

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Flooding & Land Drainage Working Party

Notes of the Zoom meeting held at 2pm on Tuesday 18th April 2023

Present

Bruce de Saram	BdS	Chair, ETC & EDDC Councillor, Littleham Ward
Tim Dumper	TD	ETC Councillor, Town Ward
Cherry Nicholas	CN	ETC Councillor, Brixington Ward
Frank Cullis	FCu	ETC Councillor, Withycombe Raleigh Ward
Chetna Jones	CJ	ETC Deputy Town Clerk
Tom Buxton-Smith	TBS	EDDC, Engineering Projects Manager
Thomas Aldridge	TA	DCC, Flood & Coastal Risk Management
Philip Morgan	PM	DCC, Neighbourhood Highway Engineer
Stuart Coles	SC	DCC Highways
Kate Pearson	KP	EA, Flood Resilience Advisor
Lisa Greenway	LG	ETC, Notes

Apologies

Steve Gazzard	SG	ETC & EDDC Councillor, Withycombe Raleigh Ward
Pauline Stott	PS	ETC Councillor, Halsdon Ward
Francesca Lloyd	FL	SWW, Customer Service & Networks Team Manager
David Seaber	DS	SWW, Customer Services & Networks Assets Manager
Kris Inch	KI	EA, Flood and Coastal Risk Management Advisor

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies (BdS)

BdS welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted.

2. To approve the notes from the meeting on the 24th January 2023

FCu proposed and CN seconded, and it was agreed the notes were an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Matters arising from previous meeting

No matters arose from the previous meeting.

4. EA: Tidal Defence and General updates

KP updated members that the final documents, as-built drawings and health and safety file are going through the final review process with the entire project team including EDDC. KP hopes they can soon finalise the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Exmouth Town Council, EDDC and EA.

KP is preparing a handbook for Exmouth Town Councils floodgate volunteers at Exe Sailing Club, Morton Crescent, The Grove and the Imperial Hotel who kindly operate the floodgates on behalf of EDDC.

KP is prioritising the MoU and handbook as she will be starting a new job on the 1st of May 2023. BdS wished KP the best of luck in her new role on behalf of all the members and

asked for his thanks to be passed onto the floodgate volunteers who have made the project a success.

CJ queried who the new point of contact would be once KP has left the role, KP advised that her team leader Russell Craig is currently recruiting to backfill the role so he will be the person to contact until the role is filled. CJ thanked KP for all her work and wished her the best of luck, KP thanked members of the working party for contributing to making the project a success.

5. EDDC: General updates including Exmouth Beach Management Plan

TBS advised that the Beach Management Plan is behind due to resourcing issues within the team, however they asked BCP to procure consultant services, for which a scoping document has been prepared and approved by EDDC.

TBS confirmed there is not much to report as there has not been any significant rainfall or storms. They have a contractor involved with the stonework around the steps at the RNLI, but TBS was not sure if the work has been completed. TBS updated members that the steps near Stuartline have been closed because of the big drop down to the beach. Unfortunately, the sand has still not come back, and EDDC engineers are considering the need for additional steps.

CJ queried if the concerns with the underground pipes in the Manor Gardens was ever resolved, TBS confirmed that they are still looking into this as it is an old drainage network. They are not entirely sure where it drains as it might connect to the highways drainage or might be a soakaway system within the park area. TBS confirmed that it has been surveyed using CCTV and it may be resolved by adding a small soakaway rather than digging up the whole area and disturbing the trees.

6. DCC: General updates

TA did not have any major updates for members although the consultant working on the modelling work to identify area in Exmouth prone to flooding. Investigations are continuing to prioritise cost beneficial solutions for future delivery.

PM confirmed that DCC has received 2 million extra funding from the government for essential repair work on the highway. PM advised that this equates to about 400K of repair work for Exmouth and Exeter areas. Exeter has been ring fenced for next year for surface dressing, pre-treatment, and patching work as Exmouth has already had a lot of work completed.

SC updated members that they are undertaking a small drainage job in Higher Marley Road in Exmouth in preparation of planned surface dressing work that is happening in May. SC advised that their contractor is also working in Morton Crescent Mews where recent flooding has caused a few issues. They will be replacing an old Victorian gully chamber. SC confirmed that they are also aware of ongoing drainage issues in Hulham Road, and the contractor has been asked to revisit and try to clear the gullies that are not operational in that area.

7. To receive a report from ESCAPE on the environmental issues at Maer rocks

BdS noted that a 20-page detailed report has been received from ESCAPE and was circulated to members prior to the meeting, BdS thanked ESCAPE for providing the beneficial comprehensive report which was circulated prior to the meeting.

BdS asked members if they had any thoughts or recommendations to be considered in respect of the bullet points highlighted on the first page of the report.

FCu was concerned that sewerage is coming up through the manhole covers as pictured in the ESCAPE report and queried how long the wooden cages with wire mesh surrounding the manholes would be in situ. He understood these were put in place by EDDC.

KP thanked ESCAPE for the feedback via the report and confirmed she had escalated the concerns to the EA area leadership team and has also asked the customer engagement team to log, investigate and respond to the concerns.

