Scope for Christmas Fayre and Grotto.** Before opening up a discussion on the above Advent event, LB suggested that she update the meeting on latest thinking regarding a Christmas Fayre. She explained that she and CH had recently had a meeting with Angela Gordon Lennox, the new EDDC Events officer, who has been employed with the aim of encouraging the use of EDDC's event spaces in order to increase revenue. She is therefore keen to encourage ETC events, such as a Christmas Fayre, although LB had explained to her that, in respect of the Exmouth Christmas Fayre, there have been significant risks and limitations in previous years (not least the weather risk, costs and the difficulty of such a small team delivering an event which, in the past, has not always been particularly successful). More recently, Angela has explained that she has been in contact with a lady in Sidmouth who would like to bring a Christmas food/craft market to the Strand over a weekend in December. LB therefore wanted to raise with members the point that, in view of ETC's own challenges in organising a Christmas Fayre, coupled with the added risk and measures required due to Covid-19, if EDDC was planning to support a separate Christmas event in the Strand this year, then this could be an opportunity for ETC to reduce its own risk and step back from organising a Fayre.
- 4.5. There followed some extensive discussion about the above Christmas events for 2020 in Exmouth, which included further points for clarity/consideration as follows:
- LB clarified that there was no suggestion that EDDC would run an event using ETC's budget. However, ETC might be able to support any events in Exmouth with publicity, marketing or branding;
 - LB explained that she had asked Angela whether there might be scope for Exmouth stallholders (including charities) to get involved in a market-style event not organised by ETC, and she thought that there might be scope for this;
 - AB explained that she had spoken to Gerry in the Indoor Market, who is keen to get involved in any festive events which are organised. LB explained that it might be possible for ETC to support a separate Indoor Market/Grotto-style event, or it may be possible for Gerry to link up with this other market-style event;

- It might be possible to organise a late-night shopping trail-style event, although members recognised that these had not been particularly well-supported by local businesses in the past.
- 4.6. Following discussion, JW sought members' views on a final decision on a Christmas event in Exmouth:
- **Christmas Fayre:** Members agreed that it would be difficult for ETC to deliver a Christmas Fayre this year and they did not support ETC expenditure on this. However, they would welcome a similar event being organised in the Strand supported by EDDC;
 - **Holy Trinity Church Advent Event:** Members supported the idea of working together with the church to hold a Strand Christmas tree lights switch-on and community lantern parade event, as well as holding a primary schools' Christmas tree decorating competition (which could even be held online). The meeting agreed for CJ to move ahead with engaging with Reverend Jones and contacting the schools to gauge their involvement;
 - **Father Christmas:** Members also discussed how they might take up Richard King's offer of a Father Christmas, which they agreed was a good idea. CH offered to contact the Rotary Club for thoughts on this.

5. Any Other Business

- 5.1. No other business was raised.

6. Date of Next Meeting

- 6.1. Members agreed it was important to meet again soon for an update on the Advent event, as well as to learn more about the standalone Christmas market which EDDC has been exploring. The date and time of the next meeting will be **Thursday 8 October at 1400**, held virtually via Zoom.

The meeting finished at approximately 1530.