

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Party

Notes of the meeting held at 3pm on Tuesday 3rd August 2021 held remotely via Zoom

Present

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| Councillor Tim Dumper | TD | Exmouth Town Council (Chair) |
| Councillor Frank Cullis | FC | Exmouth Town Council |
| Councillor Olly Davey | OD | Exmouth Town Council |
| Councillor Mike Rosser | MR | Exmouth Town Council |
| Lisa Bowman | LB | Exmouth Town Council Officer |
| Jennifer Wellington | JW | Exmouth Town Council Notetaker |
| Catherine Causley | CC | EDDC Climate Officer |

Apologies

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| Nicky Nicholls | NN | Transition Exmouth Chair |
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1. Welcome and apologies

TD welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted.

2. Approval of previous meeting notes and matters arising

The notes of the previous meeting held on the 11th May 2021 were approved.

Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill

LB confirmed that a brief email was received from the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill Alliance acknowledging the Town Council's support.

Co-Bikes

OD updated members that the Co-Bikes project has been incorporated as part of Levelling Up fund bid, rather than a stand-alone project.

The Dinan Way extension project has also been incorporated with the Levelling Up bid, alongside plans to redevelop the area around the railway station and rerouting some cycle-paths in the town.

3. To receive an introduction to the role and responsibilities of EDDC's new Climate Officer, Catherine Causley

CC explained that getting East Devon District Council's (EDDC) house in order was the main focus in her new role, as well as working with community groups and the public. She gave an update on how this would materialise, and what she has already achieved in her first seven weeks in post:

- Implementing EDDC's Climate Plan 2020 – 2040, this plan contains over 100 action points across the Council. CC intends to pull this together via a Green Team of departmental representatives.

- A baseline audit will be repeated to see where EDDC is currently at with regards to climate related matters.
- A staff active travel plan will be implemented.
- A training plan will be developed.
- Meetings are currently being held with regards to flood defences, trees and energy.
 - Members were informed that EDDC is looking to increase tree cover in the district by 9%.

Campaigns

- The upcoming COP26 conference has influenced a campaign to encourage EDDC residents to undertake a Carbon Footprint quiz to 'Know Your Score'. Using the Carbon Footprint score as a starting point, residents can work on reducing the number and then compare the results next year.
 - CC would like for Councillors in the district to take part in the campaign to encourage residents to get involved.
Action: CC to send out an invitation in due course.
- Encouraging the purchasing and consumption of local food is another focus, as local food generally uses less plastic.
- CC will also be working with the One Step Greener campaign to advertise the nomination of Green Ambassadors.
Action: CC to circulate information on this campaign.
- CC added that she attended her first event last week during the Climate Conversations exhibition at Ocean where she was able to talk to members of the public.

In addition, CC explained how she has stepped down from the Transition Exmouth Membership Secretary role to be able to focus on her new EDDC role. However, she was able to complete the Library of Things project, which officially opened on the 31st July 2021.

MR raised previous issues the Town Council have had with trying to work with EDDC and Devon County Council (DCC), especially with the ongoing water bottle refill station project.

Action: CC suggested that the existing Refill Stations, mainly in shops, should be pushed more in the meantime. However, she added that she would investigate the issues and raise with the relevant people at EDDC. A contact name in EDDC's Legal Department was provided

EDDC Ecologist post

No update could be provided on the suggestion of employing an EDDC Ecologist. However, CC confirmed that this type of work is not being covered as part of her Climate role.

Members were reminded that EDDC have a lot of vacancies at present.

Devon Climate Emergency Group

TD expressed how impressed he was with the climate presentations held by the Devon Climate Emergency group and encouraged members to watch them.

CC explained that interim feedback will be coming out soon with the full report following shortly after.

CC left the meeting.

4. To review the progress of the 10-point plan and consider next steps

Members discussed the 10-point plan, written in collaboration with Transition Exmouth, and what actions have been achieved to date:

1. *ETC to partner with Transition Exmouth on a bid to the Lottery Climate Action Fund to create an ECO / Community Hub for Exmouth in the town centre:*
Transition Exmouth had put in a bid for funding to the National Lottery but were unsuccessful.

No suitable buildings have been identified so no progress has been made on this action.

2. *ETC to plant trees on all “unowned” patches of land, plant wildflowers for pollinators and stop all use of pesticides and herbicides on council property and use only organic fertilisers:*

Most patches of land have been identified and the planting of wildflowers has been covered by Wild Exmouth’s ongoing projects.

Pesticide and herbicide use on Exmouth Town Council’s (ETC) property, or areas we maintain on behalf of EDDC and DCC, is reducing and the ETC’s Town Maintenance Operatives are using more accurate spraying equipment when using weed sprays to reduce the risk of wider contamination. A weed ripper machine has also been purchased which has reduced weedkiller use. The Deputy Town Clerk has been working on an Environmental Plan which covers the work of the Town Maintenance Team, including the use of peat-free compost.

Members raised the fact that a lot of plants are brought in single-use plant pots and this should be considered for future plant deliveries.

3. *ETC to create a website in partnership with Transition Exmouth giving information on how people can tackle climate change as individuals - and link to this in the footer of all ETC emails, and on all ETC publications:*
The 'Our Place, Our Planet' (OPOP) website is now up and running, with a link to it through ETC's staff email signatures and through ETC's website.

4. *ETC to switch to a renewable energy supplier in all Council buildings, and lobby EDDC and DCC to do the same:*
The energy supply at Gorfin Hall and the Tourist Information Service office is switching to renewable energy from September 2021. This switch will also take advantage of the feed-in tariff from the solar panels installed at Gorfin Hall.
The new CCTV cameras will also be moving to the same green energy supplier (Opus).
EDDC are also well on the way to implementing full green energy tariffs in their buildings.

