

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Party

Notes of the meeting held at 10am on Tuesday 12th April 2022 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 Mike Rosser	MR	Exmouth Town Council
Lisa Bowman	LB	Exmouth Town Council
Anna Jones	AJ	Exmouth Town Council
Catherine Causley	CC	East Devon District Council Officer
Nicky Nicholls	NN	Transition Exmouth Chair

Apologies

Councillor Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council
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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 FC, seconded by MR, and agreed by all.

3. Matters Arising

None.

4. To receive a Trees Update

MR updated members on Jane Habermehl's work with school children and other volunteers to plant 500 trees and saplings in the town, with 200 at the Knapps Cross playing field, and others on or near school grounds and playing fields. 200 of these need mulching, which MR is currently discussing with the Deputy Town Clerk. MR further updated members that the CIL and S106 Working Party is in agreement with investing CIL money in improving valley parks and planting. He queried the progress of a potential forum to discuss planting and maintenance of trees, which was to be chaired by one of the officers of the council.

LB explained that due to EDDC staff shortages, EDDC tree officers do not currently have the capacity to host the forum. However, ETC may have the capacity to facilitate this forum when the new Climate Officer has been taken on. LB further updated members that the Town Council have agreed to commit CIL funds to the Neighbourhood Plan aspiration to improve the Bapton Valley multi-user path, which

will look at planting alongside the path improvements, and the Deputy Town Clerk is currently in contact with EDDC regarding this project. Unfortunately, the EDDC Officer is leaving which may cause some delays.

Councillors discussed the Oak tree planted in Phear Park to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, which was provided by EDDC. FC noted his disappointment about the size of the tree, as he thought it should have been much bigger. TD further noted that only four Councillors attended the tree planting and there was very little publicity of the event. However, OD explained that bigger trees require more maintenance and carry a greater risk, so planting smaller trees is better.

FC updated members that St Joseph's school has applied to do tree work and suggested someone go to the schools to talk about trees and raise awareness in the children before the work takes place. It was agreed that TD would discuss this with Jane Habermehl.

TD provided an update from the Woodland Trust, who have now purchased Coombe Farm on the Lymptstone/Exmouth border. They are still raising money for the projects they will carry out there, and want to work closely with the Town Council and other neighbouring parishes to develop and raise awareness of the scheme and get more people visiting. This involves looking after hedgerows and ecosystems as well as increasing the number of trees.

TD asked for a further report on Goodmores Farm and which trees are being taken out there. Councillors expressed shock at the amount of trees being cut down along Marley Road. LB explained that Councillor Fred Caygill might have flagged this to EDDC Enforcement Officers.

ACTION: TD to contact Jane Habermehl regarding organising a talk on trees at St Joseph's School.

5. To receive an update from Transition Exmouth

NN provided an update on the ExeCargo bikes. Transition Exmouth have bought two different bikes, the Tern bike which has different attachments for cargo or carrying children, and the Raleigh Stride where the cargo sits between two wheels. Both will be delivered this week, in time to be launched at Active Travel Day. TE will work with Exmouth Cycles, who will manage the bikes and hire them out, but TE have control over the rates. TE are currently discussing the best options for promotion, whether promotion events or going round schools, and the business elements, whether businesses ride them themselves or someone rides them independently, and the different rates that will be negotiated. NN explained TE will see what works and see if they can upscale it or change it. CC confirmed she is working on a mobility hub, which will link TE's ExeCargo bikes with co-cars and co-bikes and EV charging infrastructure in the Imperial Road Car Park.

NN updated members on the Our Place Our Planet blog that comes out every month and encouraged members to sign up to get regular updates. She explained she has spoken to ETC's Arts Manager about a potential OPOP week to be held at the end of the summer with environmental film showings and different arts related events, potentially held in Manor Gardens. This will help to promote the OPOP website. NN will discuss dates with the Arts Manager. LB noted that the Arts Manager's maternity cover contract ends in August so there is a small window of opportunity in the summer.

