

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Waterfront Working Party

Notes of the meeting held at 10am on Tuesday 15th January 2022 via Zoom.

Present

Councillor Pauline Stott	ST	Exmouth Town Council (Chair)
Councillor Brian Bailey	BB	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Eileen Beech	EB	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Tim Dumper	TD	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor David Poor	DP	Exmouth Town Council
Chetna Jones	CJ	Exmouth Town Council
Anna Jones	AJ	Exmouth Town Council
Peter Blythe	PB	EDDC Streetscene Beach Safety Officer
John Morgan	JM	Red Rock Leisure Ltd Exmouth Watersports Ltd

Apologies

Councillor Jeff Trail	JT	Devon County Council
Dave Radford	DR	Exmouth Sea Scouts

1. Welcome and apologies

PS welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted.

2. To approve the notes of the last meeting dated 29th June 2021 and the inspection form dated 26th October 2021

The notes of the previous meeting and the inspection form were proposed for approval by TD, seconded by DP, and agreed by all.

3. Matters arising

Inspection Form – 26th October 2021

PS requested PB update members on the outcome of the issues arising from the inspection. PB provided an update for members on these issues:

- Broken railing by the seawall. Streetscene are still waiting for the spare parts. The steps are currently closed off with sandboards and will remain closed until the parts are received and the railing is fixed.
- Cracks in the sea wall. PB has not received an update from the engineers responsible.
- Damaged fingerpost. Although PB had thought the damaged fingerpost was taken to the Camperdown depot last year, he said that Streetscene have been unable to locate it. He will continue to look.

- Signs in The Bath House windows. CJ updated members that she had reported the issue to ETC's planning administrator, who reported it to the planning enforcement officer. PS confirmed that the signs have now been taken down.
- Octagon beach steps. PB is still waiting for spare parts.
- Octagon showers. PB confirmed that the original supplier has gone bust. As the original supplier was American, all shower parts are American Imperial fittings, making parts harder to replace. Streetscene intend to replace the whole shower block, however the money is not in this year's budget, so it will likely take place next year.

PB suggested using Sideshore showers in the meantime, however CJ confirmed that these showers are not open all the time, only available when Edge Watersports are open. Additionally, Edge Watersports are reluctant to put up signage for the showers. SG offered to contact EDDC's directors to request a sign be put up.

CJ requested that if the Octagon showers do get replaced, could Streetscene consider putting in a water bottle refill unit at the same time. PB confirmed he will investigate this.

- EDDC Flagpole. PB confirmed the flagpoles have been replaced with signs, due to the risk of storm damage. RNLI confirmed that a single red flag is not necessary as red flags need to be in pairs to mark where people cannot swim.
- Broken wall. PB has not received any updates from the engineers.
- Beach signs. PB explained he will provide further information in his update later in the meeting.
- Beach Gardens shelters. PB explained he raised the issue with property services but has not received a response. He will continue to chase this issue and suggested ETC should too.
- Pavilion Carpark Flagpoles. CJ explained that she has collected quotes for flagpoles and needs to proceed with ordering one. Streetscene will then install it for ETC.
- Pavilion Carpark Signs. PB confirmed the sign is being dealt with by EDDC's carparks team.
- Loose railing by the Abode. PB confirmed that the loose railing has been repaired, however it will likely be loosened again by waves during storms.

- Broken bollards by the seafront. PB confirmed Streetscene picked up the broken bollard piece, but is unsure as to whether it has been repaired.
- Exposed groynes at RNLI ramp. PB confirmed this will be covered by the RNLI work currently taking place, by the same contractor who is working on the ramp.
- Broken wooden board by the Lifeboat Station. PB confirmed that this has been dealt with by the RNLI, and EB confirmed it has been covered in concrete where it goes into the wall.
- Loose handrail by RNLI steps. This has been fixed.

ACTION: Inspection form to be updated accordingly with the agreed actions.

4. To receive an update on EDDC's Exmouth Beach Management Plan Steering Group

PS provided an update on EDDC's Exmouth Beach Management Plan Steering Group. The last meeting took place on 26th October 2021. EDDC have the money to remove the pipe under the Lifeboat ramp or will try and encase it in concrete. They have also painted triangles onto the end of all the groynes. PS hopes for more progress following the next meeting on 1st March 2022, where they will see if there is any money put aside in EDDC's budget for the Beach Management Plan to progress next year.

