

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL Town Maintenance Overview Working Party

Notes of the meeting held at 10am on Thursday 24th February 2022 via Zoom.

Present

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| 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 Tim Dumper | TD | Exmouth Town Council |
| Councillor Steve Gazzard | SG | Exmouth Town Council |
| Councillor Tony Woodward | TW | Exmouth Town Council |
| Chetna Jones | CJ | Exmouth Town Council |
| Anna Jones | AJ | Exmouth Town Council |

Apologies

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| Councillor Brian Bailey | BB | Exmouth Town Council |
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1. Welcome and apologies

IK welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were received as above. He welcomed TD, attending as Chair of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Party.

2. To approve the notes of the last meeting

OD proposed, seconded by FC, and it was agreed that members approved the notes of the meeting held on 20th January 2022.

3. Matters arising

Bus Shelters

CJ confirmed that the Town Maintenance Team have scheduled work for cleaning the bus shelters. They have peeled off old paint and carried out prep work on most bus shelters. They will get the same paint from the previous supplier and the work will take place over the next few weeks.

Councillors queried the progress of checking whether CIL funding applies to replacing the bus shelters. CJ confirmed that the CIL funding will only apply to new bus shelters, not for the maintenance of bus shelters, which is not the responsibility of this working party. Replacing bus shelters with CIL funding needs to be discussed by the S106 and CIL Working Party and the Exmouth Transport Partnership. CJ has raised the matter with the Town Clerk to progress further.

IK informed members of four other bus shelters in poor condition which, in his opinion, should be on the previously circulated bus shelter condition list. He brought

these to CJ's attention prior to the meeting, and they have subsequently been cleaned. CJ confirmed she will clarify ownership of the bus shelters including the shelter at the top of Exeter Road at Courtlands with Devon County Council, as DCC have been clearing the shrubs and weeds around this shelter.

ACTION: CJ to clarify ownership of the bus shelters.

Phear Park

CJ explained that she has had no further update on the Phear Park lease. It is still with EDDC's legal team. She has asked Streetscene's Manager for further updates.

ACTION: CJ to get an update on the Phear Park compound area from Streetscene Manager.

SLA for grass cutting with EDDC

CJ explained that the SLA will be discussed at the Finance Committee meeting tonight. She hopes the SLA will gain approval and, using delegated authority, this will be signed off before the end of March, enabling the new contract to start from 1st April.

4. To discuss concerns of repeated graffiti offences and propose actions for Town Council consideration

IK updated members on the number of graffiti appearing on publicly owned assets, such as bus shelters, road signs, traffic control boxes, street furniture, BT cabinets and power substations, particularly at Littleham Cross and hospital corner. He noted that ETC's Town Maintenance Team has been removing graffiti during the week, but it usually reappears over the weekend. IK explained that he emailed the Chair of the CCTV Working Party to request that the mobile CCTV camera be installed at Hospital Corner as the area is constantly being targeted by graffiti, however he had not received a response. He noted that there was once a Community Police Officer attached to the Community College who kept a book of the graffiti tags to attempt to track down the culprit. He queried whether Councillors knew if this was still running and suggested finding a way to work with the Police to combat the issue of graffiti.

SG explained that the issue of graffiti is continually raised at the Community Safety Group meetings. He suggested MC, ETC's current representative on the group, raise this issue, and MC confirmed she will. IK suggested querying whether a central log number can be set up to report the graffiti under, in order to help police to collate the information.

CJ confirmed that she emailed David Whelan in advance of the next meeting to request the graffiti issue be put on the agenda of the next meeting, however DW wanted to tackle this immediately. CJ has sent DW photos of the incidents, information about locations, and other evidence. DW confirmed he will speak with

Simon Evans but asked that any other sightings of graffiti be reported to the police. This will add to the statistics of how many incidents are taking place and allow the police to put more resources into addressing the matter. CJ requested Councillors report any graffiti to both her and the police. She will keep members updated on any feedback from DW and SE.

Councillors queried the success of the different cleaning materials trialled to remove graffiti. CJ reported the Town Maintenance Team have trialled a new gel graffiti remover, but it was no more successful than materials used before. She explained that the graffiti is ingrained into the paint, so it is hard to completely remove graffiti without peeling off the paint beneath it. FC suggested hiring a high-powered laser to remove the graffiti. The laser is very targeted and evaporates a layer of graffiti and leaves whatever is behind it. CJ explained that Streetscene used a similar piece of equipment by the underpass and were disappointed with the outcome. FC will send CJ a link to the laser to investigate.

ACTION: MC to raise the issue of graffiti at the next Community Safety Group meeting, and to suggest setting up a central log number for graffiti reports.

ACTION: CJ to update members on response from DW and SE regarding graffiti issue.

ACTION: FC to send CJ a link to the high-powered laser for graffiti removal, for CJ to investigate.

