

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Party

Notes of the meeting held at 2pm on Tuesday 8th September 2020
held remotely via Zoom

Present

Councillor Andrew Colman	AC	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Andrew Toyne	AT	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Frank Cullis	FC	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Olly Davey	OD	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council
(Ex-officio)		
Councillor Tim Dumper	TD	Exmouth Town Council
Lisa Bowman	LB	Exmouth Town Council Officer
Jennifer Wellington	JW	Exmouth Town Council Notetaker
Nicky Nicholls	NN	Transition Exmouth Chair

Apologies

Councillor Brian Bailey	BB	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Mike Rosser	MR	Exmouth Town Council

1. Welcome and apologies

TD welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted as above.

2. Approval of previous meeting notes and matters arising, including:

The notes of the previous meeting held on the 11th August 2020 were approved.

Grants for Trees and establishment of Tree Charter branch

LB attended a webinar from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) in conjunction with the Woodland Trust.

The Woodland Trust are working towards every local planning authority to have a tree strategy, with an emphasis on planting extra woodland and protecting established woodlands.

It was discussed that the Town Council should investigate applying to be part of the Tree Charter, which would include working towards the 10 Tree Charter Principles.

Action: LB to circulate the 10 Tree Charter Principles to members.

It was suggested that the Town Council investigate the following as part of the Tree Charter:

Community:

- Apply for trees each year and work with the community to plant and protect the new trees from vandalism and help with watering.
- Work with local farmers with regards to agriculture and hedgerows.
- To reinstate ex-Councillor Brenda Taylor's Woodland programme.
- Encourage the public to keep nature calendars to record what happens throughout the year, including leaves and wildlife. Information could be available through the Transition Exmouth website.
- Add to The Woodland Trust's ancient tree inventory and become guardians for those in Exmouth.
- Involve schools with the message of tree protection in Exmouth.

Planning Committee:

- As the delegated authority for Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), ETC have some say in protecting existing trees.
- To look at tree policies within the Exmouth Neighbourhood Plan, potentially adding more when the Plan is up for review.

The ideas above could be promoted through the Tree Charter Day on the 28th November 2020, being mindful of officer time.

Action: LB to circulate relevant information to members, including the 10 Tree Charter Principles.

A proactive resolution would need to be taken to Full Council with regards to joining the Tree Charter. This will be discussed at the next Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Party meeting, with the hope of adding it to the Full Council agenda for approval in October.

FC questioned the timing of the Tree Charter Day as it may come before Town Council approval. LB explained that the Town Council could get involved with the Tree Charter Day without planting trees, for example promoting the Tree Charter actions.

TD thanked LB for attending the webinar and reporting back.

Members were reminded that Exmouth Town Council (ETC) does not own any land on which to plant trees.

OD added that planting trees should not be seen as a 'magic solution' and there should be an emphasis on protecting the trees already planted and planting additional wildflowers. 'Guerrilla chalking' arrows and information onto the pavements showing where trees, wildflower patches and wildlife could be found was also suggested.

It was also noted that MR had sent some photos to LB of land south of Jubilee Drive of potential areas to plant trees. It was found that these areas are owned by East Devon District Council (EDDC). However, as Wild Exmouth and the EDDC Parks Team have been proactively identifying EDDC land for planting trees, MR had been advised to follow up with EDDC directly.

If ETC were to move forward with tree planting or working on the Tree Charter, there would be a need to set-up a group or work closely with members of the public to help with tree management.

Within the new planning reforms put forward by Central Government, specifics about tree lined streets are included. However, concerns were raised over zoning. Members were asked to note that any comments or concerns about the new planning reforms would be picked up in ETC's Planning Committee meetings.

In addition to the new planning reforms, new information regarding demolition or removal of trees were to be added to the Government's Environment Bill.

Action: LB and TD to discuss how to move the tree plan forward.

Transition Exmouth Website Launch update

NN updated members regarding the launch of the Transition Exmouth, 'Our Place Our Planet' website.

The planned launch for late September had been pushed back to mid-October, around the 15th / 20th, and online via a Zoom meeting rather than in Manor Gardens. This would be to help with social distancing due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic as well as uncertainty with the weather. The current plan would be for up to 90 invited guests, including local Councillors, businesses and other relevant parties be invited to the Zoom meeting with Rob Hopkins as a key speaker. However, it is uncertain if Rob would be able to attend due to planned meetings abroad, Coronavirus permitting. If Rob is unable to attend, Transition Exmouth will try and book another speaker.

The main aim of the website launch is to promote the value of the website, to explain what it is and to offer breakout Zoom rooms to allow for networking.

OD asked whether the website would include a forum or discussion page to allow communication amongst members of the public. Due to the need for management of a forum-based page, it was thought that a link to the Transition Exmouth Facebook page would be better.

The content would include local links and information within five key areas: food, nature and gardening, waste, travel, and energy. There may be the option of linking with the Tree Charter under one of the existing categories.

TD thanked NN and Transition Exmouth members for their hard work on the website.

Action: NN to email the ‘flat website’ documents to the Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Party members.

Electric Charging Points update:

TD had contacted Andrew Ennis at East Devon with regards to installing electric car charging points. It appears EDDC are keen to make progress in this area once finances allow.

Alasdair Mumford, Corporate Energy Manager at Devon County Council, was also contacted but no response was received yet.

FC raised a concern about where the charging points would be situated as the idea of installing them outside residential houses could cause issues. Also, AT added that lengthy queues could form as it takes a long-time to charge. It was thought it was too early to discuss these issues at this stage. TD confirmed that the issues mentioned would be professionally evaluated as part of ongoing feasibility studies.

