

# ANNUAL REPORT



**Exmouth**  
Town Council

2022/2023

## EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

“We’re looking to the future to improve the quality of life for Exmouth residents and visitors. And building on the characteristics which make Exmouth special.”

### A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

*Councillor Steve Gazzard*

It is an honour and a pleasure, as Town Mayor, to present my Annual Report for the people of Exmouth.

In this, my fourth year as Mayor, I have continued to undertake visits to a range of community groups, and I have attended events within the town and beyond. I would like to thank all those that made me, my Consort, and Town Crier so welcome during these visits.

In the past year, the Town Council's various Committees and Working Parties have continued to meet on a regular basis with the aim of helping the Town Council to steer decisions which are vital for our town and residents. We have also continued our support of many local organisations, clubs and charities with grant funding.

Exmouth Town Council continues to have a good working relationship with our two higher tier councils: East Devon District Council and Devon County Council. With the return of face-to-face meetings, this has enabled us to again be an efficient and proactive Council and tackle issues together for the benefit of our town.

In the last 12 months, the Town Council supported the County Council's application to the Levelling Up Fund for Dinan Way and Town Gateway improvements and committed £400,000 of match funding towards the project. We were therefore delighted to learn that the application has been successful and will now receive Government funding of £15.7 million, which will be a huge contribution for the economy of Exmouth Town as a whole.

The Town Council has also invested heavily in the safety of the Town Centre and esplanade by installing 10 New CCTV Cameras. We are now working in partnership with Torbay Council to provide real-time monitoring services with the support of our neighbourhood policing team.

Tourism in Exmouth is booming! I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to our team of Tourist Information Service (TIS) volunteers for staffing the information centre. The TIS offers a friendly face for all visitors, as well as enabling local businesses to be promoted through our exceptional Town Guide. The annual footfall for the TIS in 2022 has recovered to pre-pandemic levels – excellent news for Exmouth! We are still a fantastic holiday destination.

We have worked hard to make sure we are meeting the needs of our residents and visitors by making sure everyone has access to the beach through our Beach Wheelchair service. This is free to use and run with help from another team of volunteers.



Our grounds maintenance team has been working hard with Exmouth in Bloom. This positive working relationship has contributed to Exmouth in Bloom's success in The Britain in Bloom (Southwest) competition, when the town was awarded GOLD and the St Bridget Cup for our class (Large Town).

The Town Council's finances have been continuously kept at a high standard with clean external and internal audits for 21 years. This is with the greatest thanks to Julie Gregory our Finance Officer, who is retiring at the end of March. I wish to express the Town Council's sincere thanks for her service and wish her a happy, healthy retirement.

The Town Council is extremely fortunate to have a team of dedicated staff. Their considerable experience, diligence and commitment are invaluable and ensure we meet the ever-changing challenges with which we are presented.

I would like to place on record my sincere thanks and gratitude to all Councillors, staff and residents who are working hard to make Exmouth a great place to live, and who pull together as a community through times of hardship.

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## PLANNING

The Town Council's Planning Committee is a statutory consultee for planning issues affecting the Town. They meet fortnightly to discuss and comment on planning applications which have been accepted and are being processed by East Devon District Council. These applications include the development of new dwellings, change of use, extensions, advertisements and works to listed buildings and trees. We are guided by the National Planning Policy Framework, East Devon District Council's Local Plan and Exmouth Neighbourhood Plan when compiling our responses.

We also comment and make representation, where necessary, on the District Council's licensing and street naming consultations. Occasionally, a Town Council representative will attend the District Council's Planning Committee meeting to add weight to our views.

The Committee comprises a cross section of 11 members from all five wards. Members of the public are welcome to attend and can make representations.

2022 has been a busy year for the Committee. We have deliberated and commented on 312 planning applications and multiple licensing applications. We have also contributed to the emerging local plan consultation and raised concerns through that process about the level of development that is proposed for the Town in future, particularly in the context of ongoing infrastructure pressures.

## PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

### Brixington

Fred Caygill  
Andrew Colman  
Cherry Nicholas

### Halsdon

Lynne Elson  
OBE  
Brian Toye

### Littleham

Brian Bailey  
David Poor  
Michael Rosser

### Town

Tim Dumper-  
Deputy Chair  
Joe Whibley -  
Chair

### Withycombe

Frank Cullis

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## TOWN MAINTENANCE

The Town Council remains focused on protecting our environment, providing plants to encourage wildlife, and working with the community to plant trees and generally look after Exmouth.

Exmouth Town Council has continued expanding on the work and responsibilities of the supplementary town maintenance team. Our broader service includes clearing overgrown and unkept areas, planting and watering flowerbeds, planters and hanging baskets in key locations around the town and maintaining our public realm assets such as flagpoles, bus shelters and finger post signs.

The team consists of Tony Slinn, Peter Habgood, Neil Burns and Stephen Greenway.

Road weed clearing in the outlying parts of Exmouth now takes place on a regular cycle using our weed ripping machine. This machine has helped reduce the need for weed spray and increases the speed at which the kerbsides are cleared. Inevitably, there are roads where the weed ripping machine cannot be used. In these instances, minimal weed spraying has been carried out using a reliable system that provides precise, targeted weed spraying, thus reducing waste and harm to the environment.

 [Richard Scott County Councillor Exmouth division](#) 2h ·   

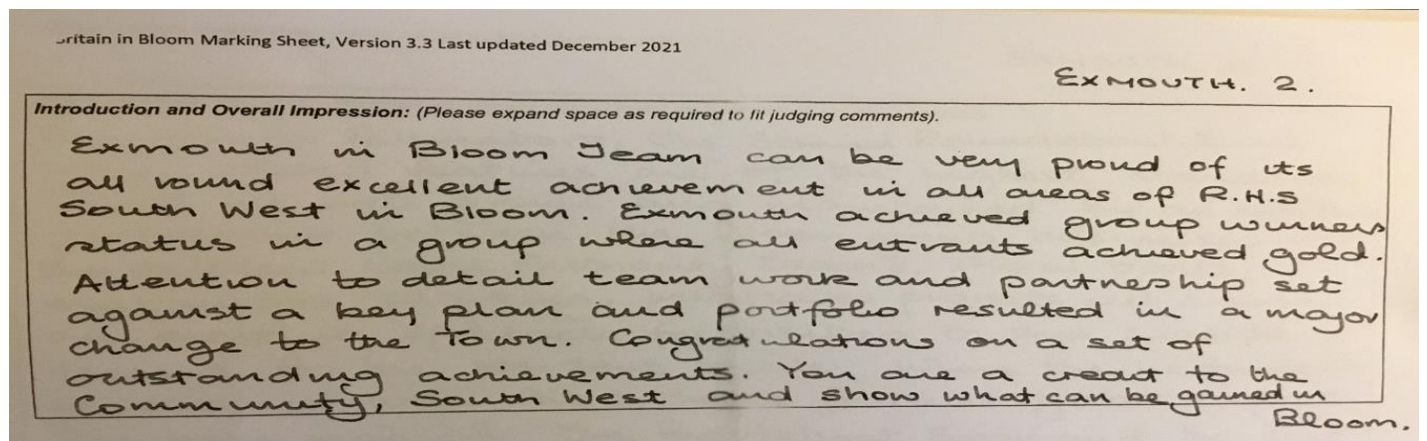
Exmouth Town Council well done to the team doing a great job cleaning the town. Engaged, happy, smiling and loving their work, great to see.



In addition, we are responsible for the provision and maintenance of roundabouts and flowerbeds in key locations around the town. Hanging baskets and troughs (with built-in reservoirs to minimise water usage) were on display during the summer months in Magnolia Centre and by the train station. The 40 blue flower towers have displays in summer and winter, with colour throughout the year. A compound area was acquired for the town maintenance team, providing a base to operate from and somewhere to compost our green waste.



The Town Council works closely with Exmouth in Bloom and EDDC Streetscene. This is reflected in the town being awarded Gold and overall winner in its category.



