

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Party

Notes of the meeting held at 10am on Tuesday 8th February 2022 held remotely via Zoom

Present

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| Councillor Tim Dumper | TD | Exmouth Town Council (Chair) |
| Councillor Brian Bailey | BB | Exmouth Town Council |
| Councillor Frank Cullis | FC | Exmouth Town Council |
| Councillor Steve Gazzard | SG | Exmouth Town Council |
| Councillor Mike Rosser | MR | Exmouth Town Council |
| Councillor Andrew Toyne | AT | Exmouth Town Council |
| Chetna Jones | CJ | Exmouth Town Council Officer |
| Anna Jones | AJ | Exmouth Town Council Notetaker |
| Catherine Causley | CC | East Devon District Council Officer |
| Nicky Nicholls | NN | Transition Exmouth Chair |
| Emma Carnell | EC | Plastic Free Exmouth Leader |

Apologies

| | | |
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| Councillor Olly Davey | OD | Exmouth Town Council |
| Councillor Alex Sadiq | AS | Exmouth Town Council |
| Lisa Bowman | LB | Exmouth Town Council Officer |

1. Welcome and apologies

TD welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted. There were a number of items that required the Town Clerk to be present, so it was agreed to defer Items 7 and 13 to the next meeting. TD suggested arranging an interim meeting to discuss these items, and will speak with LB to organise this.

2. Approval of previous meeting notes

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

3. Matters Arising

None.

4. To receive an update from Plastic Free Exmouth

TD welcomed EC, Plastic Free Exmouth Leader, to report on the work of Plastic Free Exmouth. EC provided an update on the progress of PFE since she took over as leader on January 1st, 2022. At the end of 2021, PFE was 27% of the way through gaining Plastic Free Community accreditation with Surfers Against Sewage. The delay in achieving the accreditation was due to the pandemic and change in leadership. Now, four weeks later, they are at 75% of the way through. She

explained to members PFE's current work towards meeting the Plastic Free Community criteria, including:

- Of the twelve businesses needed to gain the Plastic Free Award, they have nine completed, fifteen are being uploaded, and more businesses wanting plastic free accreditation. Hopefully this will be completed by the end of the month. Exmouth businesses that were previously accredited in 2019 but have not yet received their awards have had to be inspected again to ensure they continue to follow these practices after the introduction of sanitizing and single-use items with the pandemic.
- Thirty community allies are needed, spread over other environmental groups, schools, colleges, church groups, etc. PFE already have a lot of community allies but need to provide proof that they are working together.
- Last year, PFE built up their social media presence, increased the number of volunteers, held a festival in September, and focused on getting schools on board. A minimum of three schools need to sign up as Plastic Free Schools for the Surfers Against Sewage Accreditation. Of the eight schools in Exmouth, PFE have had interest from four.

PFE hope to have the award by the end of February. They will then turn their attention to other things, including building a website and helping to hold Plastic Free events. They are in the process of getting funding for equipment such as reusable cups at events and are discussing building a portable water bar with a carpenter. The first of these events is on 31st March 2022 with LM Events, and they will be providing this service for more events later this year and next year.

TD congratulated PFE on the success of the beach cleans. EC confirmed that PFE are now weighing the litter collected from the beach each week to analyse later. Councillors congratulated EC on her work at PFE and noted the two-minute beach clean stand at Sideshore. EC confirmed PFE meet with Sideshore's Manager on a regular basis to swap ideas. CJ raised Town Team's Big Spring Clean, and EC confirmed PFE will be involved, and will continue to work with Liz Oram from Town Team on creating a business pack to help businesses become plastic free.

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

CJ provided an update on the water bottle refill station installations. Two sites have now been installed, by the train station and at Sideshore. CJ explained that she has discussed with CC and Dave Cook from EDDC, who have said PFE were keen to apply for a grant to fund a refill station at the Foxholes toilet blocks. EDDC will take responsibility of it, and CC confirmed there will not be any issues as those faced by ETC concerning licenses. CC confirmed that the application will be submitted in the next couple of days. She is hopeful to receive funding, however there is no

guarantee. Applications for the Sea Changer's grant close on the 12th February. CC will keep members updated on progress.

