

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council virtual meeting held on Monday 11 January 2021

Present:

Councillors:

S Gazzard (Chairman).	
A Bailey.	B Bailey.
E Beech.	F Caygill.
M Chapman.	A Colman.
O Davey.	B De Saram.
T Dumper.	L Elson.
I Kirvan.	C Nicholas.
D Poor.	M Rosser.
A Sadiq.	P Stott.
A Toye.	B Toye.
J Whibley.	J Whipps.
T Woodward.	

Devon County Councillors: R Scott and J Trail
East Devon District Councillor: P Millar

Officers:

Lisa Bowman, Town Clerk.
Chetna Jones, Deputy Town Clerk.

Apologies:

Councillors: F Cullis.

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting, as well as Sam Burnett, who was attending the meeting to provide a presentation on The Wave - Littleham and Littleham Emergency Larder.

The Chairman sought, and it was agreed, that item seven of the agenda be considered before item six to enable the presentation to be given before the other council items.

Public Forum:

Councillor P Millar was given permission to speak on a matter relating to the clock in the Magnolia Centre and the need for a financial provision to be made within the 2021/2022 budget.

Councillor P Millar confirmed that, as Town and Parish Councils have the power to improve amenities, a provision should be made to remove the previously damaged clock in the Magnolia Centre and replace it with an alternative centrepiece. Councillor P Millar asked when an advert will be placed to determine ownership of the clock?

The Chairman confirmed that, as both East Devon District Council and Devon County Council were unable to confirm ownership, Devon County Council had advised that an advert be placed to determine ownership. An advert will be placed soon, after which time the Town Council will review the situation and decide what further actions will be taken.

C21/001. Council meeting minutes

Councillor O Davey proposed, seconded by Councillor J Whipps, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Monday 7 December 2020 be approved.

The minutes of the meeting (previously circulated) were received and signed as a true record.

C21/002. Matters arising from previous minutes

The Town Clerk confirmed that funding in the form of vouchers had been provided before Christmas to several organisations to help with providing support to families in financial difficulties.

C21/003. Declarations of pecuniary interests and dispensations

Item	NONE WERE DECLARED
Councillor	
Pecuniary or personal	
Reason	

C21/004. Exclusion of the Press and public

There were no items on the agenda that would be discussed in Part II of the meeting that involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

C21/005. Presentation on The Wave - Littleham and Littleham Emergency Larder

Sam Burnett started by thanking the Town Council for the vouchers which had been provided for 13 individual households, who were extremely grateful for the help given to them.

There is a great demand for fresh food, and this has proved to be very successful. Donations are collected enabling those in need to come and collect some basic provisions. Currently there are 25 separate users registered with an average of 15 families collecting food each week. The need for help is usually due to a change in circumstances, such as a reduction in income or change in benefits being obtained.

The larder service is operated from a temporary site and, although an extension has been obtained, a more permanent location is needed.

The larder service is a stepping-stone to meet the needs of the community. Further ideas include developing a community garden to bring together all generations.

A short question time followed, and the following points were made:

- Councillors were keen to help obtain more food and find a permanent location.
- Limited data is collected as users are given the option to obtain help anonymously.
- The Allotment Association may be able to help with providing a collecting service for fresh produce grown by the allotment holders.

The Chairman thanked Sam Burnett for attending and providing an informative presentation.

C21/006. Reports and minutes from Committees, Working Parties, other local bodies, the Town Clerk/Deputy Town Clerk, District and County Councillors as appropriate (Standing Order 6.2)

Planning Committee

Councillor L Elson proposed, seconded by Councillor C Nicholas, and it was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council approves the minutes of the meetings held on 23 November 2020, 7 December 2020 and 21 December 2020 and any recommendations therein.

Town Clerk's Report

The Town Clerk's report, which had been previously circulated, was noted.

The Town Clerk confirmed that a grant application had been received on behalf of Heron and will be reviewed with Councillor A Sadiq to progress the matter.