Exmouth Town Council also provides a well-balanced and controlled grass cutting regime to supplement the work of both Devon County Council and East Devon District Council. In addition, the Town Council (with the help of the community) is promoting wildlife and wildflowers in locations such as Exmouth, Marine Way bank, Pound Lane bank and Dinan Way bank (opposite Lidl). These areas have a management plan in place and cutting is only carried out at certain times of the year to enhance the wildflowers and encourage wildlife.



In the past year, the town maintenance team has regularly removed graffiti, painted bus shelters, serviced and maintained the flag poles, and cleaned and repaired signs.

Exmouth Town Council assists Devon County Council in looking after the many rights of way footpaths in Exmouth. Our dedicated team of volunteers, in particular the lead parish paths coordinator Heath Nickels, has carried out numerous surveys and reported issues which have been quickly rectified. These include replacing signs and gates, ensuring paths are kept clear and safe to use, and identifying where major works are required. Both footpath 11 and 9 have been recently resurfaced, the former by DCC and the latter by Exmouth Town Council's town maintenance team.

The Town Council has also continued supporting the work of the Ride-On Scheme based in Exeter where unwanted bikes are recycled and refurbished to encourage users to choose cycling as an alternative mode of transport. The team help by picking up unwanted bikes from residents in Exmouth and delivering them to Exeter.

In summary, the Town Council is working hard to reduce environmental impact by implementing many small changes such as using environmentally friendly products, developing environmental policies and working closely with the community to deliver initiatives that promote Exmouth as an environmentally friendly, clean, tidy and colourful place to live and visit.

## PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS



On Thursday 2nd June, Exmouth, along with many other towns and parishes, celebrated HM Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee by lighting a beacon at 9pm.

Many people gathered at Orcombe Point to watch the beacon being lit and hear local piper, Duncan Helmes, play Diu Regnare, a tune especially written in honour of the Jubilee celebrations.

Other celebrations included the big lunch, a jazz-filled family picnic day at Exmouth Festival and a fun trail providing information on key events over the six decades of the Queen's reign.

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

Exmouth Town Council's Finance Committee meets once a quarter and has delegated responsibility for monitoring the Council's budget.

For the year ending March 31<sup>st</sup> 2023, the Council budgeted to spend £877,000 across its range of services. £761,000 of this was raised via a precept request to East Devon District Council, which is recovered via the Council Tax billing process. The remaining income comes from a variety of other funding sources, including the Council's own reserves, Devon County Council, Exmouth Festival and Gorfin Hall.

	2022/23			
	Budget	Income	Precept	Reserves
	Expenditure			
Allotments	600		600	
Civic	40,375	5700	23,175	
Footpaths	6,600		500	
Exe Estuary Mgt Partnership	4,120		4,200	
Town Maintenance	94,800	5,200	35,700	52,000
Town Management	53,500		30,000	
Festival	72,000	61,024	38,000	
Arts – non-Festival	10,000		10,000	
Administration	452,200		475,500	
Accommodation / Buildings	66,000		69,500	
Grants	58,056		64,000	
S137 other	5,200		5,200	
Gorfin Hall	13,250	11,000	4,750	
Total	876,701		761,125	52,000

Each year, the Council's financial accounts and statements must be examined by an independent internal auditor appointed by the Council. For the year 2022-23 this is Thomas Westcott Chartered Accountants.

The Council is also required to complete an Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) which includes the findings of the Internal Auditor, together with Governance Statements and year-end Financial Statements. The AGAR is then submitted to the independent external auditor appointed by the Audit Commission for examination. There is a public inspection process, but the full Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) documents and internal audit reports are also available to view on our website, where you can also view details of payments for goods and services over £500 and grants to local not-for-profit organisations.

If you have any other questions about the Council's finances, please contact the Town Clerk, Lisa Bowman.

## FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

<b>Brixington</b> Cherry Nicholas	<b>Halsdon</b> Brian Toye Lynne Elson OBE	<b>Littleham</b> Alan Whipps Brian Bailey Joy Whipps	<b>Town</b> Alex Sadiq Olly Davey	<b>Withycombe</b> Frank Cullis Steve Gazzard
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## FROM CEERO TO ZERO

Hi I'm Zoey, Exmouth Town Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Resilience Officer. It's quite a mouthful but makes for the great acronym CEERO!