CJ asked members if they are willing to progress the matter by partnering with PFE and EDDC, and to help with installation and other costs. Councillors expressed concern due to the previous cost and time taken to install the refill stations and questioned whether this would be the same. CC confirmed that PFE will give ownership of the refill stations to EDDC, who will maintain it. CC added that she will investigate why ETC were told to retain ownership of the refill stations, as this caused the issues. Councillors expressed other concerns about the potential location of the station, being next to the toilets, but agreed working together as a triparty is the way forward.

Members noted their thanks to CJ for her hard work in installing the two water refill stations. There was some discussion around the current water bottle refill stations, including:

- The wind at Sideshore causing water to spray everywhere when trying to fill up bottles. Councillors queried whether partitions could be put up to avoid this, or a sign to warn the public. CJ confirmed she will discuss this with Sideshore's Manager.
- It was queried why the Council is looking at grants to fund the water refill stations when a budget of £12,000 was agreed for four water refill stations. CJ confirmed that the initial project proposal included some expected grant funding which was not received. MR queried the total legal costs of the project. CJ will confirm this with LB.
- Councillors queried the maintenance of the water refill stations. CJ confirmed the Town Maintenance Team are scheduled to clean them every Friday morning. This will be monitored as it is likely that the need will increase during the summer. CC confirmed she will speak to Streetscene and request the water refill station cleaning be included on their cleaning schedule.
- Councillors discussed a potential location for another water refill station, requesting the next be in the Town Centre. Although there is a Refill scheme in which the public can go into any Refill registered shop for free water, Councillors felt that a water fountain outside might get more use. CJ added that further funds will be required for another water refill station.

ACTION: CJ to discuss issues caused by wind at the Sideshore water refill station with Sideshore's Manager.

ACTION: CJ to confirm total legal costs of the project with LB.

ACTION: CC to arrange for cleaning of the water refill stations to be included on Streetscene's cleaning schedule.

6. To discuss the proposed criteria and scoring for designation of special verges

CJ updated members on her progress with the special verges criteria since the last meeting. Following more discussions, drawing on DCC experience, she has created a proposal for how to designate a special verge. She referred to the documents attached, produced with the help and input of DCC, Exmouth Wildlife Group and Wildlife Wardens, which seek to protect some verges that have special interest, in that they have rare species of wildflower plants and wildlife. By adopting a verge as a special verge, it will be well managed, in a controlled manner, to protect the rare species or wildlife. The documents refer to DCC, but these will be amended if ETC adopt the criteria.

CJ explained that a trial has taken place on a section of verge on Dinan Way, by the entrance to the Industrial Estate. A few species of plant have been identified on this site, and it is felt that this is worth looking after. She stated that while there is concern ETC may be taking on too much work, there are many volunteers who are passionate and willing to help, some with a wealth of knowledge as qualified ecologists willing to take time off to instruct the volunteers.

TD proposed, seconded by FC, and agreed by all to propose to the Town Council that it formally adopts the scheme for designation of special verges to enable special verges to be adopted and managed to protect rare wildflowers and wildlife.

ACTION: Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Party to propose to the Town Council that it formally adopts the scheme for designation of special verges to enable special verges to be adopted and managed to protect rare wildflowers and wildlife.

7. To consider use of EDDC's trailer by Exmouth Town Council to help promote and raise awareness of issues relating to climate change

CJ updated members on EDDC's Climate Conversations Cabin. The Community Resilience Working Party previously used the trailer for a roadshow to raise awareness on flood prevention. CJ contacted the Thelma Hulbert Gallery, where the trailer sits, to organise another flood prevention awareness event in March 2022. They expressed interest in coming to Exmouth for other climate change awareness events.

CC confirmed that EDDC's Climate Conversations Cabin has a programme of events in Exmouth, organising art projects and talks. Members discussed the possibility of involving the Climate Conversations Cabin at the Active Travel event on Saturday 30th April 2022. It was agreed that CC will send NN relevant contact information for NN to organise this.

Members further discussed the possibility of having the Climate Conversations Cabin at the Exmouth Festival. CC queried what is being done to ensure the festival is a sustainable event. Members advised CC to contact ETC's Arts Manager for more information about the event and to review the Council's Plastic Free Policy. Members asked what EDDC was doing at its own events and CC explained that EDDC are beginning to design a sustainable events policy.

Councillors queried the availability of free water at the festival, discussing potential for a temporary water refill station or use of the Imperial Rec water fountain. However, this has not been tested as drinking water. FC will raise this issue at the next Festival and Events Working Party meeting.