- 5. To address concerns regarding ownership and the purpose of protecting the verge by Dinan Way Industrial Estate as a special verge; and to agree that work continues in accordance with the attached policy (agreed by Climate and Ecological Emergency WP), management plan developed by DCC Ecologist and risk assessment.**

CJ explained that work to prepare the special verges criteria and management plan has been going on for some time, and ETC agreed to adopt this plan. She has raised Dinan Way as a special verge site on a number of occasions, however work at this site was stopped last week. She asked Councillors if they would like to proceed with this.

MC expressed concerns over ownership of the land where the Dinan Way special verge is situated, concerns over health and safety of staff carrying out the work, and whether the team were correctly following instructions.

SG and TD explained the importance that this work continue to go ahead. SG acknowledged CJ's hard work and research for this project and explained that all the health and safety issues had been considered in the risk assessment, and all staff knew exactly what work they should have been carrying out. TD agreed that the work must take place before the end of February, before bird-nesting season when the work cannot be carried out. He explained that the special verge programme had

been developed with DCC Ecologists and DCC Highways and the land was confirmed as under DCC ownership, previously worked on by DCC when they had the budget for this. He expressed his concern that it may be difficult to bring together all volunteers again before the cut-off date at the end of February. Both SG and TD expressed their concern that CJ had not been contacted directly at the time of the issue.

CJ explained that she had completed the DCC risk assessment, which was circulated to the Town Maintenance Team and volunteers prior to any work taking place and confirmed that the staff were following the safety requirements. These requirements included having their legs protected by wearing trousers, ensuring that they are visible, warm, and dry, and wearing safety visors and earmuffs when strimming grass. MC expressed concern that hard hats were not required and stated she would not accept responsibility or liability for the staff if they are not wearing hard hats when working on the bank. IK advised that after receiving clarification of ownership of the bank and subject to our staff following Health and Safety guidelines, he was in agreement with the work recommencing.

FC queried how quickly the work can recommence. CJ confirmed she should be able to arrange one day next week for ETC's Town Maintenance Team to continue with the work; however, she will have to check with the volunteers. She noted that it took a long time to get ten to twelve volunteers lined up, so this could prove to be difficult. She will keep members updated.

All Councillors agreed that the work on the special verge by Dinan Way Industrial Estate should be continued and scheduled as a matter of urgency.

CJ thanked all members for highlighting their concerns about staff health and safety.

ACTION: CJ to schedule work to continue on the special verge by Dinan Way Industrial Estate.

ACTION: CJ to organise reassembling the volunteers and keep members updated on progress.

TD left the meeting.

6. To receive an update on EDDC winter works

CJ updated members on an email received from Streetscene's Area Officer regarding EDDC winter works.

Streetscene have finished weed clearing in Jubilee Drive, the worst sections of Dinan Way, Hulham Road and Rolle Road. They are currently working on Cyprus Avenue, Portland Avenue and Foxholes Hill. More traffic islands will be cleared this weekend, including the last of the very weedy ones on the busiest roads, Salterton Road, Exeter Road and the top of Gipsy Lane. Over the last month, the sweepers

would have swept the majority of areas on the list, but unfortunately the storms have undone this work. Streetscene will now try to bring everything back to a good standard now that the worst of the wet and windy weather is over.

In the old arrangement, funding for the winter work is only until the end of February however if some aren't satisfied, work can be extended from a good will point of view until the grass cutting starts. Councillors should let the Area Officer know of any particular areas of concern.

IK expressed his satisfaction with the scheduled work and the offer to continue past the February cut-off if there are any issues. He queried whether Streetscene will be clearing Brixington Lane where there are big clumps of weeds all the way up. CJ will query this with Streetscene's Area Officer.

IK agreed to wait until the work had been completed to visit these areas. They will compare notes and agree what to follow up with Streetscene's Area Officer.

ACTION: CJ to confirm with Streetscene Area Officer whether Streetscene will be clearing Brixington Lane.

ACTION: IK to visit the cleared areas after all work has taken place and agree with CJ what to follow up with Streetscene Area Officer.

7. To consider the proposal by Councillor T Woodward to introduce bee-friendly roof-top gardens on existing ETC bus shelters.

TW informed members of bee-friendly bus stops, with trays of seeded plants on top of bus shelters to promote the activity of bees, which have been put in place in Leicester City and in a village in West Sussex. He proposed identifying one or two bus shelters owned by ETC with enough support to hold the weight of the seeds, to carry out a pilot scheme of bee-friendly bus shelters. Between 3-5 square metres of trays would be required, costing £200-£300. If accessible and successful, TW proposed taking this further around Exmouth.

Councillors agreed that this is a good idea. There was some discussion around the bee-friendly bus stops:

- CJ explained that Fernbank are looking to replace the bus shelters in the Parade and install a living roof on one or two of these. As ETC have committed to working with Fernbank and Fernbank have some proposals planned for when they will carry out the work, ETC should hold fire on this project for now.
- OD expressed concern at the Fernbank Parade bus shelter proposals as he felt these were too isolated and too far away from other food sources to be visited by many bees. He felt the bee-friendly bus stops should be located near existing gardens to supplement what the bees already have.