5. *ETC to support the Transition Exmouth events programme (to run from April to September 2020), starting with an Energy Advice Clinic in the Town Hall:*
The ongoing Coronavirus pandemic has delayed events but ETC and Transition Exmouth plan to pick up and support events where possible when restrictions relax.

6. *ETC to create a Bike Pool for use with the Bikeability programme in Exmouth primary schools, so that every child has access to a suitable bike. Bikes to be reclaimed and refurbished (explore partnership with Ride-on, who repair bikes for re-use in Exeter):*
Investigations regarding setting up a Bike Pool for students to use for Bikeability are ongoing.
From the 1st April 2021, ETC have been collecting unwanted bikes and donating them to Ride On for reuse. Over 40 bikes have been donated so far, with some already refurbished and resold.
MR highlighted that funding has become available for promoting bikes and cycling.
Action: MR to send the funding information to LB.

7. *ETC to run Environmental Days for all schools and adults to expand on their excellent first conference in 2019:*
It is unlikely that ETC will run an Environmental Day this year but there may be scope to run something in 2022.
However, through ETC's partnership with the Exe Estuary Management Partnership, £4,000 has been given to help fund a DCC Officer. Part of that role requires the Officer to go into schools to educate the children on the Estuary and environmental matters. The Town Council has also funded the

Wild Exmouth project and has links with EDDC's Countryside Team who all have an educational element.

8. *ETC to work with EDDC to install drinking water fountains throughout town – railway station, Strand and two along beach:*

Delays with securing permission from EDDC has meant that plans to install water bottle refill stations on EDDC land have stalled to a halt. However, despite some delays with DCC also, the refill station at the Railway Station/M&S forecourt has been given the go-ahead.

In addition, there has been interest from Sideshore to install a station here. The Deputy Town Clerk is working on obtaining quotes for installations.

Action: OD to contact EDDC's Legal Team for an update.

9. *ETC to commit to use only Organic, Fairtrade products in all Council hospitality and catering:*

Fairtrade products are already being used within the Town Council due to it being a contingent requirement for Fair Trade status that the Town Council passes a resolution supporting Fairtrade, and agreeing to serve Fairtrade products (for example, in meetings, offices and canteens).

However, Fairtrade food and drink options as well as organic products will need to be investigated for other Town Council events, such as the Mayor's charity event or the Mayor's Civic Service. It is important to note that the charity event has a price-point and using local products with lower food miles may be the way forward in this instance. However, there may be a higher cost issue with a potential difficulty of having to employ outside caterers.

10. *ETC to work with Transition Exmouth and local bike shops to provide subsidised electric bike hire:*

Members discussed this item but were unsure who this would benefit.

Therefore, members considered reviewing or dropping this action point from the list.

The Town Council has signed up to a cycle scheme meaning that any staff member or Town Councillor can sign-up and purchase a subsidised electric or traditional bike for travel to work.

Members agreed to review this list with Transition Exmouth at a later date and write another list when events with the public can start up again.

5. To receive an update on the progress of the water bottle refill station installations

An update was provided during the 8th action point of the previous item.

6. To consider the frequency of meetings

The previous two scheduled Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Party meetings have been cancelled due to a lack of agenda items or updates.

Members therefore agreed that the meeting schedule be changed to bi-monthly (every two months) to allow more time for work to be done in between meetings.

7. To receive an update from Transition Exmouth

In NN's absence, Councillors present that have links to Transition Exmouth were able to update members of the following:

- The Exmouth Library of Things is now open.
- The Exmouth Indoor Market stall has been working well.
- The eCargo bike project trial has come to an end and will not be continued by Transition Exmouth.

8. To receive an update on other relevant matters from Town Council working parties and outside body representatives

Tree Task and Finish Forum (TAFF)

The Tree TAFF met for their last meeting on the 22nd July 2021. At this meeting, members agreed to set-up a Tree Forum of key stakeholders and other relevant people.

When the Tree TAFF officially closes, the Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Party will add trees as a regular agenda item.

Members were made aware that a lot of work is planned at EDDC with regards to tree planting, so ETC would need to be mindful not to duplicate on any work. At a recent EDDC Full Council meeting, a motion of protecting trees was passed. However, EDDC's Tree Officers are working at full capacity which restricts how many sites they can visit. Also, issues with developers pre-empting what trees may need to go/stay means that in some instances trees are felled before applications are sent in. If trees do not have Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) on them not much can be done to protect them. Currently, there is a 5-year period in which developers undertake to protect trees, which often leads to easier removal after that period through the lack of that initial protection.

Planning was a key issue and how trees can be protected via this process was discussed.

Members were made aware that the new National Planning Policy Framework does include stronger tree protection polices within it, including point 131 which LB read out to members present.

The draft Tree Report will be circulated to Tree TAFF members once reviewed. Once face-to-face Full Council meetings can resume, the Tree TAFF report and improvements to working across authorities (as raised by MR earlier in the meeting) would be presented for approval by members.

9. Any other business

Protection of hedgerows

CPRE has launched a hedgerow campaign to raise awareness of the importance of hedgerows.

Overgrown hedgerows which cause safety concerns can be reported to DCC Highways and, if necessary, discussed at the Exmouth Transport Partnership meetings if they encroach on the highway.

10. Date of future meeting

September's meeting to be cancelled due to new scheduling pattern.

The next meeting is scheduled for the 12th October 2021 at 3pm via Zoom.

The meeting finished at 16.50pm.