

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Flooding & Land Drainage Working Party

Notes of the Zoom meeting held at 2.00pm on Tuesday 19th October 2021

Present

Bruce de Saram	BdS	Chair, ETC & EDDC councillor Littleham ward
Chetna Jones	CJ	ETC Deputy Town Clerk
Kate Pearson	KP	EA, Flood Resilience Advisor
Tom Buxton-Smith	TBS	EDDC, Engineering Projects Manager
Tim Dumper	TD	ETC councillor, Town ward
Pauline Stott	PS	ETC councillor, Halsdon ward
Frank Cullis	FCu	ETC councillor, Withycombe Raleigh ward
Steve Gazzard	SG	ETC & EDDC councillor, Withycombe Raleigh ward
Tim Clatworthy	TC	ETC, notes

Apologies

Jeff Trail	JT	DCC councillor
Ben Harman	BH	SWW
Cherry Nicholas	CN	ETC councillor, Brixington ward
Stuart Coles	SC	DCC Highways

1. Welcome and apologies

2. Notes of previous meeting of 27th July 2021

PS proposed and FCu seconded the accuracy of these notes.

3. Matters arising from previous meeting

a) Item 3a: broken fence along Withycombe Brook:

It was reported that a child fell in recently but was not badly hurt, and no complaint has been received by ETC.

Several suggestions were made at this meeting:

- (i) Get advice from an engineer to assess and cost possible repairs.
- (ii) Consult DALC/NALC, on the assumption there will have been similar situations elsewhere and will therefore be precedents; ETC liability for any accident will probably be assumed whether we do, or do not, put in protective measures.
- (iii) Erect a sign warning of the danger, which states that ETC takes no responsibility for any misadventures.
- (iv) Block off the footway entrances, adding a Danger sign and a responsibility disclaimer. It was hoped that this might achieve the additional breakthrough of encouraging the owners of the adjoining houses to come forward.
- (v) TBS pointed out that in time the houses alongside the path will be in danger of falling into the brook, and that should this happen, any agencies which have undertaken work or erected signs there – even with a disclaimer included could be responsible - need to be certain that what they have done is legally 'watertight'.

b) Item 3b: Seafront lights:

Kier have said that the festoon lights can be reinstalled; the delay now is that brackets need to be manufactured for the new lamp posts. It is expected that Kier will be paying for the lights' reinstallation.

c) Item 3e: Damaged outflow pipes by lifeboat station:

The pipes were historically used by SWW but current ownership is uncertain, resulting from unclear transfers of assets when Exmouth Urban Council was disbanded in the 1970s and then privatisation in the 1990s; so although the pipes do not appear on SWW's maps, this does not mean they do not belong to SWW.

TBS is following this up with SWW in the hope that they will remove the pipes. If not, then there is the possibility that the proposed Littleham Brook works will have the funds to include the removal of these pipes, but these works are a year away.

d) Item 5: (a) tidal flooding at the junction of Hartopp Road/Halsdon Road and (b) flooding across Dinan Way: See Agenda item 5, SWW Update.

e) Item 6: (a) EDDC press release advertising reopening of Estuary View carpark and (b) repair of beach steps near the palm tree:

(a): This was published shortly after the 27th July meeting.

(b): See Agenda item 6, EDDC Update

4. EA: Tidal Defence and General updates (KP)

a) Construction is almost completed – there remain just a few snagging issues and the landscaping to be done in November.

b) The wall behind the clocktower: this replaces the previous timber fence. The new wall has been unsatisfactorily rendered from a longevity viewpoint and this is being referred back to Kier. Once it is finished, shrubs will be replanted there as before. Jim Faux is to provide EDDC a map showing who is responsible for which flowerbeds/planted area (e.g. ETC, EDDC, Exmouth in Bloom).

c) Re. the gate numbering, since the original design, changes have been made during construction and so currently the numbers do not follow logically. However 'as built' plans will be issued with the actual numbering, and these will be included in the MOU shared between EA, EDDC and ETC so all agencies have the up-to-date information.

d) Padlocks for the floodgates: These will be obtained once EA has agreed that they are of marine-grade quality.

e) EA Estates' Team are currently finalising their 'as built' drawings and will write to all landowners impacted by the Tidal Defence Scheme to clarify ownership, responsibilities, liabilities etc.

f) Once everything is finished there will be an official opening ceremony and it is hoped ETC will attend.

g) An exercise to practise closing the floodgates will take place on 12th November for the benefit of EDDC operatives and local volunteers, and ETC is invited to attend and observe. This is not a 'wet test' but one will be scheduled for a later date.

h) PS thanked and congratulated Kier for their excellent work at the Alexandra Terrace/Morton Road/Esplanade junction.