Members noted that half a dozen, fast charging points were to be installed at the new Sideshore water sports development for public use.

Town Hall energy update

SG had contacted John Golding at EDDC with regards to installing solar panels on the Exmouth Town Hall building. Although there were aspirations to install solar panels on appropriate roofs, no dates for installations were given. There was also no update on smart meters or switching to a green energy supplier.

Action: OD to ask EDDC about changing energy supplier to a green energy supplier.

In addition, LB stated that EDDC were advertising to recruit a manager to lead on climate change.

Water Stations

The paperwork for installing four water bottle filling stations in Exmouth was still with the solicitor. Once all the paperwork has been signed off, the Deputy Town Clerk can consult with contractors.

Active Travel

The Coronavirus pandemic put the Active Travel Day on hold. However, as the application form for landowner's permission with EDDC is in place, it is hoped that the event will go ahead once Coronavirus restrictions ease.

The suggestion to make Exeter Road made one-way, with half of the road for traffic and the other half as a cycle path will be added to the Exmouth Transport Partnership meeting agenda.

It was reported that the Bapton Valley Park improvement scheme is progressing well with EDDC in the process of drawing up some plans which can be used to cost up the proposed improvements.

Unfortunately, no Section 106 money is available from the Goodmores development to link this area up with the Bapton Valley Park. However, ETC will look out for any opportunities which could be funded via the Town Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies in the future.

3. To discuss and agree follow up action needed in respect of XR correspondence received 10th August 2020

It was discussed and agreed that no further correspondence was necessary at this time as answers were either in the recent response which had been sent on behalf of the Town Council by LB or action had already been taken. e.g. putting the environmental audit results and working party notes on the Council website. However, if XR or anybody else has further questions, Members would be happy to address them.

4. To note that follow up action in respect of the recent environmental audit and scope for a reduction in the Town Council's GHG Emissions will be delegated via the Chairman / Town Clerk to the relevant Town Council working parties

It was noted that the results of the recent audit were now available for the public to view on the Town Council's website.

It was agreed that any climate related actions arising from the audit will be pursued by the relevant ETC working parties and the Chairs of those committees will be asked to report back.

Action: LB to organise a briefing of other ETC working party Chairs to explain the Environmental Audit Report and to flag up what is within their scope in the working party agendas with regards to environmental issues.

5. To collate ideas for training / learning needs for further consideration at the next HR Group meeting

As part of the working party Chair meeting, any gaps in knowledge will be discussed and relevant webinars/courses suggested. ETC will keep up to date with relevant policies.

Additionally, if Councillors or staff see a relevant webinar/course they would like to attend, this can be raised with LB and would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Most Councillors have had planning training and know that legal reasons can override suggestions for more eco-friendly alternatives. ETC have tried to insist on some eco-friendly ideas within planning applications, for example installing solar panels. In the future, members could ask for conditions to be included in planning permissions such as bats and bird boxes or cycle storage to be installed, if relevant.

It was noted that ETC is not part of the Local Government Association (LGA) so the Town Council has had no direct access to LGA webinars/courses. However, as NALC is associated with the LGA, NALC circulates relevant information to Town and Parish Councils.

6. To discuss and agree a communications strategy for the Working Party / Town Council in respect of broader Climate Change and Ecological Emergency initiatives

It was discussed that full press releases be published for bigger stories and the Town Council's social media platforms (Twitter and Facebook) be used to promote the smaller stories.

Action: JW to investigate using Orlo software to link up the Town Council's social media accounts.

Using the 'Mayor's Blog' facility on the ETC website, with a link to the Exmouth Journal website, was also discussed.

Action: LB and JW to create a draft communication strategy which will be run past TD.

7. To receive an update on other relevant matters from Town Council working parties, outside body representatives and Transition Exmouth

Community Resilience Working Party:

The Community Resilience Working Party are reviewing the Emergency Plan to include pandemics.

Plastic Reduction Working Party:

An update on the water bottle filling stations was provided earlier in the meeting.

The project to create infographics for the waste bins in the Magnolia Centre had been postponed due to EDDC officer time needing to be spent in other areas due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Plastic-free Exmouth/Surfers Against Sewage (SAS) group have been organising regular beach cleans and members thanked them for their hard work. However, work appeared to have slowed on gaining accreditation of Exmouth as a plastic free community – one of their key purposes.

NN updated the working party that Catherine Causley from DCC has been working on a waste reduction strategy to bring groups together and was asking for funding for a project to stop people dropping litter. NN asked if there could be a link with the Town Council for this project.

Action: NN to ask Catherine Causley to liaise with TD regarding this project.

Additionally, NN reported that unfortunately the crisp packet collection scheme was unlikely to restart due to the Materials Reclamation Facility (MRF) in Exeter being unable to deal with the extra waste.

The Plastic Reduction Working Party will continue until outstanding projects are finished then this group will become part of the Climate and Ecological Working Party.

LB made members aware of an email she received from DCC regarding a renewable solar energy initiative. This information is being put in Transition Exmouth's newsletter.

AOB

Ride On

It was agreed that the Town Council should try and facilitate a bike collection point for Ride On, Exeter.

Action: LB and JW to follow this up with Ride On with the possibility of promoting regular bike collections in Exmouth.

Next meeting

Next meeting Tuesday 20th October at 2pm via Zoom.

The meeting finished at 15.57pm.