Deputy Clerk's Report

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that the tender information and report on the Jubilee Clock Tower, provided by Jonathan Rhind, the Town Council's appointed architect, had been circulated to all councillors. This included the recommendation to proceed with Crowstep and Cumbia Clocks at a cost of £27,277.13 and Jonathan Rhind's explanation for the increase in costs.

The Chairman invited members to speak and there were no questions for the Deputy Clerk.

The Deputy Clerk's report, which had been previously circulated, was noted.

Gorfin Hall Management Committee

The notes of the meeting held on 16 November 2020, which had been previously circulated, were noted.

Community Organisations Liaison Panel

The notes of the meeting held on 30 November 2020, which had been previously circulated, were noted.

Concerns were raised about parking needs on the seafront, in respect of both more car parking spaces and reducing car parks on Queen's Drive. It was agreed that these discussions were not appropriate as part of receiving COLP notes and that a separate agenda item will be added to future Town Council agendas, to enable in-

depth debate to take place and provide a steer for the Town Council representatives when attending the Queen's Drive Delivery Group meetings.

Councillors M Chapman and A Sadiq joined the meeting.

Festival & Events Working Party

The notes of the meeting held on 3 December 2020, which had been previously circulated, were noted.

The working party will be meeting early this year to decide on the delivery of Exmouth Festival 2021.

Town Team

The notes of the meeting held on 9 December 2020, which had been previously circulated, were noted.

Exmouth Transport Partnership

The notes of the meeting held on 15 December 2020, which had been previously circulated, were noted.

Councillor T Dumper confirmed that Great Western Railway had provided an informative presentation on some very positive improvements. Concerns were raised about safety with Stagecoach double parking at The Parade and it was agreed that these concerns be investigated further.

S106 and CIL Working Party

The notes of the meeting held on 15 December 2020, which had been previously circulated, were noted.

Councillor F Caygill proposed, seconded by Councillor B Bailey, and it was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council accepts the outcome of the recent sports votes and uses it to inform the project priority list for S106 expenditure on sports provision for Exmouth.

Councillor F Caygill confirmed that the working party will be informed of the results at the next meeting on 12 January 2021 and the funding awards will need to be ratified at the next Town Council meeting.

Outside Bodies

Councillor D Poor confirmed that at the Woodbury, Exmouth & Budleigh (WEB) Board Health and Well-Being meeting the vaccination procedures were discussed and all staff and volunteers were congratulated for their help. Primary Care will also be assisting with more localised vaccinations.

Councillor T Woodward confirmed that car park marshalling was a joint effort by the Town Council Community Resilience and Exmouth Mutual Aid volunteers. A total of 60 sessions were filled with 34 volunteers offering their help.

Councillor T Woodward also confirmed that vaccinations will continue as further batches are expected and these will continue at the Tennis Centre. The Maer Car

Park had not been used because an indoor site was needed both for equipment and comfort of those being vaccinated.

Councillor O Davey attended the latest Allotment Association meeting where business was as usual. The allotment shop was now available online.

District Councillors' Reports

The Chairman thanked Councillor B De Saram, Councillor O Davey and Councillor P Millar for their written reports, which were circulated in advance of the meeting and were noted. The reports have been attached as an appendix to these minutes.

Councillor F Caygill confirmed he had met a DCC engineer and a wildlife specialist by the viewing platform on the Exe Estuary earlier in the day as residents had raised concerns that this area is not accessible by disabled users. A solution had been agreed and work will be implemented as part of a bigger ongoing project.

Councillor M Chapman confirmed that she was disappointed that it had been agreed to increase car parking charges in coastal towns from April and she was concerned for the viability of local businesses in these towns. Councillor M Chapman confirmed that she was collecting data on domestic abuse and was struggling to get hold of this information.

