

## **EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL Town Maintenance Overview Working Party**

Notes of the meeting held at 10am on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021 via Zoom.

### **Present**

|  |    |   |
|--|----|---|
| Councillor Ian Kirvan                    | IK | Exmouth Town Council (Chair)            |
| Councillor Maddy Chapman                 | MC | Exmouth Town Council                    |
| Councillor Frank Cullis                  | FC | Exmouth Town Council                    |
| Councillor Olly Davey                    | OD | Exmouth Town Council                    |
| Councillor Steve Gazzard<br>(ex-officio) | SG | Exmouth Town Council                    |
| Councillor Tony Woodward                 | TW | Exmouth Town Council                    |
| Chetna Jones                             | CJ | Deputy Town Clerk, Exmouth Town Council |
| Jennifer Wellington                      | JW | Note Taker, Exmouth Town Council        |

### **Apologies**

None.

#### **1. Welcome and apologies**

IK welcomed members to the meeting.

#### **2. To approve the notes of the last meeting**

The notes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021 were approved.

#### **3. Matters arising**

##### Bus Shelters

IK thanked staff for circulating the bus shelter ownership and will investigate this further.

##### Western Power Distribution (WPD)

CJ explained that WPD has confirmed that the electric system previously quoted for at the Phear Park compound would allow for one electric car-charging point to be added. If any further charging points would be required, additional infrastructure would need to be installed at a much-increased cost. Members agreed one charging point to be added in the future will be sufficient.

##### Grass cutting areas

IK had previously provided CJ with a list of grass verges that needed to be cut. CJ updated members that both Devon County Council (DCC) and East Devon District Council (EDDC) have been cutting verges recently and confirmed that the areas on the list had been cut albeit not very well.

#### **4. To receive an update on the progress of summer planting and cost to date**

CJ updated members that the summer planting has been completed and the cost has been in line with what was expected. The few trays of plants that were left-over have been used to in-fill where some plants have not taken or have been vandalised.

The new flowerbed at Lime Kiln Lane has been completed. However, members raised concerns that the lane itself is extremely overgrown. The Town Council has pushed DCC to undertake the clearing of the overgrowth but as much of this originates from private properties DCC is in the process of contacting residents to request that they maintain their hedges on both sides of their fences.

**Action: Members to raise this with Exmouth's DCC Councillors.**

Lots of positive feedback on the planting in the Magnolia Centre has been received. IK thanked staff and Exmouth in Bloom for the work that has been done, with MC adding her thanks, particularly mentioning the improvement of the Royal Air Force (RAF) memorial area.

#### **5. To receive a report following the recent virtual conference delivered by Devon Local Nature Partnership and the launch of Wild About Devon initiative and new Parish and Town Councils Nature Forum**

CJ updated members that she attended the launch webinar of the Wild About Devon initiative. A report on the event which had been circulated prior to the meeting was noted.

Exmouth has very different requirements of verge maintenance compared to rural areas and as a result CJ has contacted the DCC Ecologist, who delivered the presentation on "Life on the Verge" at the webinar, to discuss a more hybrid way of working and to seek help with producing detailed management plans for well-balanced nature habitats.

CJ confirmed the Town Council was registered to the newly established Parish and Town Councils nature forum. The aim of this forum will be to help the Town Council fulfil its statutory duty as set out in the [Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act \(NERC\) 2006](#).

#### **6. Update following the meeting with EDDC's Portfolio Holder for Coast, Country and Environment**

A walk-about meeting with Councillor Geoff Jung (EDDC's Portfolio Holder for Coast, Country and Environment) in Exmouth town centre was useful and pointed out the ongoing issues facing the town and the need for attention in some prominent areas.

Councillor Jung acknowledged that there are difficulties with resources and staffing levels currently within Street Scene making it difficult to maintain the standard previously provided.

IK confirmed he had thanked Councillor Geoff Jung and was awaiting details of any partnership working.

**7. To review the grass cutting regime carried out by EDDC and agree whether this or any part of this is to be implemented on the areas requested by Exmouth Town Council**

CJ confirmed she had requested the EDDC policy on Rewilding to help understand the proposed action plan to deliver this new way of working.

In response Nick Christo (EDDC Street Scene Manager) provided an extract of the report which had been submitted to EDDC Cabinet in September 2020 as below:

***“Improve our sustainable management of green spaces/rewilding to help protect the environment and meet Climate Change Action Plan aims. Building on our adopted Green Space Plan Natural Green Space Policies 1 and Nature Recovery Network approach:***

*- Continue improving the range of areas managed sensitively for wildlife and biodiversity, including reduced grass cutting and meadow creation where appropriate. Use the Wilder Britain wildlife trusts case studies document as a guide.”*

Members questioned the phrase ‘managed sensitively’ as it was felt this was not apparent in the current methods.

Members were also a little surprised to see that some sites the Town Council pay EDDC to cut have been left uncut. Streetscene had confirmed that work to catch up following the spring flush and extremely warm wet weather was in-hand

CJ added that she had been provided with a list of sites EDDC plan to use for rewilding (leaving the grass uncut between April and October):

- Salterton Road
- Phear Park
- Marine Way
- Brixington playing field
- St Johns playing field
- Site at Dennesdene Close
- An area in Jubilee Drive
- Seymour road
- The Crescent (Littleham)
- Imperial Recreation Ground (fringe area to right hand site of entrance)

**Action: CJ to query the sites duplicated with the areas that the Town Council has requested EDDC to cut.**

CJ confirmed that with a careful management plan the bank in Pound Lane which is managed by the Town Council’s in-house team is producing good results. Recently 5 different species of butterfly have been seen in this area.

**Actions: OD/SG to contact Councillor Jung and EDDC, with regards to ensuring rewilding areas are managed correctly.**

**CJ to contact Street Scene to clarify the duplicated sites.**

## 8. Any other business

### Phear Park Compound

The Heads of Terms amendments sent to EDDC have not been approved apart from the request to change the break clause to 12 months.

As there have been no further updates on any of the other amendments, the project cannot progress further. The next steps will require money being spent to proceed.

**Action: CJ to chase EDDC again for an update on the Heads of Terms document and will cc John Golding into the correspondence.**

The green waste generated by the Town Maintenance Team's operations is being composted on site. It is hoped that the compost produced will be used in-house.

### Lease Vehicles update

Due to issues in obtaining the necessary parts, manufacturers are struggling to release new vehicles meaning there will be a delay in the delivery of the leased vans.

The current vehicles are still in operation, but issues are ongoing including battery and clutch problems. Members discussed that the Town Council may have to investigate the possibility of hiring or buying a second-hand van/s before the lease vehicles arrive.

**Action: CJ to contact the leasing company for an update on the timeframe for the delivery of the lease vehicles and take appropriate action if there are to be long delays.**

### **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

The meeting finished at 11.30am.