

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL Festival and Events Working Party

Notes of the virtual meeting held at 1400 on Thursday 8 October 2020 via Zoom

Present

Cllr Joy Whipps (Chair)	JW	Exmouth Town Council
Chetna Jones	CJ	Exmouth Town Council
Carla Hiley	CH	Exmouth Town Council
Natasha Smart	NS	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

Lisa Bowman	LB	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Aurora Bailey	AB	Exmouth Town Council
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. FC proposed, seconded by SG, that the notes of the last meeting on 7 September 2020 be approved.
- 2.2. In respect of matters arising, CH provided a brief update on the standalone Christmas market which had been discussed at the last meeting. As far as she is aware, EDDC continues to engage with the organiser, but it is clear that this is a private enterprise (like any other event being held on EDDC land) and therefore ETC has no involvement with it.

3. Christmas 2020 Plans

- 3.1. **Advent Event, Sunday 29 November 2020: Lantern Parade.** Firstly, CJ provided an update on the proposed lantern parade. She has been in touch with the 8 Exmouth primary schools about attending the parade and making the lanterns, as has happened in previous years. However, the response has been disappointing (although understandable): 4 schools have declined, and of the remaining 4 only 2 have confirmed the numbers of pupils who would be involved. CJ therefore discussed this response, along with ETC concerns about encouraging any kind of public gathering in the current pandemic situation, with Reverend Steven Jones, the Rector of Holy Trinity

Church. He agreed that it would be difficult to hold an event like this in the current climate and that it should not go ahead as proposed. CJ therefore wanted to highlight this with the working party. After a short discussion, JW clarified that the lantern parade would not go ahead.

3.2. Advent Event, Sunday 29 November 2020: Christmas Tree Festival.

As an alternative to the lantern parade, CJ had discussed with CH and Reverend Jones whether more could be made of the idea of the primary schools' Christmas tree decorating, turning it into a bigger scale Christmas Tree Festival with wider community involvement. 6 of the 8 primary schools have indicated they would like to be involved in the tree decorating this year, and CJ wondered whether community groups/charities might also like to decorate a tree. Reverend Jones is very keen on establishing a broader community event and has offered to make Holy Trinity Church available to host it. There would be space for 12 trees, which each school or community group/charity could decorate, and these would be delivered to each school/group afterwards for them to display in their premises. The Festival could open from 4-7pm on Sunday 29 November, to allow visitors to view the trees, and could continue daily from 5-7pm from Monday 30 November-Wednesday 2 December. Visitors could vote for their favourite tree either in person or online, as the Festival opening could also be filmed and made available for visitors to view remotely.

- 3.3. There followed some discussion about different aspects of the proposed Christmas Tree Festival. CH wondered whether it would be worth finding additional venues to include more trees, but members felt that it was better to limit the Festival to the 12 trees which could be managed in one venue. FC raised the issue of safety and whether some kind of online booking process could be used to help regulate the flow of visitors. CJ explained that the church would manage visitors in a Covid-secure manner and members agreed that it could be left to the church to organise this. Members also discussed ideas for other community groups who might want to get involved, which could include charities such as Open Door, Salvation Army, Community Larder and Citizens' Advice, or children's organisations such as the various cadets groups in Exmouth. Not all groups would be in a position to decorate the trees so it would be worth developing a larger list to approach. CJ suggested that groups with a crafting capability might be more likely to want to be involved; CH suggested care homes might be another option for this. CJ asked that members email suggestions for community groups/charities to approach/include asap.

ACTION: All to email Reception ideas for community groups/charities asap

- 3.4. In terms of costs, CJ explained that the WP has a budget to deliver Christmas-related events and that costs would be likely to include the 12 trees from Richard King, as well as a bigger tree for Holy Trinity Church which Reverend Jones would like to use as a remembrance tree. The meeting agreed that schools would not need to be provided with a budget or materials for the tree decorating, though it might be necessary for the community organisations/charities, so there could be a small cost for this

(although CH suggested materials could be procured cheaply from the Scrap Store). CJ explained that schools had previously been provided with a factsheet on tree decorating, so this could be provided again to all participants. Members discussed having a theme for the event and agreed that the theme should be 'Joy'.

- 3.5. Members also discussed additional ideas for inclusion in the event. OD suggested expanding the Festival into the community, eg by encouraging residents to put a picture of a tree in their windows (similar to the rainbows during lockdown). FC raised the idea from COLP about replanting Christmas trees on the beach against the Esplanade wall to help stop sand erosion/movement. CJ commented that EDDC's Nick Christo had been asked about this but not yet responded, so she could chase this with him.

ACTION: CJ to contact Nick Christo re Christmas tree beach planting

- 3.6. Following the discussion, CJ sought the working party's final decision on this proposal. Members felt strongly that it was important to deliver some kind of community event at Christmas, albeit conducted within the safeguards of the Covid-19 regulations, and unanimously supported this idea. SG proposed, seconded by FC, to hold a Christmas Tree Festival held at Holy Trinity Church with 12 decorated trees, along the lines outlined above.

- 3.7. **Promotional material for Christmas celebrations and community guidance.** CJ explained that she had also spoken to Reverend Jones about compiling some kind of literature/guide for the community. CH suggested that this could take the form of a Christmas card and could include useful details such as local support/helpline numbers over Christmas and dates/times of local Christmas events/church services, as well as details of the Christmas Tree Festival. CJ explained that this could be delivered in a similar way to the Exmouth Mutual Aid leaflet, which was posted to all residents at the start of the pandemic, with the help of EDDC who provided all the names/addresses. Members supported the idea of information being delivered in the form of a Christmas card to residents. OD wondered whether the scope could be expanded to include things like festive recipes and tips for recycling/reducing waste, such as ways of packaging paper without using purchased wrapping paper. The card should also be printed on recyclable paper.

NB Cllr Bailey left the meeting

- 3.8. JW noted that the card would need to be delivered before the start of the Christmas Tree Festival on 29 November. CH agreed to start working on ideas for the content asap. She sought suggestions for the front cover: members unanimously agreed on a tree, possibly a Magnolia or Christmas tree.

4. Any Other Business

- 4.1. In respect of other outside upcoming public events, such as the Remembrance Day service in the Strand, FC raised concerns about how the

gathering of crowds would be managed (even when advised not to congregate). Members agreed that it may be necessary to pass these concerns on to EDDC.

5. Date of Next Meeting

- 5.1. Members agreed that it was important to meet again in a month to agree final plans for the Christmas Tree Festival. The date and time of the next meeting will be **Thursday 5 November at 1400**, held virtually via Zoom.

The meeting finished at 1500.