- Councillors queried the maintenance of the bee-friendly bus stops, such as how often they will need to be watered in summer and who will do this, and who will look after them to ensure they are not taken over by weeds.
- It was commented that bee-friendly bus shelters may not need a lot of maintenance because the sedum forms a dense matt meaning other weeds can't get through, and the soil is shallow so the weeds would not become deeply embedded.
- CJ commented that the Town Maintenance Team is already at capacity with watering and struggle to fill the bowsers in the summer so may not be able to take on watering the bus shelters.
- It was commented that, when looking into this previously, the shelters were in such a bad state that they would not be able to withstand the weight of the trays. However, the weight may be different now. Nevertheless, Councillors expressed concern that the weight restraints may restrict what can be put on the shelters owned by ETC.
- TW commented that the bus shelter roof-top gardens are reasonably low maintenance and suggested looking at the garages at the back of Trefusis Terrace, which are covered with sedum, as an example. IK commented that the bus shelters outside CTC Lymptone, provided by Fernbank, had part-sedum roofs if members wished to see examples of these type of shelters.
- Councillors agreed to let Fernbank know the Town Council support their proposals and to find out more information as to who will water and maintain them. If the Fernbank trial is successful, ETC can look at a long-term plan to replace ETC-owned bus shelters with stronger roof-tops and then introduce the bee-friendly bus shelter roof-top gardens.

ACTION: CJ to report to the Town Clerk that the Town Maintenance Overview Working Party is in support of sedum living gardens on the bus shelters, and support and welcome Fernbank's proposal for this.

8. To receive an update on Town Maintenance work

CJ updated members on the Town Maintenance work. The focus has been on road weed clearing. The team have cleaned from Prince of Wales drive and the surrounding areas, into Macey Road and roads off of there, working their way towards Clairmont Road. Some parts are still in bad condition, but because the work is being done more often, the team are getting through it quicker.

As previously discussed, the Town Maintenance team have been carrying out graffiti removal work, however it has been very deflating to remove graffiti only for it to return again.

Grounds maintenance work has not been the main focus; however, some work has taken place. CJ commented on the pansies that have suffered. Boyce's provided ten trays of free plants to replace what suffered, which have been planted to fill in the gaps. Summer plants have been ordered, introducing a few new elements, a few more perennials, and introducing a Jubilee element. The work will not take place until early June because of the festival work required to be carried out at a similar time.

CJ mentioned the staff parental leave currently scheduled for the end of April but may take place slightly earlier. She confirmed that she has informed staff that no leave will be granted from mid-May to mid-June and that staff will be expected to cover weekend work during the festival, which is also stated in their contracts. CJ informed Councillors that all the work is in hand and planned for.

CJ confirmed that road weed clearing and bus shelter painting will continue as the weather gets better. The team will start watering once a week.

Councillors queried whether the Town Maintenance Team were asked to carry out any repairs for storm damage. CJ confirmed that Streetscene is responsible for road incidents and damage caused by the storms, so ETC's team were on standby but did not have to carry out this work. SG passed on thanks from the Devon County Councillor Jeff Trail to the Town Maintenance Team for helping at Dinan Way and Valley Way where some trees came down on private land.

9. To receive an update on vans

CJ updated members on the van delivery dates. The Ford Transit arrived this week with only a few days' notice. Staff had to rush to get insurance and a fuel card sorted as this could not be done without the registration of the van. CJ circulated a photo prior to the meeting and confirmed that staff are very pleased with the new van. She informed members that the inside of the truck is not lined as lining would cover the hooks inside, meaning things could not be locked down, and because it has no roof the inside would rot. The Team are building time to clean out the van into the schedule once a week and also to take the diesel engines for a longer run every so often due to the usual short stop start journeys.

CJ confirmed there is not yet a date for the next vehicle. She will keep members updated.

Councillors queried whether ETC transfers are on the vehicles and whether the back tailgate has saturate markings. CJ confirmed the vehicle has both. Councillors queried whether staff are continuing to use their own vehicles or whether they are all using ETC owned vehicles. CJ confirmed the team have swapped vans and are all using ETC owned vehicles, however this may change when watering starts due to the size of the vans. IK suggested arranging some publicity once we have received all the vans and CJ agreed.

10. Any other business

Jubilee beacon lighting

MC queried the Town Maintenance Team's involvement in the beacon lighting. CJ confirmed that the Town Council plans to light a gas fuelled beacon that connects to a gas bottle. It will be put up earlier in the day and a team member will stay with it until it is lit to prevent it from being stolen. As this is occurring alongside the festival, CJ will schedule who will cover which shift. She confirmed that this has been discussed in the Festival and Events Working Party.

11. To note the date of the next meeting

Councillors noted the date of the next meeting at 10am on Thursday 17th March. CJ informed Councillors that she will be on annual leave the week prior to the meeting and requested that Councillors send any agenda item requests to AJ directly.

The meeting ended at approximately 11:45am.