NN updated members on Active Travel Day, taking place on 30th April 2022. OD confirmed they are doing well for volunteers but could do with a few more in case people drop out. They are gradually getting documents back into EDDC. The invoice for the day has been received and LB confirmed that the invoice has been processed for payment. OD explained that one of the bike shops had to drop out, and that he has received the posters and will be delivering these in the town centre today. CC stated she will promote the event in the resident's newsletter and on social media. TD confirmed that Stagecoach's manager will be attending the event, but that Great Western Railway did not respond to his invitation.

NN explained that TE are having lots of good conversations with different local community and voluntary groups around food waste and food poverty, community energy, and health and wellbeing moving out of the pandemic and social isolation. They are potentially going to pay someone to pull some of this work together as they work along broader climate justice and social justice issues.

6. To receive a plastics update

TD reported to members an update from the Plastic Free Exmouth Leader. PFE have received 600 usable cups to rent for a small donation to PFE projects and events. The first event is a 10k race taking place on Sunday 24th April, providing runners with water using reusable cups. The organiser has said this will save thousands of reusable cups each year.

The Community College are now at 93% completion on their tasks to become plastic free and Withycombe Primary are on their way. 22 business have now received plastic free status and another 20 have signed up. PFE have removed 157.5kg of litter from the beach since January 23rd. They will be holding their plastic free festival on August 7th. They have asked the Town Council if they are aware of an appropriate storage area and cupboard for litter picking equipment, 600 cups and educational resources.

CC confirmed that PFE were unsuccessful on the first lot of grant funding they applied for, however the grant funders really liked the project and so PFE are number one on the reserve list. In the last lot of grant funding, the first three on the reserve list ended up getting funding, so there is a possibility here. CC has investigated using money from the existing climate budget; however, this is not

possible. CC is discussing potential next steps with the Deputy Town Clerk. Councillors discussed concerns and queries around the water refill stations including:

- FC queried if data on usage of the existing water fountains is available and when we are likely to receive this, however it was noted that this information is not available.
- FC further suggested investigating sponsorship from local businesses on individual water refill stations. It was noted that the Town Council has approached some local businesses for sponsorship, however, was unsuccessful, perhaps due to the current climate. TD noted the building of relationships with the business community through the Chamber of Commerce Business Awards and the Town Council's climate impact and environmental award.
- Councillors discussed maintenance costs for the refill stations and agreed that this will go up in the summer as they will require increased cleaning.

7. To receive an update from LB on anticipated next steps for the Call of Nature Eco-hub project

LB updated members on a letter from EDDC confirming the categorisation of the toilet blocks into categories A, B and C. She explained that the Imperial Rec toilet block, which has been put forward for the climate hub, is a category B toilet which will be marketed to local businesses and collaborative projects. There is a 12-month timeline to market the category B toilets and discuss the category C toilets with town councils. LB will keep members posted on progress, but noted it looks very positive. She further confirmed that, when taken on, the new Climate Officer will have the capacity to work with TE on this project.

NN confirmed discussions with EDDC have been positive and suggested that the project should become part of EDDC's climate emergency response as well. She explained that she is not doing any further work on this project until more information is known.

MR explained that the S106 and CIL Working Party have agreed the project is suitable for CIL funding if needed and could be proposed to the Town Council. LB agreed that once we have received quotes, a recommendation to the Town Council could be made to contribute CIL funding to this project.

8. To discuss and determine the Working Party's response to Devon Climate Emergency's response to the Climate Assembly recommendations, due to be returned by April 17th

LB and TD agreed that members should respond individually to DCE's response to the Climate Assembly recommendations if they wish to.

CC explained that this is not a consultation on DCE's or the Climate Assembly's actions, as councils have been consulted at every stage of the process on this, but is a chance to say whether councils think the process has been right.

ACTION: Members to respond individually to DCE's response to the Climate Assembly recommendations if they wish to.

9. To receive an update on Motion for the Ocean

LB explained that she has recently joined a NALC networking group for coastal communities where they have been discussing national policy for coastal communities across the country. She updated members on a presentation from a special interest group in the North working on coastal community issues, specifically Motion for the Ocean. Since then, Falmouth Town Council have declared a Motion for the Ocean. She suggested that Exmouth Town Council declare a Motion for the Ocean and work with Adrian Toole to continue his daughter's work and legacy in promoting cleaner oceans. All members agreed that LB is to contact Adrian Toole to discuss the Motion for the Ocean.

