

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL Town Maintenance Contracts TAFF

Notes of the meeting held at 2:00pm on Thursday 11th February 2021 via Zoom.

Present

Councillor Ian Kirvan	IK	Exmouth Town Council (Chair)
Councillor Olly Davey	OD	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Tony Woodward	TW	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Frank Cullis	FC	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council
Chetna Jones	CJ	Deputy Town Clerk, Exmouth Town Council
Jennifer Wellington	JWe	Exmouth Town Council Note Taker

Apologies

Councillor Joy Whipps	JWh	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Brian Bailey (ex-officio)	BB	Exmouth Town Council

1. Welcome and Apologies

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

2. To approve the notes of the last meeting

The notes of the meeting held on 14th January 2021 were approved.

3. To review the plant plan details that will be needed for ground maintenance work

CJ had created a spreadsheet of the draft plant plan, that was circulated to members prior to the meeting.

The spreadsheet was set up with a summary tab sheet (which was included as part of the previous tender specification) and different sheets for each location with details of what plants were being considered, the amounts of each plant to be purchased and photos of the current displays. CJ explained how she had spoken to Exmouth in Bloom to see what displays they were planning so that the colour schemes would match.

Members discussed the plant plan in the meeting and agreed to the plan in general as they felt the plants chosen would add colour and vibrancy as well as offer pollination opportunities for a variety of insects.

IK proposed, seconded by OD that CJ proceeds with the plant plan but suggested that more plants would need to be purchased to ensure full coverage in each flowerbed.

4. To review grass cutting arrangement including the additional costs identified by StreetScene

CJ summarised an email she had received from Nick Christo, East Devon District Council (EDDC) Street Scene, regarding their tender feedback and extra costs associated with additional areas of grass cutting.

It was agreed that CJ requests that EDDC continues with the highway verge grass cutting work for summer 2021 in all the areas specified but no longer carries out any winter work, in order that the net cost remains the same as previous years (with the exception of an RPI increase). It was unfortunate that Nick Christo had not responded to CJ's previous email, but again ask if he would be in agreement that by removing the winter work (October – March), the cost associated with this work can be offset against the additional grass cutting being requested and that the Town Council will not need to seek additional funds.

If, however, this is not acceptable by Nick, this TAFF will need to see a full itemised breakdown of the cost for this work in order that it may be presented to the Town Council to make an informed decision. Without this information the Town Council would not be in a position to make a decision.

Action: CJ to draft an email explaining the new grass cutting requirements which will be circulated to members before sending to Nick Christo.

In addition, Nick Christo's email suggested that the current depot space used by Exmouth Town Council's (ETC) Town Maintenance Team in Phear Park will need to be revisited as EDDC were not awarded the Grounds Maintenance contract. However, members agreed that this arrangement was never in relation to the ground maintenance contract but was in relation to ETCs return to the Town Hall. Therefore, looking for a new depot space would need to be a priority.

5. To review the potential of a depot/yard space for Exmouth Town Council

Due to the uncertainty of the depot space at Phear Park, as well as EDDC also using this space for storage, it was suggested that ETC find their own depot space. The site would need a storage container to house gardening tools, chapter 8 signs as well as other smaller machinery. In addition, a secure yard space would be required for larger pieces of equipment and vehicles and to take delivery of plants twice a year. A potential site was identified at the old Salterton Road landfill site on Dinan Way.

Action: CJ to contact Devon County Council to investigate the possibility of using the concreated area at the old Salterton Road landfill site as a depot space.

6. To discuss the content of a draft Environmental Policy for consideration by the Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Party

Councillor Tim Dumper had circulated some thoughts prior to the meeting to help shape an Environmental Policy with regards to town maintenance. Members discussed these ideas and confirmed that due consideration was already been given to 'simpler' measures, such as types of fertilizers used, the way and amount of weed spraying as well as choice of plants. In addition, due consideration was also being given in the way the ETC Town Maintenance Team worked in terms of unnecessary travel and the TAFF are looking at ways in which to reduce the need to travel back and forth when disposing of green waste and watering.

There are aspirations for longer term actions such as the use of electric vehicles, but it was felt these were dependent on some Council wide decisions. There is also a wider issue relating to grass cutting and re-wilding that requires careful consideration to keep the impact in an urban area to a minimum as well as promote wildlife.

Overall, the TAFF would welcome a Town Council Environmental Policy and would be happy to assist the Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Party in developing one.

7. Any other business

Equipment

CJ confirmed that the Town Maintenance Team are getting through a lot of equipment such as brooms, hoses, and brushes on the weed ripping machine. As much of these were in the outer parts of Exmouth and had not had any attention for a number of years, these were impacting on the low level equipment and especially during the wet weather when the detritus was built up and particularly muddy.

In addition, the group added that urgent consideration should be given to a more suitable water bowser as more water will be required for the flower towers and the flowerbeds. Previously, the Team would only fill up once or twice a day at Kings Garden Centre for watering the flower towers. However, this could increase dramatically now the flowerbeds, hanging baskets and troughs are ETC's responsibility.

CJ explained how EDDC has a much bigger bowser with multiple attachments and, as they are no longer needing this for the flowerbeds, this could be an opportunity to purchase it.

Actions: CJ to find out the costs for purchasing a bigger water bowser and determine if there is an appetite for EDDC to sell it EDDC's water bowser. CJ to contact Kings Garden Centre to ensure they would be happy to continue supplying the water.

Street cleaning

ETC currently cover street cleaning where EDDC do not send road sweepers. As this is done by hand, it can be quite time-consuming so there may be scope for ETC to purchase an electric road sweeper. However some further investigation was required.

Action: CJ to check with Devon County Council if EDDC need to pick up on this work as a statutory duty.

8. Date of next meeting

In a month's time (date TBC).

The meeting finished at 5.10pm.