

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Waterfront Working Party

Notes of the meeting held at 10am on Tuesday 27th June 2023 via Zoom.

Present

Councillor Pauline Stott	ST	Exmouth Town Council (Chair)
Councillor Tim Dumper	TD	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Mark Williamson	MW	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor David Poor	DP	Exmouth Town Council
Chetna Jones	CJ	Exmouth Town Council
Peter Blythe	PB	EDDC Streetscene Beach Safety Officer

Apologies

Councillor Ian Kirvan	IK	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Joy Whipps	JW	Exmouth Town Council

1. Election of Chair

SG proposed, seconded by TD, that PS be re-elected as Chair of the Waterfront Working Party. No other nominations were received, and all members agreed that PS be re-elected as Chair.

2. Welcome and apologies

PS welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted.

3. To approve the notes of the last meeting dated 10th January 2023 and the inspection form dated 21st March 2023

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

4. To receive an update on the SWW Dye Testing and next steps

Members discussed the attempt of the SWW Dye testing and how it was unsuccessful due to very little water in the pipes and no dye had been seen discharging into the sea. The purpose of the dye testing was to ascertain which pipe is used and where the discharge occurred. There were fears it was discharging into Littleham Brook. However, SWW suggested that as water was flowing into the brook and no green dye could be seen in the water it was safe to assume it was not discharging into the brook. Members confirmed that they had not heard of anyone reporting that they had seen any green dye.

SWW has said it will consider alternative ways to increase the flow rate before trying again.

CJ confirmed that she had taken notes and has emailed SWW these with questions that were asked as follows.

- Upgrade proposals – what are they and when are they going to be carried out?
- Sewage transportation – How much sewage is being transported to Exmouth now and does SWW intend to increase this when the upgrades are completed? If so by how much?

CJ reiterated to SWW that ETC would like to arrange a site visit to the Maer treatment centre, and this has now been planned for 21st September 2023. She also requested drawings and maps of pipework and tanks. SWW would use this opportunity to talk through the map of underground network.

CJ will keep members informed of any updates including any details of another repeat of a dye test.

5. To seek clarification from EDDC Beach Safety Officer on the criteria for attaining a Blue Flag for Exmouth Beach

PB was unable to respond at the meeting due to sound issues and agreed to supply a response by email.

In his email, PB confirmed he had asked KBT to clarify the criteria and was informed that a bathing water profile must be compiled for every Blue Flag beach. A bathing water profile includes identification of potential sources of pollution, a description of the physical, geographical and hydrological characteristics of the bathing water, as well as an assessment of the potential for cyanobacteria and algae formation.

It is recommended that there should not be any industrial, urban wastewater or sewage-related discharges into the Blue Flag area or immediate buffer zone/surrounding area. If there are discharge points in the area of the beach, these must be documented at the time of application. Where combined sewage overflow discharges or other urban/industrial wastewater discharges are identified within, or immediately adjacent to, the proposed award area, information to warn the public that there is an intermittent discharge which could, in the short term, impact the bathing water quality must be provided. The collection, treatment and discharge of urban wastewater in the community must meet national/ international standards and comply with national/international legislation. For EU member countries, there are requirements for the treatment and effluent quality given in the EU Urban Waste

Water Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC). A number of new EU countries have been granted dispensation from the EU Directive.

Regardless of national/ international standards and legislation, this wastewater or other discharges must not negatively affect the environment or compromise the water quality standards of a Blue Flag beach.

Regarding industrial pollution, notification must be given about industrial facilities and plants in the vicinity of the beaches, stating their likely influence on the environment. Moreover, the appropriate authorities must confirm in writing that the area is being monitored to ascertain the environmental impacts of nearby industrial facilities and confirm that the facilities do not pose a public health risk or environmental hazard.

With regard to how this is applied, we review the bathing water profile compiled by the EA and is publicly available on Swimfo

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/bwq/profiles/>

A classification for a bathing water of ‘excellent’ demonstrates that any nearby discharges are not affecting the bathing water quality in a negative way

PB confirmed that an application was made each year and during the season if a pollution incident occurs the blue flag is lowered. If the pollution incident is severe the blue flag is lowered for the whole season. He added that pollution risk forecast (PRF) and combined sewage overflow (CSO) are not considered a pollution incident.

This bathing water at Exmouth Beach is subject to short term pollution procedures. The Environment Agency makes a daily pollution risk forecast at this site based on the effects of rain, wind and seasonality on bathing water quality. These factors affect the levels of bacteria that get washed into the sea from livestock, sewage and urban drainage via rivers and streams and how they disperse. When these factors combine to make short term pollution likely the EA issue a pollution risk warning on its website and the beach manager (EDDC) will display a sign advising against bathing at the bathing water. After a short-term pollution event, levels of bacteria typically return to normal after a day or so but it's possible to have several warning days in a row. In 2022 7 pollution risk warnings were issued for this bathing water. All bathing waters have the potential to be affected by a pollution incident and if this occurs a pollution risk warning will be issued with associated advice against bathing is available on the EA website for Exmouth Beach.

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

Bins

Four bins have been lost to fire mostly resulting from BBQs, despite having steel BBQ bins available, these will be replaced as soon as possible.

The neos (the small round bins) are being replaced from the Octagon to Mamhead with the standard bins that we have on the rest of the seafront. These hold more and are safer for our operatives to empty since they contain wheely bins and can be emptied using a bin-lift.

Toilets

The Orcombe block discussed at the previous meeting will be open as a public toilet all season and will then be marketed for reuse in September. It is likely that whatever reuse is settled on will still include a public toilet. This is being handled by property not by Streetscene as part of the toilet review.

Beach signs

The relay of the headers is on hold due to the capacity of Strata's designer, as it is more important that the dog information at all our beaches is corrected urgently to bring it in line with the PSPOs. PB agreed that it was less than optimal to still be waiting for changes requested in November and it is now nearly July, but said they are working to resolve it. The stencilling will be resprayed as soon as possible although there is a capacity problem with half the team that does it, currently off.

Planters

New planters are planned for Beach gardens, the planters in Mamhead will be removed at the same time to make more room for vehicles to manoeuvre.

7. To receive an update on the Beach Wheelchair Project

PS updated members that the beach wheelchair project is going well, and it is lovely to see local care homes using the beach wheelchairs for their residents. Exmouth Beach Wheelchair has appeared on TV and in the newspapers recently which has given the project lots of publicity.

Thanks were given to Mollie Carey for all her hard work with the beach wheelchair project and to a regular volunteer Suzanne who has been volunteering since last year.

PS asked PB if there were any grant she could apply for as part of the beach blue flag status. PB replied that grants stopped since covid.

8. Any other business

SG reported the dangerous condition of the bench in beach gardens and that he had sent photos to Simon Kennedy but is still awaiting a reply. PB will follow up with Simon Kennedy.

MW asked how often the Blue Flag is awarded and how this works with the SWW discharge?

PB advised that he will provide an explanation in his email (see item 5 above for the explanation).

ACTION: PB to follow up about the bench with Simon Kennedy.

9. Date of next meeting

5th September 2023 – Walkabout meeting - meet opposite the Jubilee clock.