

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Party

Notes of the meeting held at 3pm on Tuesday 7th December 2021 held remotely via Zoom

Present

Councillor Tim Dumper	TD	Exmouth Town Council (Chair)
Councillor Frank Cullis	FC	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Olly Davey	OD	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Andrew Toye	AT	Exmouth Town Council
Lisa Bowman	LB	Exmouth Town Council Officer
Chetna Jones	CJo	Exmouth Town Council Officer
Anna Jones	AJ	Exmouth Town Council Notetaker
Catherine Causley	CC	East Devon District Council Officer
Carol Jay	CJa	Transition Exmouth

Apologies

Councillor Mike Rosser	MR	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Andrew Colman	AC	Exmouth Town Council
Nicky Nicholls	NN	Transition Exmouth Chair

1. Welcome and apologies

TD welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted.

2. Approval of previous meeting notes

The notes of the previous meeting were proposed for approval by OD, seconded by FC and approved by all.

3. Matters Arising

E-Cargo Bikes

OD gave an update on Transition Exmouth's research into the appropriate e-cargo bike. The group have tested three different two-wheeler bikes in Plymouth, which are recommended as they are very manoeuvrable and good for uneven surfaces. The Urban Arrow Shorty was preferred. This Friday 10th December, Transition Exmouth will be going to Exmouth Cycles to try ridgeback cycles and carry out more research.

OD confirmed that Exmouth Cycles will take on the admin for the project, including renting out the bikes and taking rental money. It will be discussed how much money Exmouth Cycles will take, with the rest going to Transition Exmouth. He also confirmed that Transition Exmouth plan to buy two bikes and spend the rest of the funding on bike storage and potentially an app for ease of booking. In the short-term,

the bikes will be stored in the market, but Transition Exmouth would like to find better long-term storage and may look for grants to enable this storage.

CC provided an update on bike storage facilities. She has successfully applied for and received £9500 to provide e-cargo storage facilities behind Exmouth Town Hall or in The Strand. She has also received £25,000 for East Devon-wide bike storage, including Manchester bike hoops to be installed in Exmouth, a trial of covered e-cargo bike storage facilities, and additional family sized bike parking spots. She will be collecting data from the Transition Exmouth trial with the intention of installing this in more East Devon towns. This funding comes from CC's Climate Carbon Fund, to work on the lack of cycling parking infrastructure in 2022 and work out where additional parking spots are needed.

LB noted that ETC have registered a need for additional bike parking in the town centre through the Exmouth Transport Partnership, and Devon County Council will be rolling out a new scheme for bike parking next year. She confirmed that a member of the outside consultancy who helped DCC to ascertain bike parking needs five years ago, resulting in extra bike hoops being installed at LED and The Strand, is now working inhouse at DCC. She will email CC these details.

ACTION: LB to email CC with contact details for DCC representative responsible for bike parking needs.

Carol Jay joined the meeting.

Update from EDDC's Climate Change Officer

CC provided an update on EDDC's Climate Change work, including:

- CC has received funding to train four people to deliver carbon literacy training across the district, community groups, and parish and town councils, beginning early next year. This includes creating toolkits to help organisations become carbon literate. Already, 63 Councillors have successfully finished this carbon literacy scheme.
- CC has received funding to create a bespoke carbon calculator. This will calculate staff commuting miles, will help to decide where offices will be located across the district, and will measure the carbon impact of full council meetings.
- CC has received £4000 of funding for an AONB Wildlife Officer to work with two Parish Councils. They will trial building resources to target and work with a Parish and their community and community groups to see how they can tackle their climate emergency, and work together to support them to make the necessary changes.

- A year-long trial will begin with Co Cars based at Blackdown House in Honiton and Exmouth Town Hall, where a dedicated Co Car and charger will be permanently based near the Council offices. These will be available for staff to use during the day on a business tariff, and for the public to hire in the evenings and at weekends. EDDC have received promotion funding and will begin working with the council next Spring to promote this car sharing model.

CC left the meeting.

Tree Update

LB provided a tree update on behalf of Jane Habermehl from Transition Exmouth. The Town Council have been involved in DBS checks for tree planting volunteers and have ordered the trees to be delivered to the Town Hall. The trees have now been collected and planted.

Tree Enforcement

As previously agreed, the Town Council will continue to ensure trees are not being cut down without proper permission.

4. To receive an update from Transition Exmouth

CJa gave a further update on the test e-cargo bikes which will be delivered to Exmouth Cycles on Wednesday 8th December and will remain in Exmouth for a week. She welcomed those involved in the project to join a group bike ride on Friday 10th December to test the e-cargo bikes, or to arrange a separate time to take the bikes out. Another test day with Raleigh bikes and Bergamont bikes will take place in the future, to be confirmed at a later date.

CJa confirmed that Nicky Nicholls, Transition Exmouth Chair, has stopped her full-time job to concentrate on climate matters. She has signed up to Pluss: Positive People, a lottery funded programme available to people over 25, not currently working, which provides business planning support, funding support and training support.

