

## **EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Exmouth Town Hall, St. Andrews Road, Exmouth on Monday 06 February, 2023 at 6.30pm.**

#### **Present:**

Councillors	S Gazzard (Chairman)
	A Bailey
	B Bailey
	E Beech
	A Boatwright
	F Caygill
	M Chapman
	O Davey
	I Kirvan
	A Sadiq (left at 8.35pm)
	A Toye
	T Dumper
	C Nicholas
	M Rosser
	J Whibley
	B De Saram

#### **Officers:**

Lisa Bowman, Town Clerk

#### **Apologies:**

Apologies were noted from Councillors Lynne Elson, Alan Whipps, Joy Whipps, Frank Cullis, David Poor, Pauline Stott, T Woodward, Councillor Jeff Trail

The Chairman then welcomed all to the meeting.

**Public Forum:** There were several unidentified members of the public present but none had registered to speak.

#### **C23/098. Council meeting minutes**

Councillor Maddy Chapman proposed, Councillor Fred Caygill seconded, and it was agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting be accepted as a true record.

#### **C23/099. Matters arising from previous minutes**

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

#### **C23/100. Declarations of pecuniary interests and dispensations**

Item	Councillor	Declaration Type		Reason
		Pecuniary	Personal	
8	Joe Whibley	x		Chair of Licensing and Enforcement Committee at EDDC

### **C23/101. Exclusion of the Press and public**

There were no items on the agenda which necessitated the exclusion of the press or public.

### **C23/102. Update from EDDC Portfolio Holder, Councillor Jack Rowland, and EDDC Carpark Services Manager, Richard Easthope on EDDC proposal regarding Vanlifers using the lorry/coach park at Estuaryside.**

Councillor Gazzard requested permission for this to be discussed at the beginning of the meeting. This was agreed by all and the item was brought forward.

Councillor Jack Rowland, accompanied by EDDC Carpark Services Manager, Richard Easthope, explained that a background report had been circulated prior to the meeting and his intention was to seek the views of the Town Council regarding the ongoing use of the lorry park by a number of van-lifers so that any relevant views could help inform a report which will go to EDDC Cabinet for consideration in due course.

Councillor Rowland confirmed that the site is currently designated as a paying coach and lorry park which is currently being used by a number of van-lifers. EDDC has not been able to find an alternative EDDC owned site for them to occupy and there are Planning and Equalities Act issues so whilst the District Council understands the circumstances which have led to its use in this way, the car park is not regulated for such use. There are currently 23 van-lifers resident on the site with capacity for 50. Water and waste arrangements are not clear but none of the residents have declared themselves as homeless and the housing outreach team has been consulted. Councillor Rowland himself has visited the site on three occasions.

Members subsequently debated the matter at length and clarification was sought on a number of issues from Councillor Rowland, Richard Easthope and members of the public in attendance.

Highlights of the discussion included the following observations and queries:

- The situation is possibly going to be exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis
- The concept of a permit (with proof of link to local area) to legalise the situation is potentially supported
- Risk of unforeseen consequences (i.e., on street parking) if van-lifers are evicted.
- Risk of setting a precedent regarding land-use; especially in context of EDDC not having a designated gypsy and traveller site
- Demand on leased land for EV charging points

- Risk to wildlife and SSSI status of the Estuary
- Scope for use by the van-lifers of commercial campsites in the Town?
- Decision making process for short-stay motorhome parking in the town?
- Scope to negotiate with private land-owner to find a suitable alternative site?
- Need to stop further influx to the site
- Use of developer contributions or unilateral agreements to negotiate the permanent use of a piece of land?
- Scope for use of Foxholes Carpark, in accordance with an aspiration discussed by the Town Council's Campervan TAFF to expand facilities at Foxholes (for short-stay motorhome visits)?
- Extent of the problem across the County?
- Sense of urgency to resolve the matter

Councillor Bruce De Saram subsequently proposed and Councillor Mike Rosser seconded a proposal that EDDC should be asked to prioritise the scoping exercise for Foxholes Carpark for completion within three months.

By way of background, the Town Clerk subsequently explained that Foxholes was deemed to have potential as an approved overnight carpark for *visitors* as it had scope to provide proper water and waste water facilities, being adjacent to a toilet block etc. It had been suggested as a potential alternative to the withdrawn Imperial Recreation Ground site as part of the recent trial of sites for overnight campervan and motorhome parking but *not* in the context of van-lifers requiring a permanent site. Nonetheless, the motion was put to the vote and carried.

**RESOLVED that EDDC should be asked to prioritise the scoping exercise for Foxholes Carpark for completion within three months**

**C23/103. Reports and minutes from Committees, Working Parties, other local bodies, the Town Clerk/Deputy Town Clerk, District and County Councillors as appropriate (Standing Order 6.2)**

Councillor Tim Dumper proposed, Councillor Brian Bailey seconded, and it was agreed that the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> January and 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023 be accepted as a true record.

