

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Waterfront Working Party

Notes of the meeting of the Waterfront Working Party held on Tuesday 29th June 2021 at 10am via Zoom.

Present:

Councillor Pauline Stott	PS	Exmouth Town Council (Chair)
Councillor David Poor	DP	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Tim Dumper	TD	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council
Dave Radford	DR	Exmouth Sea Scouts
Pete Blyth	PB	StreetScene Beach Safety Officer, EDDC
Chetna Jones	CJ	Deputy Town Clerk, Exmouth Town Council
Tim Clatworthy	TC	Note Taker, Exmouth Town Council

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Fred Caygill	FC	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Eileen Beech	EB	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Jeff Trail	JT	Devon County Council

1. Welcome and apologies

PS welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted.

2. Election of Chair

Cllrs TD and DP proposed and seconded that Cllr PS remain as Chair, and this was agreed in a unanimous vote.

3. To approve the notes of the previous meeting of 2nd February 2021.

Cllrs DP and TD proposed and seconded that the notes of the last meeting be approved.

4. Matters Arising

a) Campervan Task and Finish Forum (TAFF)

The TAFF explored issues DCC were experiencing with campervan roadside parking, and one solution suggested was improved signage. As Imperial Rec would not now be available to campervan parking, and the lorry park was felt should remain as a lorry park, other sites were visited to investigate replacing and expanding dedicated campervan parking. Final decisions to follow.

b) Abode of Love

The graffiti has now been cleaned off, but the walls still look tatty with the repeated washing. The meeting expressed its thanks to Anna Fitzgerald and her team for the artwork there. This was only intended to be temporary as the Thelma Hulbert Community Project is ongoing, but has been delayed due to the coronavirus situation. It is hoped that the new artwork will instil sufficient pride to dissuade users from again defacing the area.

c) Beachfront Congestion

Since the last Waterfront meeting DCC have installed more warning signs in an attempt to reduce the likelihood of collisions between pedestrians, cyclists, and other road users. It was felt that ideally more should be done, and ETC councillors are monitoring the situation. It was pointed out that the situation would likely improve greatly once the various seafront tidal defence works were all complete.

d) Flagpole

PB has agreed to help install the new flagpole in its new location further from the festoon lights. The intention is to order a new flagpole when the next service is due on the other flagpoles, to save paying twice for the considerable delivery costs.

e) Beach Library

Consultation with other councils (Teignbridge and Brighton & Hove) has resulted in two recommendations from their successful experiences: (1) that the box be made of some non-flammable material, e.g. metal, and (2) that instead of a local council maintaining it, a local business (Sideshore?) be asked to adopt it and look after it. Their responsibilities would include their examining the contents to ensure that neither rubbish nor dangerous items have been put in it.

5. Beach Management Plan (BMP)

The Town Clerk agreed that Cllr Pauline Stott and Cllr Tim Dumper represent the Town Council at the first Exmouth BMP Steering Group meeting on 13th July 2021. This is a temporary measure which will need ratifying by the Town Council, and is in place to avoid delays in work starting on the BMP. PS and TD to attend and feed back information from it to the next Waterfront meeting. The BMP will be led by EDDC, the principal officer being Tom Buxton-Smith, EDDC's Engineering Projects Manager. Its primary purpose is to determine ways in which Exmouth's beach can be protected from sand loss in the long term, so as not to have to keep moving sand from one end to the other. It will also seek to establish sources of funding to enable this work.

Limits to attendees (e.g. ward members, interested groups) were not established at EDDC's Cabinet meeting to set this up, and this will need to be agreed upon in the 13th July meeting. Main water/beach users and a safety group have already been invited, but Waterfront w/p attendees are asked to talk with water sports users to encourage them to share their thoughts with the Waterfront w/p – either informally or through attending our meetings - so that this can be fed back to the steering group.

DR commented that Sailing Club members have noticed a loss of 0.5m depth in sand.

6. Beach Wheelchair Project

Planning permission was granted last week, and a 6-month lease has been obtained; a longer lease could not be obtained until planning permission had already been granted.

The hut frame has been built already, and erection of the building is expected to start on 30th June. Other aspects (e.g. electricity, solar panels) are expected to be finalised within a month, but some of the wheelchairs take 6-10 weeks to make, so a full complement is not likely this summer.

It is envisaged that the scheme will be run by volunteers; PS said there is great interest in the scheme.

TD congratulated PS on her 4-year perseverance to see this through and thanked her for this contribution to Exmouth.