County Councillors' Reports

Councillor J Trail confirmed that waiting and parking restrictions will be in force to enable essential road maintenance, but that due consideration will be given to people delivering essential parcels for people self-isolating.

Councillor J Trail confirmed that domestic abuse information was collected by the police and that bus parking concerns on The Parade may need a traffic order to resolve the issues.

Councillor R Scott informed members that, as Exmouth Town Council had already made the decision to proceed with the Liverton Business Park Junction scheme, he will be responding to queries relating specifically to the letter sent to the Town Clerk which had been circulated with the agenda. Councillor R Scott confirmed that the indicative programme of works was still in place and the dates specified allowed for potential delays and managing expectations. He added that Devon County Council was obliged to consult and explain the background as well as provide details of the proposed scheme. Highways experts confirmed that the proposed work will help alleviate the problem at this junction. Installing emergency lights will not help the emergency services and there were not sufficient funds to create a junction controlled with traffic lights. However, ducting will be added to enable traffic lights to be added at a later stage if they are required and additional funding becomes available. Councillor R Scott added that town councillors can help by ensuring that, as consultees on planning applications, developers are asked to contribute to help with providing appropriate infrastructure.

Councillor J Trail confirmed that amending the speed limit to 30mph will require a policy change and that both he and Councillor R Scott were working on this, but it will take time.

County Councillors J Trail and R Scott were thanked for attending and answering questions raised by councillors.

C21/007. Agreement of 2021/22 budget and associated precept

The Chairman asked that the Town Clerk and Finance Administrator be thanked for their work on the budget. Members agreed that this was a well-balanced and fair budget.

The Town Clerk confirmed that, although the tax base had not reduced generally in East Devon, Exmouth has seen a reduction. This was due to an increase in the number of households being exempt from paying their council tax.

Councillor L Elson proposed, seconded by Councillor P Stott, and it was **RESOLVED** unanimously that Exmouth Town Council agrees the budget for 2021/2022.

Councillor L Elson proposed, seconded by Councillor P Stott, and it was **RESOLVED** unanimously that Exmouth Town Council agrees to request a precept demand of £730,345.

C21/008. Approval of the Council's Risk Management Policy and Risk Assessment for 2020/21

Councillor L Elson proposed, seconded by Councillor B Bailey, and it was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council approves the amended Risk Management Policy and Risk Assessment for 2020/21.

C21/009. Agreement of delegated authority to the Climate and Ecological Working Party to respond to the Interim Devon Carbon Plan consultation

Councillor E Beech proposed, seconded by Councillor O Davey, and it was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council agrees to give delegated authority to the Climate and Ecological Working Party to respond to the Interim Devon Carbon Plan consultation.

C21/010. Nomination of a Councillor representative to the Tidelines management board (external body)

Councillor D Poor proposed, seconded by Councillor B Bailey, and it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor E Beech be appointed as the Councillor representative to the Tidelines management board (external body) and that Councillor O Davey be appointed as the substitute.

C21/011. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 22 February 2021 at 6.30pm.

The meeting concluded at 20.51pm.

Signed..... Date.....
(Chairman)

Appendix – East Devon District and Devon County Councillors’ Reports

District Councillor’s Report – Councillor Olly Davey

Since our last meeting, I have attended the following meetings:

8.12.20 Lower Otter Restoration Project Site Meeting – met with staff from Environment Agency and Clinton Devon Estates to receive details of the proposed project, which has now been approved.

Community Led Housing Webinar – discussion on how local groups and councils can set up house building projects, with some interesting case studies.

9.12.20 Full Council – to allocate funds to LED to ensure continued viability.

10.12.21 The last of the LGA webinars on Decarbonising Transport – this one was about cycling. Not surprisingly, the crucial element is infrastructure, and a bold approach to urban spaces, allocating space to cycling rather than cars. Scrutiny Committee – This went on a surprisingly long time, thanks to what felt like a planned ambush of the Sustainable Homes and Communities Portfolio Holder, Cllr Megan Armstrong, who faced a barrage of questions on her role, which she handled with calmness and a willingness to engage. We also received a budget report, a quarterly performance report, and a review of the Car Parking TAFF recommendation to increase parking charges. It was felt that post-Covid was bad timing, and that the rise should be postponed for a year. This has yet to be debated at Full Council. There was also discussion of how campervans might best be catered for.