TD queried whether the long-term absence of the EDDC engineer has affected the progress of the work on the BMP. PB confirmed the staff member returned to work last week on a phased return but was not aware of any delays.

5. To receive an update on the Beach Wheelchair Project

PS provided an update for members on the Beach Wheelchair Project. She currently has five wheelchairs and has another one on order since October which will arrive in two and a half months. The ramp has been put in and the changing room is being fitted now. 40,000 people have visited the Facebook page with many enquiries from people all over the country asking when the wheelchairs can be booked. The booking system is currently being completed, and they hope to open by Easter.

BB and SG noted thanks to PS for her fantastic efforts in the Beach Wheelchair Project. It has taken a long time and she has done a brilliant job. PS noted her thanks to Devon County Councillors in their donation towards purchasing an electric hoist, making Exmouth the only town in Devon and Cornwall to have a hoist for use in this way.

Councillors queried whether EDDC can allocate disabled parking spaces for the beach wheelchair hut and if the paperwork and protocol has been completed for

wheelchair hire. PS confirmed that she has applied to DCC for two disabled parking spaces and two parking spaces for volunteers near the hut. She further confirmed that they have researched other Beach Wheelchair projects and drawn up paperwork stating users are responsible for using the chairs, hoist and standing aid. The wheelchairs will be free to use, with a £20 deposit which is then returnable. PS hopes to get more donations for future wheelchairs.

6. To receive an update on the Tidal Defence Works

TD fed back to members the update received at the latest Flooding and Land Drainage Working Party meeting, that there were a couple of small problems with the tidal defence works and that there will be another test run and a wet test run.

CJ confirmed that the bulk of the work is complete, and the Environment Agency are now in the process of sorting out any small issues. She asked members to raise any issues they were aware of, and she will take these back to the Environment Agency.

CJ continued to update members on the festoon lights. Kier have made the brackets and delivered them to Streetscene's Camperdown depot. However, the control boxes have not been located and Streetscene has concluded that they will not be found. CJ is working with Streetscene to find a solution in how to go forward. CJ is currently establishing the cost per control box unit as she only has a quote for the whole installation and working out which lampposts originally had the control boxes on them. She confirmed she will keep members updated with any progress she makes.

Councillors expressed their shock and disappointment at the loss of these valuable items and agreed that those responsible for the loss of the control boxes should be liable for the cost of replacement.

7. To receive an update from Streetscene on seafront, bins, toilets and beach signs

PB provided an update on behalf of Streetscene. Streetscene have eight big bins which will be put out in the next couple of weeks to replace the double litter stations currently along the seafront. The double litter stations will be refurbished and then temporarily put out in very high use periods, such as bank holidays. Additionally, two extra recycling units will be put out along the seafront, but the exact location has not yet been confirmed. Action taken on the toilets will be subject to the toilet review.

PB provided a further update on beach signs. Streetscene are currently re-doing all the tops of the beach signs to include the postcode and the What Three Words reference of each location. At the same time, Streetscene will rename Blenny Bay to Exmouth Beach. He is currently pinning down the What Three Words reference for each location and will then take this to the sign designers. Additionally, Streetscene are redoing the maps on the signs where the road layout is wrong, however they are

waiting for the planning permission on the Queens Drive Space to be confirmed before they begin this work.

PB updated members on dog signs. He is working with the new Environmental Health Manager to make the dog signs along the beach more obvious to the public. He confirmed Streetscene have taken down the A0 sign for winter but will reinstall it for summer along with a second A0 sign at Orcombe Point end. They will install A3 or A2 size signs at the relevant entrances to the beach and will use a bigger stencil on the pavement at the start of the new financial year. PB confirmed that Streetscene are hoping to complete all signage before peak visitor season, however work is dependent on the timing of the sign manufacturer.

Councillors raised the issue of dog mess on the beach causing public health issues for sports events, and queried enforcement of dog rules and whether a dog warden could be introduced. PB confirmed that Streetscene will use the beach rake to ensure the beach is clean before events take place. He further confirmed that Streetscene support dog wardens and increased enforcement, however they don't have the resources to fund paid staff with the appropriate training. They do not want to use volunteers due to the high risk of harm or threatening behaviour.