CJa reminded members that Transition Exmouth's AGM will take place on Thursday 9th December and invited all members to attend.

5. To receive an update about the Call of Nature proposal for the Imperial Rec toilet block, following EDDC's Overview Meeting discussing the Public Toilet Review

OD provided an update from EDDC's Overview Meeting. He confirmed they had broadly accepted the categorisation of the toilets – Category A toilets will be charged for, whilst Category B and C toilets will be offered to commercial organisations or town councils. SG confirmed that Councillors tried to put the Railway Station toilets into Category A, but were unsuccessful; it will be Category B. He has sent LB a copy

of the final recommendations which have been through cabinet and will go to full council on Wednesday 8th December.

SG and OD responded to queries about the Transformation Reserve, stating that whilst EDDC want to resolve the Public Toilets issue sooner rather than later, some money has been put aside to fund Category B and C toilets to allow them to remain open until the transition is complete. OD acknowledged the extension made for Honiton Town Council, until they are in a position to make a bid.

LB suggested a lack of clarity as to whether the Town Council should approach EDDC regarding public toilets or whether EDDC will be marketing these opportunities, as some sites have had multiple expressions of interest. She asked District Councillors to find out more information so that the Town Council does not miss their opportunity. TD requested LB write to EDDC expressing the Town Council's interest in the Imperial Rec toilets.

There was further discussion regarding the Railway Station toilets, including suggestions of involving Great Western Railway with the Railway Station toilets and writing to EDDC to express interest in these also. LB cautioned the Working Party about expressing this interest, as the Town Council has not expressed the same interest in this way. However, if there is no commercial or community interest in these toilets, there will be a further 12-week consultation with Town and Parish Councils before any decision is made to shut them.

LB further mentioned the proposals being put together by Andrew Ennis for potential campervan parking in the old Environment Agency Compound at the Exmouth Lorry Park, which relies on the availability of public toilets. There was discussion as to whether the toilets would need showers added or further rebuilding and refurbishment before they would be suitable for this use. LB will contact Andrew Ennis for an update.

Actions:

- **District Councillors to find out more information about the marketing of the Public Toilets.**
- **LB to write to EDDC expressing the Town Council's support for the Call of Nature proposal at the Imperial Rec toilets.**
- **LB to contact Andrew Ennis for an update on the proposals for the Railway Station toilets and will circulate this with members when received.**
- **If necessary, the Town Council Officers will arrange a Campervan TAFF meeting to discuss the proposals for Exmouth Lorry Park.**

6. To receive an update on the progress of the water bottle refill stations and installations.

CJo provided an update on the successful installation of both refill units, at the train station and at Sideshore. EDDC and Sideshore have agreed to pay for the water to both units, which have both been installed with water meters inside so that we can monitor how much water is being used and measure their impact. Prior to the meeting, AJ circulated designs for the signage with the Plastic Reduction Working Party. CJo has been in contact with Sideshore's sign company to receive a quote for signs made from natural and recycled materials.

In response to queries regarding other frustrating delays at potential sites, CJo discussed her meeting with Mark Williams where she explained the purpose of the project: to protect the environment, to reduce single-use plastic, and to improve people's health and wellbeing. She is still waiting for Mark Williams to get back to her after this meeting. CJo also discussed her meeting with Rob Harrison regarding the need to approve all work with EDDC before carrying out work on these sites. She queried why this would be necessary, given the fact that the Imperial Rec toilet will soon be changing hands, and is still awaiting a response.

Regarding general upkeep of the units, CJo confirmed that a rota will be created for cleaning once a week by the Town Maintenance Team. Legionnaire's testing will be carried out by Sideshore and EDDC.

There was some discussion around press and social media coverage, and CJo confirmed there has been some coverage already on our social media, and there will be further press coverage around the formal opening next year. She confirmed all coverage and signage will ensure the key message, the free water refills, is very clear.

Actions:

- **CJo to circulate photos of the installed water bottle refill stations with the Climate & Ecological Emergency and Plastic Reduction Working Parties.**
- **CJo to circulate quotes from Sideshore's sign company when an update is received.**
- **CJo to contact Mark Williams in January for a response regarding the delays to installations on EDDC owned sites.**

7. To receive an update from Councillor Tim Dumper on relevant matters discussed at the recent DALC County Committee

TD confirmed he has become the Chair of the group looking at sharing best practice with local councils, which is making a good start. He noted the good and efficient work of the new policy officer, Mark Clapham, the new Chair who is active in environmental issues, David Chalmers, and the County Officer in the Devon Climate Emergency Response group, Cara Stobart. LB confirmed the strong network both she and CJo have with other Devon Clerks. SG provided an update from the Larger Councils Group and agreed that there is lots of interest from other councils in the work taking place in Exmouth.