14.12.21 Housing Company TAFF

15.12.20 Strategic Planning – this was mainly taken up with discussion on the future of Cranbrook Town Centre, which has now thankfully been resolved.

6.1.21 and 7.1.21 Planning Committee – the only Exmouth application was for a building for additional facilities at Bystock Court. Although this required the loss of some mature trees, it was felt that the gain of day centre facilities was the greater benefit. The two biggest applications were for the changes to the Lower Otter mentioned above, which was approved, and for a new primary school and housing estate just outside Ottery St Mary, which was refused. Other applications considered were to allow for all-year use of caravan sites (but only for holiday use), a new caravan park at Woodbury Park Golf Club, various conversions to residential accommodation and farm buildings. With a few exceptions, most applications have been decided by a sizeable majority, if not a unanimous view.

District Councillor’s Report – Councillor Bruce de Saram

I have attended the following meetings:

8.12.20

With only 6 members of the Committee present the Lower Otter Restoration Project Site Meeting in Budleigh – met with staff from both EA and Clinton Devon Estates to

receive details of the proposed project, which has now been approved. Sadly, this meeting was a very poor turn out from the Committee to such an important meeting.

10.12.20

Scrutiny Committee – Took part in the Q and A session as a non-committee member with the Sustainable Homes and Communities Portfolio Holder, Cllr Megan Armstrong who answered many questions on her role which she handled as effectively she could given that many questions were of an operation nature rather than strategic questions which is her area of expertise. However, the leader was not happy with the way the questions were put and suggested that in future a PH would not be invited to Scrutiny again but subsequently agreed that future Q's should be sent to Chair of Scrutiny and PH in advance so that they could answer the questions even more effectively which we can look forward to later this week in our two-day session. The Scrutiny Committee agreed to this resolution.

“The Leader of the Council applauded Councillor Armstrong for enduring the questions and addressed the issue of the endless supplementary questions that demanded factual information that Members could have asked Officer in advance of the meeting. He advised that Scrutiny was not meant to trip up portfolio holders and ask members to show more respect”

09.12.20 Attended Full Council

15.12.20

Strategic Planning – took part in the discussion as a non-committee member on the future of Cranbrook Town Centre, which has now been resolved and hopefully works will proceed as agreed.

16.12.20

Took part in the LED Monitoring Forum as a non-committee member to learn more about this matter as clearly due to Covid it's a very important issue for the Council to consider.

6.1.21 and 7.1.21

Planning Committee along with my fellow Exmouth Colleagues – the only Exmouth application was for a building for additional facilities at Bystock Court which I proposed for approval although not Ward Member myself as it was of a good, unusual quality design and was fully supported by one of the Ward Cllrs-Cllr Chapman and Town Council were also in agreement.

District Council Report P Millar

Christmas can be a tough time for many, but this year, it has been a lot worse given the restrictions and the year we've had. These struggles have been profoundly evident by research I've undertaken since starting a new job as a Communications and Public Affairs Officer for the Men's Health Forum, a national charity which seeks to alleviate the health problems of men and boys, and to recognise that there is a strongly gendered nature to the way our bodies work. I have stepped down from Cabinet so I can concentrate on the new role and to ensure I have time to concentrate fully on my Ward during this time.

Since my last verbal update in the autumn, these are the issues which I have faced in my role as an East Devon District Councillor speaking up and securing improvements for Exmouth.