5. SWW: General updates (BH)

a) Re. Item 5a: Tidal flooding at the junction of Hartopp Road/Halsdon Road:

A forthcoming proposal for a large capital scheme in Exmouth is still in the planning stage, whose focus is the improvement on a wide range of issues. It was hoped that SWW would be able to attend ETP meetings more frequently and keep us informed on the results of their survey. (TC pointed out that SWW employees are not permitted to join Zoom meetings.) The flooding issue here is separate from the gully flooding issues previously experienced here, which DCC have since rectified.

- b) Re: Item 5b: Flooding across Dinan Way:
BH has received no calls re Dinan Way flooding, but as it is a long road, he requests that future reports be made with more precise location details. TBS added that if the Dinan Way flooding referred to the flooding by Shakespeare Road last winter, this has stopped, though it may reappear this winter.
- c) PS reported flooding by Woodlands Drive; CJ recommended that the next time there is flooding PS report it with a photograph to help determine whether this a DCC gully issue or a SWW issue.
- d) Recurrent flooding behind the hump at on Victoria Road near the junction with Imperial Road: after recent storms the road has been flooded up to the tops of the kerbs stretching back six houses, despite the gullies being clear. Had the rains continued a little longer these gardens and even the houses would have been flooded. It was suggested that sandbags should be offered to these properties.

6. EDDC: General updates (TBS)

- a) Re Item 6b: Repair of beach steps near the palm tree:
Hal Furneaux-Gotch, who is responsible for much of the coastal repairs, has been away for some time and TBS is unaware of the current situation there and the repair schedule. The steps in question are the second set towards town from the (new) lifeboat station, which have been boarded up all summer.
 - **Action: TBS to find out when this is due for repair.**
- b) There has been repeated flooding on the Esplanade/Queens Drive (a) outside Aby's/the new zebra crossing, (b) around the clocktower, and (c) on the beach side of the road opposite where the campervans park.
 - **Action: TBS to contact DCC's Emma Stamp/Phil Morgan to see if these three areas can be cleared as part of one job.**

7. DCC: General updates

No formal report from DCC had been received.
The next gully-clearing round for Exmouth is scheduled for January 2023; this is a 3-year cycle. However, DCC can always be notified of local problems through their 'Report It' website function.

8. ETC Councillors: Reports and questions to representatives of external organisations

These are covered elsewhere in these notes.

9. AOB

- a) Sandbags: It was pointed out that providing empty sandbags and suggesting people fill them with earth was of little cheer to residents in fear of imminent flooding. A contingency plan was suggested in which a truck with filled sandbags could be readied in advance of predicted storms and driven round the areas in need. However, it was gauged that there would be insufficient time to deliver to many of the vulnerable addresses.
- b) KP suggested alerting vulnerable residents to the website: <https://www.befloodready.uk/> which gives helpful advice on preparing properties for possible flooding.
- c) Furthermore ETC has hundreds of 'Flood Ready' leaflets which councillors may share within their wards, available from Reception/Chetna. Thousands have already been distributed in low-lying areas but as people generally tend to forget about flood preparation, they need to be reminded time and again.
- d) BdS welcomed TD's suggestion of involving the Flooding & Land Drainage working party next time we do more community resilience training.

- e) CJ welcomed FCu's suggestion of putting on another flood preparation awareness campaign/roadshow, using ETC's 'Flood Ready' leaflets.
- f) EA's National Flood Action Awareness Campaign is due to start 22nd November, and KP hoped we would promote this through our various communication channels.
 - **KP to keep us informed.**
- g) KP advised us that Jim Faux is shortly moving to Somerset; and that Dave Hancock's duties will be picked up by Rob Butler as Dave will be covering other responsibilities.
 - **KP to inform us of Jim Faux's replacement.**
- h) The meeting thanked TC for his seven-year stint as note-taker for this working party and wished him a happy retirement.

10. Next meeting: tba, and future meetings, at the request of members, are likely to continue to be on Zoom, as they are better attended.

11. Close of Meeting: 3pm