The following were also noted:

Town Clerks report

Notes of the Community Organisations Liaison Panel Working Party held on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Notes of the Festival and Events Working Party held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Notes of the Flooding and Land Drainage Working Party held on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Notes of the Flooding and Land Drainage Working Party held on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2022

The notes of the Town Maintenance Overview Working Party held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023 were received a true record and in respect of the associated recommendation, Councillor Ian Kirvan proposed, Councillor Maddy Chapman seconded and it was unanimously agreed to approve the recommendation from the working party that the Town Council renews the EDDC Grass cutting and winter work SLA agreement for 2023/24 at a cost of £23,348.04, a 3% increase from last year.

**RESOLVED: to approve the recommendation from the working party that the Town Council renews the EDDC Grass cutting and winter work SLA agreement for 2023/24 at a cost of £23,348.04, a 3% increase from last year.**

The notes of the Waterfront Working Party held on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023 were accepted as a true record. Councillor Tim Dumper subsequently proposed, seconded by Councillor Eileen Beech and it was unanimously agreed to ratify a recommendation that Exmouth Town Council writes to East Devon District Council asking them to ensure that any marketing of the Orcombe Point toilets and any contractual agreements come to with organisations or firms operating the building include a condition that, at a minimum, they provide at least one toilet for public use and for a minimum period based on current opening hours and dates as currently operated by EDDC.

**RESOLVED: that Exmouth Town Council writes to East Devon District Council asking them to ensure that any marketing of the Orcombe Point toilets and any contractual agreements come to with organisations or firms operating the building include a condition that, at a minimum, they provide at least one toilet for public use and for a minimum period based on current opening hours and dates as currently operated by EDDC.**

### **Reports from members who represent the Council on Outside Bodies**

- **WEB Health and Well Being Board:** the notes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023 were forwarded by Councillor David Poor for noting.
- **Devon Association of Local Councils:** the notes of the County Committee meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022 were noted. Councillor Tim Dumper also provided a verbal update on the outcome of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023.
- **Fairtrade Exmouth:** Councillor Tim Dumper had circulated a brief report prior to the meeting confirming that the Steering Group is currently preparing for Fairtrade Fortnight (February 27<sup>th</sup> - March 10<sup>th</sup>). The focus this year is on coffee, and two growers from Rwanda will be visiting Devon. Their day in Exmouth will be Tuesday Feb 28<sup>th</sup>, when a Schools Conference is being run at the Beacon School in the morning, and a late afternoon coffee and meet the growers session in the late afternoon.

Invitations are being extended to all Councillors, and others interested across the town.

- **Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group:** Councillor Aurora Bailey provided a verbal update in her capacity as representative.

**District Councillors' Reports:** Written reports from Councillors Olly Davey, Councillor Bruce De Saram and Councillor Joe Whibley had been circulated prior to the meeting and are appended to the minutes.

**County Councillors' Reports:** Councillor Richard Scott was in attendance and was asked about the County Council's position on the van-lifers discussed earlier in the meeting. Councillor Scott confirmed that the County Council had instigated a Scrutiny Review of the wider county policy on overnight parking of motorhomes on County Council owned Highway land but there was no standard approach across the eight different councils. However, the knock on effect from any eviction of the van-lifers would potentially lead to time-consuming enforcement issues.

In response to a question about next steps for the successful bid to the Levelling Up Fund for the Dinan Way extension and gateway improvements, Councillor Scott explained that the next step would be the associated land requisition by the County Council. Members queried whether there was any contingency in the budget for overspend and Councillor Scott highlighted the risk of inflationary pressures on other successful first-round bids.

#### **C23/104. To agree a response to East Devon District Council's Street Trading Policy Consultation.**

Councillor Joe Whibley updated Councillors that the main change to the policy included provision for an application charge to be introduced in respect of Street Trading Licences but the proposed fee is less than other Districts.

Also, there is a proposed change in Sidmouth relating to consent streets and a stipulation regarding use of reusable materials associated with any licence.

Members queried who would be responsible for implementation and it was confirmed that this would be down to Licencing officers at east Devon District Council.

It was subsequently proposed by Councillor Tim Dumper, seconded by Councillor Maddy Chapman and agreed by all that the Town Council is in agreement with the proposed changes to the policy.

**RESOLVED: that the Town Council is in agreement with the proposed changes to the District Council's Street Trading policy.**

**C23/105. To ratify that Councillor Tim Dumper has been appointed as the council representative for the Bus Users and Stakeholders (BUS) Forum.**

Councillor Brian Bailey proposed, seconded by Councillor Brian Bailey and it was agreed that Councillor Tim Duper is appointed as the council representative for the Bus Users and Stakeholders (BUS) Forum with immediate effect.

**RESOLVED: that Councillor Tim Duper is appointed as the council representative for the Bus Users and Stakeholders (BUS) Forum with immediate effect.**

**C23/106. To ratify the CCTV policy.**

Councillor Fred Caygill proposed, seconded by Councillor Joe Whibley and it was agreed by all that the amended policy be adopted.