Safety Issues along Hulham Road

A recent planning application for new dwellings along Hulham Road have shone a light on safety issues for nearby residents. As well as standing up for residents and successfully arguing against the new dwellings, I will be seeking to find ways to mitigate the speeding issues and the lack of safety the people along Hulham Road and Phillips' Avenue feel, both pedestrians (so many of whom are school children) and drivers. There are many measures which could be considered, and I will be consulting residents in the coming months.

Playing Pitches in the Ward

Exmouth Halsdon residents have been blighted by the dereliction of many playing pitches within or closely accessible from the Ward. Warren View Playing Fields was once a thriving football facility with two 11-a-side pitches serving youth and adult football clubs. But, while my colleague Cllr Armstrong fought a lonely battle for the facility to be brought back into use, my Conservative predecessors in the Ward failed to fight for its survival and allowed it to go to rack and ruin. This neglect is a significant part of the reason Cllr Armstrong and I topped the poll in May 2019, not Brexit. Following representations, I've made we are looking at attracting serious grant investment and it is now being put out to tender. Warren View has enormous potential and it should not be wasted. This pandemic has shone a light on the need for more quality, outdoor space as we recover.

On a brighter note, there are a few Conservative Cllrs in Exmouth who genuinely care about Exmouth and have not treated new Councillors with hostility. One of them is Cllr Chapman. Her and I have been lobbying for over a year to secure improvements to Brixington Park, which is on the border of the Brixington and Halsdon Wards, and not only benefit Brixington residents but also Exmouth Halsdon residents in roads in the North East of the Ward (Vansittart Drive, Brixington Lane, Pines Road, Lime Grove). Together we have secured £150,000 of improvements through what I would describe as a good-cop, bad-cop routine from Maddy and myself. This time, I played good cop with a speech to the Budget Setting and Capital Allocations Panel in December, while Maddy has continually raised it at successive Scrutiny meetings (in which at one she said, 'I'm bloody fed up with it!', to looks of terror from the then Portfolio Holder for Finance). I thank Maddy for all the times she has sought to raise it and look forward to the improvements at the park. We worked hard to avoid a concrete jungle (MUGA) being placed in the middle of the park which would have permanently removed its potential to be a playing field, and Exmouth desperately needs playing fields.

Homelessness and Mental Health

Rohaven Bed & Breakfast is used by East Devon District Council to provide emergency refuge for people who are on the streets and are willing to accept help. In the month of December alone, I dealt with representations made by four rough

sleepers through concerned members of the community, and I am delighted to say that all four are now being safely accommodated, either in the B&B for now or in other accommodation.

Cllr Gazzard and I have worked very closely to try to raise the issue of poverty on the EDDC agenda, and a focus on the mental health issues which are affecting people – particularly those who find themselves struggling to pay the bills. In that regard, I appointed a Mental Health Champion when in Cabinet, and have been working with senior officers to see if we can put funding towards campaigns to raise awareness and offering mental health support for frontline officers and Councillors many of whom are struggling at this time due to the significant increase in workload.

Moving Towards Gender Equality at EDDC

Finally, despite the urgent reactive demands, there have been opportunities for proactive work too. I drafted and seconded a motion to ensure there was Maternity Pay for all senior Councillors at EDDC. This attracted local and national press and I hope it will result in more young women from Exmouth standing to be East Devon District Councillors in the future.

Future High Streets Fund and Business Support

Cllr Whibley and I have begun trying to understand why Exmouth has not received a portion of the Future High Streets Fund as promised by Simon Jupp. This was a disappointing piece of news and does not stack up at all with the statements made just before the election. We are hoping to initiate discussions between EDDC, the Town Council and the community so that we can put forward a bid for new funding should that be announced.

I have also been helping to connect local businesses forced to close with EDDC (which is speedily administering the grants) to flag urgent cases to ensure money is transferred within 24 hours. I have also lobbied the Portfolio Holder for Economy to consider the Cranford Sports Club for the Discretionary Fund following a large number of representations from the Ward, as well as other businesses which have been badly affected.