

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Community Resilience Working Party

Notes of the virtual meeting held at 1400 on Wednesday 20 January 2021 via Zoom

Present

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| Cllr Tony Woodward (Chair) | TW | Exmouth Town Council |
| Chetna Jones | CJ | Exmouth Town Council |
| Natasha Smart | NS | Exmouth Town Council |
| Cllr Steve Gazzard | SG | Exmouth Town Council |
| Cllr Tim Dumper | TD | Exmouth Town Council |
| Cllr David Poor | DP | Exmouth Town Council |

Apologies

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| Lisa Bowman | LB | Exmouth Town Council |
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1. Welcome and Apologies

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

2. Notes of Last Meeting

2.1. Proposed by TD, seconded by DP, members approved the notes of the last meeting on 9 September 2020 without issue.

3. Matters Arising from Last Meeting: Actions Update

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

- **Completed.** CJ explained that a lot of work had been done on this before Christmas, which had resulted in financial aid being given out to numerous local community groups for those in need;

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

- **Completed.** NS explained that she had updated the Emergency Plan accordingly;

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

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

- **Ongoing.** Firstly, CJ wanted to clarify any confusion over grit bins (since Action 3 had confused sand availability points with grit bins), and made it clear that grit bins contain only grit and not sand.

Sandbags: CJ explained that sandbags are held at the Town Hall as well as by individual councillors. However, it would be useful to identify a town centre

location with greater accessibility throughout the day/weekend where an extra supply could be held and made available more easily in an emergency.

Sand Availability: Members also discussed the difficulty for residents of what to put in their sandbags, as neither grit from grit bins nor soil should ideally be used. SG explained that East Devon District Council (EDDC) had previously advised that residents could use sand from the seafront as a temporary measure, but not from the beach itself, only if taken from the road or path. CJ explained that a pallet of sand would not be expensive, but the issue was where to store it in the absence of an ETC depot of some kind. Members therefore agreed that a local store of easily available sand for residents to access was still an issue to be resolved;

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

- **No further action required.** DP explained that he had tried to explore this in a WEB meeting and had contacted someone separately, but had not yet had a response. TW commented that EDDC's website has a support hub page which ought to be sufficient for advertising support groups;

Action 6: NS to update amendments to the Plan

- **Completed.**

4. Issue Updates

- 4.1. **a. Grit bins.** CJ explained that LB had emailed councillors to seek their assistance in updating the locations of grit bins as well as to ascertain the condition and quantity of grit in each. The resulting data had enabled TC to create a table of actual and possible grit bin locations (see table which had been circulated with the agenda). Although not complete, the table at least gives a broad idea of the current locations and status of the bins as far as we know. Members agreed to update the grit bin table at Annex M of the plan with the updated list. [NB Already actioned by NS]
- 4.2. The issue now is to confirm the list details with Devon County Council (DCC), who is responsible for maintaining the grit bins. The reason ETC set about creating its own list was due to DCC's mapping of grit bins clearly being inaccurate. A further complication is that DCC's mapping system does not seem to have updated the new Exmouth ward boundaries. TC has been seeking confirmation from DCC about the accuracy of ETC's updated list, and to enquire about the maintenance of the bins and the grit inside, but not yet received a response. CJ suggested raising this with LB to seek a response through DCC Councillor Jeff Trail. SG further suggested seeking an update report on this at the next Full Council in February.

Action 1: CJ to discuss with LB re seeking an update on grit bins from DCC

- 4.3. **b. Emergency Boxes.** CJ explained that the 8 emergency boxes are ready and contain copies of the Emergency Plan and essential kit such as torches and high vis jackets. The only extra items that could still be included are

walkie-talkies. One of the Community Resilience volunteers has a good knowledge of these and could advise on what type should be included in the boxes, if the working party could advise on the actual requirements for them. After some discussion, including about the use of walkie-talkies during the current NHS Covid vaccination programme in Exmouth where Nigel Pinkstone is a volunteer, CJ suggested she would contact Nigel for a steer on this. Otherwise, members agreed it might be easier initially to rely on mobile phones and review this if there was a problem.

Action 2: CJ to contact Nigel Pinkstone for advice re walkie-talkies

- 4.4. **c. Exmouth Flood Gate Volunteers.** CJ explained that she had had several discussions with Kate Pearson, Environment Agency, about ETC being involved with opening and closing the flood gates through a volunteer network. This led to a letter being distributed to local residents seeking volunteer support, which elicited quite a few responses. The focus is going to be on Morton Crescent residents, rather than businesses, and CJ is planning to invite residents to a meeting on 28 January, to which working party members are also invited. The initial aim is to develop a relationship with the volunteer group as well as to explain what volunteers can expect and give residents an opportunity to ask questions. The plan is to keep the Flood Gate volunteers as a separate group to the broader Community Resilience volunteers, although once the Flood Gate management is in place, and working well, then those volunteers could be asked if they would like to join the wider Community Resilience volunteer group also.
- 4.5. **d. Completion of Flood Gate MOU.** CJ believes that EDDC and EA are in the process of finalising this, including incorporating additional requirements highlighted following ETC seeking legal advice on it, such as listing all the assets referred to in the MOU and numbering each gate. ETC has not received a revised version yet but this is an issue for the Flooding and Land Drainage WP to pursue at its meeting the following week, so will not need to be considered further by this working party.
- 4.6. **e. Additional Names for Community Resilience Volunteer List.** TW explained that he had initially thought that the recent Car Park volunteers (those supporting the Covid vaccination rollout and comprising an additional 40 names) should be added to the broader Community Resilience volunteer list, but after speaking to CJ he was now of the view that the lists should be kept separate. TD agreed that volunteers are often volunteering in a very specific capacity (similar to the Flood Gate volunteers), so keeping the lists separate was the best option. CJ suggested that names could be included in the confidential version of the Emergency Plan but within their very specific volunteering capacity lists.
- 4.7. There was also some discussion about the need for clarity and guidance for the protection of volunteers, as had been highlighted by some recent correspondence with Car Park volunteers. It was clear that organisers Brooklands' view is that volunteers are assisting at their own risk, but this is not necessarily clear to, or appropriate for, the volunteers themselves. CJ

therefore believes there needs to be greater clarity on responsibilities in order to better protect volunteers. CJ has been in touch with the practice manager Debbie Sargeant to ask her to formally request ETC assistance to clarify requirements and safeguards for volunteers, if assistance is required, which would then be subject to normal Full Council consideration and process. TW suggested that he would also contact the supervisor Dave Moore about this.

5. Any Other Business

5.1. None raised.

6. Date of Next Meeting

6.1. The date and time of the next meeting will be **Wednesday 29 September 2021 at 1400**, although members agreed that additional meetings could be held in the meantime as necessary.

The meeting finished at approximately 1500.