MR raised his horror at the sewage at Maer Rocks caused by South West Water. LB explained that SWW have been brought to EDDC's Scrutiny Panel and are due to attend another meeting, where EDDC have attempted to push several actions in terms of transport and discharging of sewage. OD confirmed he attended the first meeting, where SWW presented and stated they were allowed by law to release sewage in this way. Councillors agreed that this is a national issue which needs to be dealt with nationally, however a big priority of the Town Council is the safety of people on the beach, making sure they are aware of any sewage. CC made members aware of apps to check for water quality issues during the summer.

LB updated members on the EX8 residents group now known as ESCAPE, working with EDDC and Friends of the Earth to stop sewage discharge and other issues. A representative for ESCAPE has attended EDDC's Scrutiny Group and is due to attend the next one. LB explained that Councillor David Poor has already been in liaison with the representative from ESCAPE, and she will give MR his contact details.

ACTION: LB to contact Adrian Toole to discuss working together on Exmouth Town Council's Motion for the Ocean.

ACTION: LB to give MR contact information for leader of ESCAPE.

10. To receive an update on the recruitment of a Climate and Ecological Emergency Officer

LB updated members that the advert for the Climate and Ecological Emergency Officer will be put up on Indeed today. It will be pushed through local council forums

and through the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group networks. CC stated she will share the post through her networks.

LB left the meeting.

11. To discuss and agree how the Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Party will respond to the relevant sections of the Draft Local Plan

TD updated members that he and Councillor Lynne Elson will be meeting with Lympstone Parish Council to discuss items on the Draft Local Plan. He stated that it is not clear whether there is anything this Working Party can do at this time.

OD reported back on his discussion with Ed Freeman, who encouraged people to allow the process to move forward smoothly to the relevant consultation periods without too much outside intervention. He noted that this is the first time the pre-draft has ever been debated in public. OD noted his concern with the definition of 'sustainable' within the local plan, as the plan defines Exmouth as a sustainable location because of its services and facilities, however not every part of Exmouth can access these services and facilities sustainably.

Members discussed issues with sustainable transport in Exmouth and in the Draft Local Plan, with TD expressing the view that there was work to be done via the Exmouth Transport Partnership working with both EDDC and DCC to develop an integrated transport strategy. They raised the need for better bus services and the need for any development to be within 15 minutes walking distance of essential services.

Councillors agreed to keep a close eye on the progress of the Local Plan and, if necessary, draw attention to important issues. Otherwise, the Working Party will wait for the formal consultation to do raise any concerns formally.

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

Fairtrade Exmouth

TD expressed his thanks to CC for her address at the Fairtrade Pancake Party.

Town Maintenance Overview Working Party

TD reported that the work on the Dinan Way special verge near Lidl has been successfully completed to allow for the protection of rare species of plants.

CIL and S106 Working Party

MR reported that the CIL and S106 Working Party have agreed to support projects in the neighbourhood plan with CIL funding if needed, particularly relating to the talk of improving the cycle network and in tree planting.

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

Members agreed that the Working Party should hold a special one agenda item meeting to discuss the future steps and community involvement in the objectives of the Working Party. It was agreed that it would be appropriate that the new Climate and Ecological Emergency Officer be involved in this discussion and bring their experience to the new objectives. However, it was noted that the recruitment process for the new project officer should not delay this meeting for too long, as it is important to discuss future objectives.

ACTION: All members agreed to postpone this item to a special single item meeting to discuss the future objectives of the Working Party.

14. Any other business

LB re-joined the meeting.

OD reported that a member of the public had contacted him with concerns regarding Flora Close, which was built on an original water meadow, and with attempting to get the woodland on Dinan Way designated as special ancient woodland. OD will view the site at Flora Close and discuss the woodland on Dinan Way with the Woodland Trust.

15. Dates of future meetings

Councillors noted the date of the next meeting, scheduled for Tuesday 28th June 2022 at 10am.

The meeting ended at 11.40am.