I'm passionate about sustainability. I love nature, am a keen walker and very amateur bird watcher. But most of all, I'm keen to do what I can to help residents, organisations and businesses in Exmouth learn about, tackle and adapt to the climate and ecological emergency.

It's great to see so much climate work already taking place and I have just finished drafting a new Climate Plan, that builds on these good foundations. Together with the Climate and Ecological Working Party, I'll be working hard to make Exmouth cleaner, greener and healthier.



Our vision is for all Exmouth residents, visitors (and wildlife) to thrive in a zero-carbon town. We'll use our influence to ensure high quality, low-impact development while protecting and enhancing the internationally important and beautiful local environment. We'll initiate, support, and encourage climate action initiatives from residents, businesses, and voluntary groups in the local area.

But we are in a climate emergency, and there is always so much more we can do. The climate plan will therefore evolve and flex as the climate crisis unfolds. These are the five key areas:

<b>Leading by example</b> promoting our good work	<b>Procurement</b> embedding sustainability in our purchases	<b>Constitutional &amp; place-shaping</b> tackling energy, biodiversity, zero waste & transport	<b>Engaging &amp; educating</b> building community resilience	<b>Convening &amp; co-ordinating</b> initiatives to achieve zero carbon
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Have you measured your carbon footprint? The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has a quick and easy-to-use online calculator. You can find it [here](#). And if you follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#) you'll find lots of helpful information on how to reduce your carbon footprint as well as your energy bills!



## EXMOUTH FESTIVAL 2022

After a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, we were delighted to bring Exmouth Festival back to the Imperial Recreation Ground in June 2022.

The event coincided with the Platinum Jubilee celebrations and kicked off on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June with a performance by Sarah Yeo, Exeter-born singer songwriter. Over the course of the weekend, we were entertained by a diverse range of performers, including local bands, choirs, and dance groups as well as circus skill workshops and storytelling in our Big Top tent. Community stalls and local vendors were also in attendance.



Festival attendees enjoyed a headline performance by SPACE on the Friday evening and Grammy nominated, British reggae band Musical Youth on Saturday evening, who regaled us with a rousing performance of 'Pass the Dutchie'!

On Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June, we invited everyone to bring a picnic and join us for a very special Big Jubilee Lunch, supported by The National Lottery Awards for All. The weekend culminated with Exmouth's very own swing, jazz, and party band, All Jazzed Up! performing on the main stage.

We have already made considerable inroads with our plans for Exmouth Festival 2023 and there are some big changes ahead. This year, the festival is leaving the Imperial Recreation Ground as its main site and events will instead take place in multiple locations across Exmouth. These changes have been made following a period of reflection and against a backdrop of unsustainable costs to deliver the festival safely. By bringing the festival into the town centre, we are hoping to create a festival that is unique to Exmouth, with most events and activities remaining free to access. You will be able to enjoy a town-wide celebration of all things creative through a diverse line-up of film, theatre, dance, music, interactive performances and much more.



We look forward to seeing you there!

## GRANTS & SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS APPROVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL IN 2022/2023

### Grants

Date	Applicant	Purpose	Amount Approved
24/02/2022	Exmouth Stroke Survivors	Core activities & equipment	£1210.00
09/06/2022	Southwest Brass Band	Contribution towards running costs of the Exmouth Brass Band Festival	£500.00
09/06/2022	Open Door – Exmouth Community Café	Retrospective funding towards a new boiler	£1500.00
18/08/2022	Tennis Lawn Club	Contribution towards the cost of a defibrillator	£400.00
18/08/2022	Devon General Society	Contribution towards the running costs of Devon General Remembered Event	£500.00
24/11/2022	EDAA	Cost of materials to build six adapted beds for a new accessibility project	£1500.00
24/11/2022	Exmouth Concert Band	Contribution towards costs of hiring rehearsal space	£1000.00
24/11/2022	Exmouth Museum	To purchase an Inspiron Laptop and Canon Pixma inkjet printer	£500.00
24/11/2022	Parkinsons Group	Contribution towards cost of specialist exercise classes	£1000.00

