

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Campervan Task and Finish Forum

Notes of the meeting held at 10am on Monday 24th July 2023 held via Zoom

Present

| | | |
|------------------------------|----|------------------------------|
| Richard Easthope | RE | East Devon District Council |
| Councillor Fred Caygill | FC | Exmouth Town Council (Chair) |
| Jeff Trail BEM | JT | Devon County Council |
| Councillor Christine Channon | CC | Devon County Council |
| Councillor Paul Hayward | PH | East Devon District Council |
| Councillor Mark Williamson | MW | Exmouth Town Council |
| Lisa Bowman | LB | Exmouth Town Council |
| Mollie Carey | MC | Exmouth Town Council |

Apologies

None

1. To Elect a chair

FC was proposed as Chairman by MW, however since the meeting was not quorate it was agreed that the Chairmanship would be ratified at the next quorate meeting.

2. Welcome, Introductions, Apologies

No apologies for absence had been received.

3. To receive an update from Richard Easthope regarding the proposed changes to overnight parking of motorhomes and campervans in EDDC owned carparks in Exmouth and any other associated items/actions

FC welcomed RE to the meeting and asked him to provide an update from a District Council perspective. RE reported that Queens Drive and Echelon carparks had been adopted for overnight motorhome parking and 4957 motorhomes have used the designated parking areas since April 2022 (up to 24 July 2023) at an overnight rate of £11.

There is a capital budget of £150,000 allocated for Estuary side carpark improvements but plans haven't progressed.

Van lifers have now been relocated and the compound previously used by the EA has been returned to use for lorry and coach parking.

RE is aware of the aspiration of the TAFF to look at scope to expand facilities at Foxholes but stated that it could be strongly contested on several grounds.

High bacterial levels have been detected in the vicinity of the Maer possibly caused by discharge and waste from overnight motorhome parking and this is very relevant

to the debate. Concern has been raised by the environment agency who have been monitoring levels for the last 18 months.

CC reiterated that one of the key suggestions from previous TAFF meeting was the need for proper facilities; hence suggestion of expanding facilities at Foxholes. She is very reluctant to see the use the estuary side car park because there is still a need for lorry and coach parking in Exmouth. It was noted that the previous car parks officer had been charged with a scoping exercise but this had never been completed.

JT reported that the matter had been discussed by Devon County Council in Dec 22 and it had been resolved that the County Council would write to District Councils to ask them to review their policy on motorhomes and motor caravans in liaison with one another to ensure that there is a consistent approach across the County. Also, that the County Council's definition of motorhomes / motor caravans within its Traffic Regulation Order be reviewed to more appropriately reflect current parking practices and enable consistent enforcement of rules with regards to vehicles being used in the manner of a motorhome (but which have not been permanently converted).

Questions were asked about the bacterial contamination emanating from the Maer Road car park and whether there were any immediate remedial actions which could be taken? It was noted that EDDC enforcement officers are aware of the issue but it is hard to enforce on a 24/7 basis.

It was also noted that the van lifers previously in the Estuary side carpark have mostly moved to Phear Park but some have relocated to Maer Lane.

A question was raised regarding the parking meters and signage in the lorry park. RE confirmed that the new signage has been reinstated along with the new working tariff machine.

PH raised the suggestion of using the geography of the Maer car park's northerly boundary to provide additional spaces if the income would cover capital cost and it was recognised that there is a question of balance in providing day parking versus overnight parking at Mear Road site with a consensus that revenue generation is a valid starting point.

Members were reminded that the previous EDDC officer was tasked with scoping the idea for the use of Foxholes car park with full facilities. However, RE highlighted that the carpark brings three times as much carparking income compared to the Maer Road car park. This needs consideration especially considering the demand for parking in the area. Would it work as a business model? A proposal to increase overnight parking charges may or may not work.

RE confirmed that the Estuary side carpark has had funds allocated but officers need to know long term plans for Estuary site to determine scope for upgrades and white lining etc.

It was noted that there are several certified camping sites in proximity of Exmouth but Members need to decide if there is a need for overnight parking in the Town and the proposed scoping exercise needs to be completed against a definite time frame.

MW subsequently proposed, seconded by FC that a recommendation is put to Full Council that the Town Council writes to EDDC to request that the (previously requested) scoping exercise for fully serviced motorhome parking at Foxholes carpark is completed as soon as possible. This was put to the vote and carried.

PH confirmed that EDDC officers are due to discuss parking for the district and the potential for a scoping exercise could form part of that discussion and ongoing strategic work.

4. To note the work and recommendations of Devon County Council's Motorhomes Task Group on the development of a county-wide policy for the provision of longer and short-term sites for Recreational Vehicles and Campers (agenda item 107, linked below):

JT updated members that DCC is arranging work with District Councils in accordance with motorhomes task group recommendations. DCC has also put in traffic orders that cover the whole of the Esplanade from Ocean to the Beach Hotel which will prohibit overnight parking of motorhomes. Members welcomed this news and confirmation that traffic orders were being progressed to control overnight parking on DCC owned highway.

Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting be left in abeyance and confirmed when PH and RE have carried out the scoping exercise.

The meeting finished at 11.30am