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

Special Verges

CJo reported she has been in touch with Exmouth Wildlife Group and Devon County Council's County Ecologist, Mike Waller. She has met with Mike, the Wildlife Wardens, and Tom Wood from EDDC Streetscene and discussed the special verge at Dinan Way, which contains some rare species. CJo has recently received a management plan from the County Ecologist with marked areas needing special attention. This is a complex plan with various different levels of grass cutting and various expertise needed.

There was some discussion as to whether this is something the Town Maintenance Team has the capacity, resources or training to take on, and what classifies a grass verge as a special verge. It was suggested that a second bank at Pound Lane should also be considered as a special verge. It was noted that the Dinan Way verge is not currently the Town Council's responsibility, and it was suggested that the Town Council should instead be focusing on the verges they are responsible for.

It was agreed that the Working Party needs to agree a) if it wants to adopt the special verges at Dinan Way and b) the criteria for a special verge. The actual work will then be down to the Town Maintenance Overview Working Party to implement. TD invited CJo to join the next meeting in February with a mini-report on the issue before it is discussed again, fitting with the seasonal requirements.

Action: CJo to provide a report on special verges to go on the agenda for the 8th February 2022 meeting.

Planning Application for Site of Redgate and Land at Tesco Store

FC queried whether another ecological survey needs to take place at the site before anything is done with it, as the site has been left for so long. It was noted that within planning law, a 3-year period must elapse before an updated ecological survey is required. LB commented that this recommendation does not need to come from the Climate & Ecological Emergency Working Party, but that she would be discuss this with EDDC's Planning Authority.

ACTION: LB to check the period in which an updated ecological survey is necessary and confirm this with members.

Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee

LB updated members that the Town Council will be watching what comes forward from EDDC's recently published emerging Local Plan regarding the climate emergency. Consultation with the public will begin in 2022, but LB has circulated the Local Plan draft to COLP and Councillors. She commented that the Neighbourhood Plan was progressive in highlighting Climate and Ecological Emergency matters, but now we need to see what is appropriate to tighten under the Local Plan.

Action: CJa to flag EDDC's Local Plan draft to Transition Exmouth.

Allotment Association

OD confirmed the Allotment Association is no longer stocking peat-based compost. They are only selling peat-free in their shop.

Plastic Free Exmouth

TD updated members about his correspondence with Emma Carnell, who is due to become the main convener of Plastic Free Exmouth. They will be focusing on making local ecological issues and action more obvious to children rather than presenting children with climate issues far away and creating tools so that people can interlink with climate issues more locally. In the New Year, TD, as the Town Council's representative for Plastic Free Exmouth, and Emma Carnell will put a plan together to accredit Exmouth as a plastic free community.

Fairtrade Exmouth

TD noted that the National Fairtrade Foundation is insisting climate and climate justice become features of what is done across the Fairtrade organisation. TD will meet with the Exmouth Fairtrade Steering Group in the New Year to look at how climate justice issues can be incorporated.

9. To discuss the future objectives of the Climate and Ecological Working Party

There was discussion around various objectives to consider, including:

- The Eco-Hub, which will be a massive project and should be a top priority, as there is a limited window of opportunity to work with EDDC. Nicky Nicholls will be receiving business planning advice and training from Pluss: Positive People project who will be able to bring in trainers and workshop facilitators to support the project. It was noted that Sideshore are keen to become involved with the Eco-Hub project.

- Working with the Chamber of Commerce to engage with businesses in Exmouth. It was noted that the Town Council already has strong links with council representatives on the Chamber, which should be utilised. Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Councils are already running workshops, pioneered by the University of Exeter, regarding what businesses can do to improve their eco credentials. A partnership with the Chamber of Commerce is worth exploring to facilitate these workshops.
- Further involvement with local businesses through the Environmental Impact Award, which is sponsored by the Town Council. LB noted that there has been a low level of entries this year and suggested increased engagement with local businesses in the run up to the awards in May, around education and information sharing. CJa suggested the award could focus on making our businesses more eco, and could be awarded to the business taking the most numerous or effective steps to becoming an eco-business, perhaps writing a blog stating what steps they've taken and how this has changed their business.
- There should be focus on the Environmental Policy and the work to be done around special verges.
- Building connections with Sideshore. TD and SG acknowledged their involvement with Sideshore's Plastic Free Festival and suggested working more with Sideshore. Various contacts within the Sideshore team were discussed, and it was agreed that CJo and LB will share these contacts with members.
- Advocacy work, including promoting Our Place, Our Planet, and reaching those people who are not currently on board with climate issues.
- TD requested backing from members in writing a press release focusing on Exmouth's environmental achievements and encouraging more people to get involved.

Actions:

- **LB will contact Laura Woodward Drake from the Chamber of Commerce regarding working together on this.**
- **CJo and LB will share Sideshore contact details with members.**
- **LB and AJ will shape a plan of objectives for the Working Party, in consultation with TD as Chair.**

10. Any other business

Nothing raised.

11. Dates of future meetings

All dates were agreed.

Next meeting is scheduled for 8th February 2022 at 10am.

The meeting ended at 17.02.