PS queried whether there is a replacement danger sign for the Mamhead slipway as the flag is wrapped around the flagpole. PB confirmed that there are currently hazard signs at the Mamhead slipway and the new flag and lanyard are on order and should arrive before the main season starts. He confirmed that Streetscene have again put in a blue flag application and will know if they have been successful by April. PS requested whether, if the blue flag application is successful, Streetscene could apply for a wheelchair. PB commented on an accessibility project running pre-pandemic which allowed blue flag beaches access to beach wheelchairs and access matting free of charge. He will investigate whether this is still running and put together an application for Exmouth and Sidmouth.

PB confirmed that Streetscene and the RNLI have put together a proposal to increase the number of lifeguards for a longer period. Lifeguards will now be on the beach from Easter to the end of October, with four off-peak and six on-peak. At highest peak, there will be a second stand on the other side of beach, near Orcombe Point. This will provide much better cover and will separate the main swimming area from the Watersports. Streetscene are waiting for final confirmation of budgets, as the cost has almost doubled since the previous year.

8. To receive an update on Jubilee Clock Tower area

CJ provided an update on the Jubilee Clock Tower area. The wall behind has been painted and the plants have all been put in. She is awaiting confirmation from EDDC regarding decisions about the damaged black bollards and the lights in the planters and pavement bollards.

PS confirmed she attended EDDC's budget meeting, however the Jubilee Clock Tower lighting was not put forward. CJ explained that she is hoping EDDC will at least return to the original proposal of fixing the lights instead of creating a light display to light the clocktower in different colours. She confirmed she has supplied information to EDDC engineers regarding the contractor ETC used to carry out the electrical work in the clock tower and who highlighted the issues with the wiring on EDDC's side. She has not yet received a response. PS suggested following this up at the Beach Management Meeting on 1st March 2022.

There was some discussion about the broken bollards, and it was noted that these were discussed at the previous COLP meeting. CJ confirmed that the general responses from COLP members were reported back to EDDC. Once she has received confirmation of a decision, she will feedback to COLP.

9. To receive an update on Queen's Drive and Sideshore

PS updated members on the main issue in the meeting notes regarding the Queens Drive carpark being unsuitable for fitness groups. PB confirmed that there were some issues regarding how well the grass had grown in, meaning the surface would be damaged if used by fitness groups at that time, and some issues with proximity to the road and visibility of fitness groups. Another meeting is taking place on Thursday 17th February 2022. PB will have further updates following this meeting.

PS queried whether the tenant at Harbour View had been offered a new lease. PB confirmed that they have. It has now gone to legal and will be confirmed for another year. PS queried what is happening to the coastguard watch tower as it has been leaking water. PB will confirm with the EDDC Queens Drive Delivery Group.

ACTION: PB to confirm with EDDC Queens Drive Delivery Group what is happening to the coastguard watch tower and provide an update.

10. Any other business

Red Rock Leisure/Exmouth Watersports Ltd Update

JM provided an update on Red Rock Leisure and Exmouth Watersports Ltd. All the schools are back on the beach following the pandemic, and he confirmed they will be back at Orcombe this year at full capacity. They are teaching children all over the country, around 6000 children a year, and 2000 of these are being taught at Orcombe.

JM raised the issue of dog mess on the beach when teaching the children and the smell from the dog bins by the entrance to the beach. CJ requested JM write to EDDC and/or ETC regarding his concerns with the dog mess on the beach. ETC have previously raised these concerns with Environmental Health but were told this was not a big issue and that it was well managed and under control. It would be useful for EDDC Environmental Health to hear this directly from JM.

PB explained that the dog bins are a tricky issue as if there are no dog bins, there will be an increase in dog fouling on the beach. He explained that Streetscene are looking into better solutions than having dog bins attached to the back of the beach signs.

Cold Water Swimmers

PS explained that the group of cold-water swimmers, who use the beach regularly, require somewhere to store their clothes whilst they are swimming, as dogs regularly spoil their belongings.

PB confirmed he has spoken with the swimmers, however there is no suitable location for beach lockers. Similarly, hooks on the seawall are unsuitable due to the rising and lowering of the beach level. PS suggested introducing lockers at the RNLI Life station or next to the beach wheelchair unit. PB explained it may be difficult to run, to find a suitable location and to prevent the lockers being vandalised.

11. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting, a walkabout meeting on Tuesday 5th April 2022, was noted. It was agreed to meet at Orcombe Point at 10am and walk back along the seafront.

The meeting ended at approximately 11.15am.