ACTION: FC to raise the issue of availability of free water at the Exmouth Festival at the next Festival and Events Working Party meeting.

8. To receive an update from Transition Exmouth

NN updated members on the potential for a networking event like one previously held at Marpool School before the pandemic. CC suggested this be held in June, during EDDC's Sustainability Month, so that she can help promote it. She hopes to hold a similar networking day at Ocean for all environmental groups to engage with each other and skill share.

9. To discuss and agree next steps for the Call of Nature Eco-hub project

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting to discuss the relationship between ETC and Transition Exmouth in acquiring the toilet blocks when LB is present.

ACTION: To discuss and agree next steps for the Call of Nature Eco-hub project at the next meeting, 12th April 2022.

10. To discuss the scope for the Town Council to be involved in the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Green Canopy

CJ explained to members that there is a suggestion for Town and Parish Councils to plant a circle of seven trees for the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations, each tree representing a decade of the Queen's reign. A line of trees is also acceptable if there are space constraints. There are also suggestions for community groups to get involved and plant trees and register these on the Queen's Green Canopy website.

CJ further explained that ETC has received a letter from Councillor Ian Thomas, Chair of East Devon District Council, offering every Town and Parish Council an oak tree to plant in the town. Councillors discussed potential locations for the oak tree, including Manor Gardens and Phear Park. Councillors agreed to accept the offer of an oak tree from EDDC and agreed that Phear Park is the best location due to the

number of trees that have been lost from Phear Park and the Exmouth Tree Group map of trees of interest in this area.

CJ confirmed the requirements for the tree planting: trees must be planted by mid-March in a site suitable for the size of an oak tree and accessible by the public. She will contact Streetscene to enquire about the possibility of planting the oak tree in Phear Park.

ACTION: CJ to respond and accept Cllr Ian Thomas's offer of an Oak Tree and contact Streetscene to enquire about the possibility of planting EDDC's oak tree in Phear Park.

11. To receive an update on other relevant matters from Town Council Working Parties and outside body representatives

Fairtrade Exmouth

TD provided an update on Fairtrade Exmouth. National Fairtrade aims for the year are to focus on climate justice and climate matters, and Fairtrade Exmouth's Steering Group are currently thinking through and working on these matters.

12. To discuss ETC's participation in EDDC's district wide sustainability month being held in June

CC provided an update on EDDC's sustainability month, which will incorporate and promote any sustainability events taking place in June under the banner of EDDC's sustainability month. Currently, this includes a series of events celebrating World Ocean Day at Ocean, a networking event for community groups, a film festival at Sideshore, promotion of refill shops, and challenges for community development events such as trying to live plastic free for a week. They are hoping to hold talks with ecologists and EDDC's Green Space Development Officer, and to showcase the amazing work of community groups.

CC encouraged members to let her know of any events they want to hold, and she will provide the relevant forms. She is currently at the stage of generating promotional documents, branding and logos, and ask Parish and Town Councils and community groups to register their interest and share in newsletters and on social media.

FC raised the issue of the amount of plastic on the allotments. CC agreed that there is potential to work with the allotment holders, introducing a plastic free challenge. Councillors agreed to discuss this with OD, ETC's allotment representative.

ACTION: Councillors to discuss potential for EDDC's sustainability month and feedback to CC.

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

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting when LB is present.

ACTION: To discuss the future objectives of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Party at the next meeting, 12th April 2022.

14. Any other business

Draft Local Plan

MR raised the issue of ensuring the Draft Local Plan reduces carbon and greenhouse gases as much as possible. Councillors agreed that the Draft Local Plan contains some concerning land proposals for sites infringing on the green wedge, and other environmental issues. TD noted that currently the consultations are being handled by EDDC's Planning Committee, but that the Working Party will later be asked for their views. It was agreed to discuss the Draft Local Plan at the next meeting.

ACTION: To discuss the Draft Local Plan at the next meeting, 12th April 2022.

The Woodland Trust

TD updated members that he and FC were previously invited to a farm near the Exmouth border in Lypstone that the Woodland Trust are attempting to acquire. They are currently fundraising for this, and TD suggested the Council should promote this fundraising. Councillors agreed to report the Woodland Trust fundraising to Full Council so all Councillors are aware and can assist in fundraising.

15. Dates of future meetings

Councillors noted the date of the next meeting, scheduled for Tuesday 12th April 2022 at 10am.

The meeting ended at 11.53.