### SLAs

Date	Applicant	Purpose	Amount Approved
24/02/2022	NCI Exmouth	Contribution towards running costs of the Lookout above the Harbour View Café as well as the adjacent Coast watch house	£2000.00
24/02/2022	Citizens Advice East Devon	Core activities	£6000.00
24/02/2022	Exmouth Museum	Planning the improvement of public areas throughout the museum and carrying out necessary repairs and refurbishments and core activities	£1000.00
24/02/2022	Exmouth in Bloom	The grant will go towards EIB expenditure and core activities	£6500.00
24/02/2022	Exmouth Community Transport	Core activities	£5552.88
24/02/2022	Exmouth Beach Rescue Club	Core activities	£1500.00
24/02/2022	Exmouth Football Club	Core activities	£3500.00
24/11/2022	Open Door	Support towards running costs of its Children and Families projects	£3000.00

## **WHY BECOME A LOCAL COUNCILLOR?**

If you're passionate about community, we need you! Councillors make a huge difference to the quality of life of local people and the way in which local issues are dealt with. We need people to put themselves forward for election, from all backgrounds and experiences, who reflect the communities they serve.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Throughout England parish, town, community, and neighbourhood councils (local councils) work towards improving community well-being and providing better services at local level. They are the tier of local government below the level of district, county or unitary council (principal authorities) – the tier that's closest to the people. Sat on these local councils are some 80,000 elected local Councillors, people just like you, who give up a little of their time each week to represent the interests of their local community.

### **WHAT ARE LOCAL COUNCILS?**

There are over 9,000 parish, town, community, and neighbourhood councils (local councils) representing around 16 million people across England, and they form the most local level of government. Each year a sum of money raised locally called a 'precept' is collected through your council tax. This money is invested back into your local neighbourhood by your local council to improve facilities and services for you and your neighbours. Many local councils also supplement the money collected locally through applications to grant and fund providers, securing further resources to invest in the community. It is your local Councillors representing the aspirations of the community who will decide how to spend this money.

Whether urban or rural, local councils all have one thing in common – their purpose is to make the lives of the people in their local community better. They give the local community a voice and the means to achieve this.

Local councils will often work with the principal authority in your area and cooperate to ensure the effective delivery of services to the community. It is your local Councillors, helped by your local council staff, who identify local needs and ensure delivery.

### **WHAT CAN LOCAL COUNCILS DO?**

Local councils have an overall responsibility for the well-being of local neighbourhoods. Their work falls into three main categories:

- ✓ Representing the local community.
- ✓ Supporting the delivery of services to meet local needs.
- ✓ Striving to improve the quality of life in the local area.

### **WHAT DOES EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL DO?**

Exmouth Town Council provides, maintains, or contributes to the following services:

- ✓ Provision of allotments.
- ✓ Bus shelters.
- ✓ Provision of community centres – Gorfin Hall.

- ✓ Supporting Devon County Council in road weed clearing, clearing overgrowth, footpath maintenance and floral displays.
- ✓ Local illuminations such as seafront festoon lights and Christmas lights.
- ✓ Exmouth Festival, Christmas and other celebrations and civic events.
- ✓ Statutory consultee on planning and other matters relating to the town. Responding on behalf of the committee.
- ✓ Holding other stakeholders accountable for the services being delivered in Exmouth.



#### WHY SHOULD PEOPLE GET INVOLVED LOCALLY?

Everyone benefits from being part of an active community. Would you like to do your bit and contribute as a Councillor?

If everyone sat back and let 'other people' do it, there would be no community organisations – voluntary, cultural, sporting, youth or local government.

It can be very rewarding to learn from such involvement, or you can gain immense satisfaction from being part of something that makes a difference to the community.

There may be many challenges along the way but there will also be opportunities to meet many new people and gain skills which may be useful in other aspects of life.

If this has caught your attention, then consider standing as a local Councillor in the upcoming elections on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

Why be a passive complainer on the *outside*?

Instead, be an active participant on the *inside* and help make a positive difference to your local community.

If you'd like to find out more about becoming a town Councillor, email the town clerk, Lisa Bowman, [townclerk@exmouth.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@exmouth.gov.uk) or phone the town council office on 01395 276167 to make an appointment.