7. Update on the Tidal Defence Works

a) Flood gates

Kate Pearson, Flood Resilience Advisor at EA, is presenting a training video to community resilience volunteers at a meeting on 6th July, focussing on how to operate the gates in various scenarios, and possible risks. It is hoped to follow this up soon after 19th July, assuming the current covid restrictions are lifted, with an onsite practice session while Kier officers are still in the vicinity, in case there are any problems with the gates.

b) Other related works

These have been progressing sufficiently well for Kier to estimate completion by the end of July.

Most of the Heras fencing in the Camperdown Road area has now been removed after the repair of the collapsed sewer by Imperial Road.

- c) The meeting wished to express its support and thanks to the engineers and planners not only for their work through many and varied challenges, but also their flexibility and co-operation when asked, e.g. putting in service ducts to the Sea Scouts hut, and installing the electrical wiring channels for our new seafront CCTV cameras. This has meant a great cost saving for ETC. The new walls on Morton Crescent and Alexandra Terrace are also much admired.

8. Update from Streetscene on Bins, Toilets and Beach Signs

a) Bins

There are more bins than ever before along the seafront (33 waste bins, 14 recycling stations and 9 BBQ bins) so there is no excuse to drop litter. Streetscene will however put a few more out, though additional bins add on time for the team to empty, and currently due to the extra cleaning needed for the toilets and the number of bins out, the operative has to come back mid-round during busy days to empty the van before going back out to complete the round.

b) Toilets

Streetscene are still carrying out enhanced cleaning on toilets along the seafront, and anticipate continuing this throughout the summer to cope with the additional usage that they will get. It would not be sensible to scale back immediately even with stage 4 of the easing of covid restrictions. Putting additional temporary toilets (blue loos) is not desirable as they would need cleaning as well, and this is a significant resource issue that they cannot commit to – they just do not have the staff. Across the District, 75% of toilets are now open, but in Exmouth the Maer and Imperial Rec toilets will remain closed while enhanced cleaning continues for all the others – again this is a human resources issue. A suggestion was made that the public could be directed to the toilets in ‘Ocean’ as the external public toilets by the Rowing Club often have queues outside them. PB pointed out that Streetscene had no authority to request this, but that Nick Christo might take this up with the management of Ocean.

Action: PB to take this recommendation to Nick Christo.

c) Beach Signs

There are already 46 dog-ban signs in situ but Streetscene will install more, including 2 much larger ones at each end of the dog-ban area, where ground-level stencilling is also now being painted. The feeling is that that if the dog-ban continues to be ignored, further signs are a wasted effort, and resources would be better used in enforcement. Recruitment has begun for two enforcement officers, but these have to be agency personnel and the agencies currently have no spare staff to offer.

It was pointed out that if someone accessed the beach from outside the dog-ban area and then walked towards the water's edge, they may enter the dog-ban area without realising it, as the signs are not visible from lower down the beach. Streetscene are aware of this and are exploring options, though it is unlikely that any remedy will be installed this year.

d) Sand Boards

For safety reasons some sand boards remain in place at the top of steps leading down to the beach, particularly where the loss of sand has resulted in a long step down at the bottom of the steps.

e) Cycle Parking

A request was aired for more cycle parking along the seafront, especially at the Orcombe Point end.

Action: PB to take this up with the relevant authorities.

f) Seasonal/Permanent Employment

PS and PB asked that anyone who might know someone looking for seasonal or permanent work to suggest they apply to Streetscene.

9. **Update on the Jubilee Clock Tower**

The repairs are now completed and the roof repainted. The lights around it are still not functioning correctly but Nick Christo has been informed. SG thanked CJ for all the hard work she has dedicated to this project.

10. Update on Queen's Drive and Sideshore watersports centre

a) Grassed area

Despite demonstrable need for more car-parking spaces, this area is to become a fitness area. Planning permission has been recommended for the necessary equipment storage hut.

b) 95 'Beach Bus' Service

The hourly service has now been increased to half-hourly. It is hoped that this will ease traffic congestion and demand on parking spaces. However some of these buses advertise the Torbay area, not the Exmouth-Exeter region.

c) Sideshore

The ramp has been completed and some minor improvements made in the vicinity. There are toilets and showers which members considered were for public use at the rear of the building, but no signage indicating them. PB suggests contacting the Sideshore venue manager.

Action: CJ to approach the Sideshore venue manager recommending signage to the toilets and showers be installed (as per the planning application).

11. AOB

None.

12. Date of next meeting:

Tuesday 26th October 2021 (possibly to be brought forward, closer to the end of the summer.)

The meeting concluded at 11:16am.