In addition, CJ provided members with the following response received from SWW as they were unable to attend the meeting:

Unfortunately, we cannot comment on the tankering issue at the works but will pass this to the relevant department.

We are aware of the problem with the manholes along the Maer during times of heavy rainfall. Any time we experience an event at this location we thoroughly sample and can confirm that there is no evident impact on the bathing water or Littleham Brook.

We are unable to seal down the manhole covers as this would move the problem further downstream and potentially cause a greater problem there. Our contractors, Glanville Environmental, are currently in the area undertaking CCTV surveys to check for any restrictions from the CSO to the sea. When the results of the CCTV have been reviewed, we will be able to undertake more investigations using dye testing. On site meetings have also taken place with SWW, EDDC and the EA.

We do have some investment plans in this area that I would like to share with you. To help reduce environmental impact from our sewerage network, and to contribute towards improving bathing water quality at Exmouth, we have reserved c. £18,000,000 of investment up to March 2025.

We are currently undertaking a project to improve Maer Road and Phear Park pumping stations storm overflows performance to reduce them to less than 10 significant spills per year. We also plan to improve the screening on the overflows to reduce aesthetic impacts when the overflows spill. The target for completion is March 2025. This project includes:

- Removal of surface water from the combined sewer at Seymour Ave and Denning Court*
- Improving sewers to reduce groundwater infiltration*
- Pumping more flows to the Maer Lane STW for storage and treatment*
- Upgrade STW outfall pipe through Sandy Bay holiday park and out to sea off Straight Point.*

We are also evaluating the potential for surface water separation in The Colonies area to reduce releases from Hartopp Road pumping station storm overflow by 2025.

All overflows in Exmouth are currently included in plans to be improved by 2030 to achieve less than 10 spills per year. As mentioned, we also plan to improve the screening on the overflows to protect from and reduce aesthetic impacts when the overflows spill.

FCu queried which local council requested that SWW remove the rusty pole, which is an Exmouth landmark, CJ confirmed that ETC did not make this request.

- Action: CJ will chase the tanker concern if no response is received
- Action: EDDC and EA to monitor investment plan to improve bathing water quality
- Action: EDDC and EA to monitor spills per year
- Action: CJ will follow up the site visit previously requested by members
- Action: CJ will circulate SWW's report to members

8. To note emails received from residents regarding sewage in Exmouth

BdS noted that emails received from concerned residents were circulated to members prior to the meeting.

9. To highlight to SWW and the Environment Agency the issues raised by ESCAPE and residents & request that dye testing is prioritised, upgrades urgently implemented and alert process improved for clarity

FCu was once again disappointed with the lack of attendance by SWW. BdS was keen to request that a regular SWW representative attends future meetings.

FCu was concerned that SWW had still not completed dye testing as previously promised. TD also felt misled by SWW as they previously confirmed that they were ready for dye testing, but nothing has happened.

- Action: CJ will contact SWW to query when dye testing will take place

Furthermore CJ added that she had spoken with an EDDC officer on the matter recently and he confirmed that the power to deal with sewage discharge to water courses lies with EA and sewage discharge on land is with EDDC.

On-going work is taking place currently regarding sewage discharges on land at Maer which took place just before Christmas and EDDC is gathering information to determine appropriate action. There are legal implications involved and investigation details cannot be discussed without prejudice.

EDDC is looking at short term measures to manage the impact of any spills onto the Maer as well as medium terms plans and obtaining a better understanding of SWW's longer term infrastructure measures.

The contacts at EA are being asked to provide an update on actions taken regarding sewage discharge into Littleham brook and the sea.

A better understanding of the alert system was needed as there seems to be a discrepancy with what EA consider a discharge and SWW consider a spill.

10. To urge that SWW stop the transportation of sewage by trucks to Exmouth & that the Planning Authority challenges ant new development until improvements are made by SWW

BdS confirmed that the transportation issue was discussed in item 7 and SWW has confirmed an update will be provided by the relevant department.

FCu requested that CJ bring to SWW's attention the issues raised by residents in item 8.

TD advised that when Ian Vosper spoke with ETC there was no mention on when SWW were going to stop tankering sewage. CN reminded members that during the SWW meeting they confirmed that they were investing to increase the capacity of the Maer Road pumping station, but CN feels that this should be stopped as it is an unsuitable location.

- CJ to make SWW aware of the issues raised by residents regarding the tanks being used to and from the Maer pumping station and to suggest that Maer Road is an unsuitable location for expansion
- CJ will make the planning authority aware of the ESCAPE report to consider in any new development in the area

11. SWW: General updates

No representatives were present, and a report was provided.

12. ETC Councillors: Reports and questions to representatives of external organisations

No other comments.

13. AOB

CJ updated members that the pathway by Withycombe Brook has been completely fenced off by an unknown person for some time and as no objections have been received CJ does not intend to take any further action. TD confirmed that a recent planning application was received that is thought to have some relation to this for which LB is investigating, CJ will discuss this further with LB.

SG had passed on his thanks to BdS prior to the meeting for all his work within the WP. Members thanked BdS for his work as chairperson and in response BdS thanked members for their kind words.

14. 2023 meetings:

18th July
17th October

The meeting ended at 14:50