**RESOLVED: that the amended CCTV policy be adopted with immediate effect.**

The meeting concluded at 8.50pm.

Signed..... Date.....(Chairman)

## **Appendix**

### **Councillor Bruce De Saram:**

Please see the link to my report for the next Town Council meeting on Monday

[The disgraceful Queen's Drive situation and the future of the Exmouth Pavilion | Opinion | Opinion | News | Exmouth Nub News](#)

I wish to add in and put on the record:

1. The point that I would make about what I have written is that I have tried to be positive about the Queens Drive Space but as members are aware we have not yet reached any decisions despite nearly 4 years of opportunity from May 2019 to January 2023 to do so. This is the disgrace I refer to.
2. As to the Pavilion I have not put forward a case for its demolition but I have simply hi-lighted the options available including the preferred one of the LED Monitoring forum.

### **District Councillor's Report, Town Council, 6/2/23 – Olly Davey**

#### **Strategic Planning**

With consultation now ended, officers will begin collating the many submissions, both online and via phone calls, emails, letters and slips completed at the public meetings.

Sadly, I was unable to attend the Exmouth public event before Christmas, due to a bout of Covid. There has been some criticism of the Commonplace software used, and an analysis of its effectiveness will follow in due course. Following Michael Gove's announcement in early December saying that housing targets would in future only be advisory, there have been suggestions that we should pause preparation of the new Local Plan. Officers, however, have pointed out that until we see the detail of this in future legislation, we should continue to review the results of the consultation, and continue with preparation of a draft plan, bearing in mind that it contains much more than simply land allocations for housing. It is very much my hope that the promise of advisory housing targets will be kept, and that in future housing allocations can be decided on local need, rather than being driven by Government imposed targets. Meanwhile, the committee has many other reports to consider.

#### **Planning Committee**

Planning has not had many Exmouth applications of note, apart from the redevelopment of the old Red Cross Hall in South Street. Committee deferred a decision for a site inspection, which took place last Monday. Everyone is keen to see the hall redeveloped but councillors were split on the merits of the proposal, and it was narrowly refused in line with the officers' recommendation, citing concerns about overdevelopment and the effect on the amenity of neighbouring properties.

Recent appeal rulings seem to suggest the Inspectors are taking a more relaxed line on home extensions, and on locations deemed sustainable, e.g. just outside BUAB's.

With EDDC unable to demonstrate a 5 year land supply, rejecting some applications, especially for large schemes, is more difficult, and needs sound reasons.

### **Allotment Committee**

Following some grant support from Exmouth Town Council, the Association has built some raised beds for use by disabled gardeners. If anyone is aware of any groups or individuals interested in taking one on, they should contact Cheryl Chessum, the acting Chair, at [vicechairedaa@gmail.com](mailto:vicechairedaa@gmail.com). I have already put Stephen Beer, the Chair of the Stroke Survivors Club, in touch, and it's hoped that they will take on a bed. Our wonderfully able Treasurer has decided to resign, having brought a great deal of order to the financial systems in use. We now need a new Treasurer, who should have a much better system to deal with. Rent renewals have gone well and smoothly, with many renewing by bank transfer, and others taking advantage of the opportunity to renew by visiting the allotment sheds on designated days.

### **District Councillor Report, Joe Whibley, EDDC Town Ward Feb 2023**

If a district councillor's report consists of things they've written this month, then I'd like you to consider the following piece...

<https://www.exmouthjoe.com/post/the-pavilion-is-not-being-knocked-down-or-moved>

...which also talks about the Pavillion, what happened at the LED meeting, and why it is in this situation in some detail.

This is what I've actually done this month though...

I worked with EDDC's licensing team to produce a press release about unlicensed taxi drivers in the district, specifically Exmouth. This is becoming a significant problem, brought to my attention firstly on social media and then in more direct communications.

I'll be sending you a separate link to the press release later, and I'd urge you all to share on social media, or to any local groups or lists to which you are subscribed. We need to ensure people know how to recognise EDDC taxis to ensure their drive is a safe one, especially when many of these reports occur in the late evening when people are perceived to be more vulnerable due to the effects of alcohol.

The key messages are...

1. check the car has an EDDC badge on the back.
2. Ask to see the driver's ID badge.
3. If in doubt, get out.

This has been a huge problem in big cities previously, and we don't want incidents such as that which resulted in a conviction in Plymouth last week happening here.

I have also attended the Scrutiny committee at EDDC which debated the local plan - unfortunately this committee was not in a position to do anything about it at that point. It's very difficult to examine the success of a project that has not yet neared completion.



Sadly, nothing useful emerged from it, but members were assured at least, and seemed happy to note, that we use the same consultation software as many other councils and nothing is, as yet, set in stone.

I was delighted to attend safeguarding training at EDDC, something which has been asked for since 2021. It proved most useful, and I hope should any situation occur whereby we feel children or vulnerable adults re in any way at risk at all, appropriate steps will be taken by members.

I have attended to a number of matters in my ward, including signposting residents to the relevant areas of the council. I will continue to do so until the end of the term.