

# EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

## Flooding & Land Drainage Working Party

Notes of the Zoom meeting held at 2pm on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023

### Present

Tim Dumper	TD	ETC Councillor, Halsdon Ward
Pauline Stott	PS	ETC Councillor, Halsdon Ward
Graham Deasy	GD	ETC Councillor, Littleham Ward
Steve Gazzard	SG	ETC & EDDC Councillor, Withycombe Raleigh Ward
Cherry Nicholas	CN	ETC Councillor, Brixington Ward
Louise Venables	LV	ETC Councillor, Town Ward
Chetna Jones	CJ	ETC Deputy Town Clerk
Kris Inch	KI	EA, Flood and Coastal Risk Management Advisor
Tom Buxton-Smith	TBS	EDDC, Engineering Projects Manager
Phil Morgan	PM	DCC, Neighbourhood Highway Engineer
Stuart Coles	SC	DCC Neighbourhood Highways Officer
Lisa Greenway	LG	ETC, Notes

### Apologies

Mark Williamson	MW	ETC Councillor, Littleham Ward
Jeff Trail	JT	DCC Councillor
Kate Pearson	KP	EA, Flood Resilience Advisor
Rob Butler	RB	EA, Exmouth Tidal Defence Project Manager
Dave Seaber	DS	SWW, Customer Services & Networks Assets Manager
Francesca Lloyd	FL	SWW, Customer Service & Networks Team Manager
Vicky Garner	VG	SWW, Community and Partnerships Manager
Jay Harris	JH	SWW, Regional Operations Manager
Jon Snowden	JS	EA, Senior Advisor Public Health
Jim Faux	JF	EA, Technical Spec

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### 1. To elect a chair

CJ requested nominations for the election of the chair of this working party. TD nominated SG, seconded by GD. No further nominations were received. Members were asked to vote, and SG was duly recommended as chair.

### 2. Welcome, introduction and apologies

SG welcomed members, CJ introduced KI to members and noted apologies, and suggested that DS, KP, and JF be removed from the distribution list as they are no longer able to attend.

### 3. To approve the notes from the meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> of July 2023

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

### 4. Matters arising

No matters arising.

## 5. To discuss the Maer Lane treatment site visit

SG apologised for not attending the site visit. CJ provided members with a brief update on the meeting with SWW representatives in the Town prior to the site visit, where plans were provided, and points raised.

During the meeting SWW representatives confirmed that there are 5 sludge treatment centres throughout East Devon located in Exmouth, Tiverton, Crediton, Kilmington and Countess Wear. Members were reminded that due to issues with the centres at Countess Wear and Kilmington sludge was redirected to Exmouth, however these issues have now been resolved.

BH from SWW confirmed that there was plenty of capacity within the treatment works therefore they could cope with additional sludge and sewerage if required.

SWW confirmed that the problem with one of the pumps in the CSO tank under the Imperial car park have now been resolved.

PS found the site visit very informative and was surprised that it did not smell as bad as anticipated. PS updated members that SWW work is still ongoing in Featherstone Road to separate the sewerage from the rainwater in the older properties and that Open Reach whilst working had punctured a water main.

GD raised concerns with SWW during the visit about increased transport to and from the treatment works and the one-way system not being adhered too. GD registered concerns about the infrastructure of the site and SWW confirmed that they are having discussions with Clinton Devon Estates and others to potentially expand the treatment works. GD agreed with PS that although the site did not smell badly on the day there are significant issues with foul smells which were queried with SWW and GD asked if they were capturing this data.

VG agreed to look into the transport routes used by SWW when transporting sludge to the treatment centre and determine which route would be most suitable especially with expansion plans and the likelihood of more traffic.

PS queried whether the flags could be colour changed to differentiate between sewage overflow and rainwater off the land as other councils operate this system. TBS stated that rainwater over farmland can be quite unpleasant too but will pass the request onto the EDDC Beach Safety Officer for a response.

## 6. SWW: General updates

No representatives were in attendance and no report was received.

### Questions to SWW:

#### Outfall Pipe

**What is the outfall pipe's location and integrity.** (Dye testing has not been able to prove this is the overflow pipe and it is believed that it might be broken elsewhere on the beach or road).

We believe the SWW CSOs are overflowing in the duck pond meaning bathing quality is affected. This is from Imperial Tank and pumps, Phear Park pumping station and Hartop pumping station.

Exeter road CSO with pump regularly overflows and we know it overflows into Withycombe Brook. This is 500m away (from the other CSOs) and therefore SWW say it does not affect bathing quality. **Surely this overflow ends up in the same water course as the other 3 and any overflow should be recorded reported in the normal channels as they occur.**

In response to Vicky's reply to Andy Tyerman we would like to ask for **evidence to back up the false positive triggers that SWW are claiming that triggered the EDMs.** (and copies of the attending engineers reports plus record of previous false triggers)

### Maintenance Work

**What maintenance work has been carried out in existing infrastructure and what is the continuous preventative maintenance regime.**

SWW sent apologies as no one was able to attend the meeting. However, they confirmed that they would provide answers to the questions raised as soon as possible.

After the site visit, CJ and GD met with a couple of ESCAPE members who were intrigued to hear how the visit went. As well as a discussion on the visit ESCAPE added that they were seeking confirmation on additional information they had been made aware of by other sources. The above follow-up questions to SWW and EA were agreed.

ESCAPE will continue to monitor and keep the working party informed of their findings. They thanked the working party for its continued efforts to hold SWW accountable.

CJ advised that BH, the local SWW site engineer informed her that he was moving to a new role soon and promised to provide his replacement's contact details so that he can attend meetings.

SG queried when the next dye testing will take place. Although an alternative date was not available SWW confirmed the dive on 24th August went ahead as planned, confirming that the outfall can be seen for 70m from the end of the concrete surround at end of the exposed bedrock. The end of the pipe was not found, however approximately 5m from where the view of the pipe disappears, a hole was found. At this point the pipe was found to be partially filled with sand. This sand will need to be removed and the pipe repaired, which is a complex job that will require specialist resource. We are currently exploring how we deliver this piece of work, especially as we are moving into the Autumn/Winter but will advise once the plan has been agreed.

Members were disappointed that SWW were not in attendance and that EA do not attend on a regular basis.

## **7. EA: Tidal Defence and general updates**

**Questions: to the EA**

Waterfit is reporting every single discharge even if below the threshold of 5 minutes at the Maer Road. Every single discharge contains sewage discharge, but it is deemed to not exceed the amount that would affect the water quality.

### **Who decides the threshold EA or SWW? (how is that threshold calculated)**

**We are aware that there have been several overflows from Imperial CSO and that there was an issue with a pump which has been replaced (and a ruptured pipe). Has EA requested information on maintenance records and are they monitoring the overflows.**

KI apologised that no one was present to answer the questions directly, but they have been logged with the enquiries team who will respond via email.

KI confirmed that the flood defence scheme is almost complete with the floodgates operating well. KI has been assured that the remaining outstanding snags have been scheduled for Kier to put right which include landscaping and removal of heras fencing near the Sea Cadets.

KI updated members that there are a few internal documents that are in the process of being finalised to get the project formally signed off. Once this happens letters will be sent to all the landowners that have had assets built on their land which will include drawings and an outline of roles and responsibilities that each party take on.

KI advised that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between ETC, EDDC and EA is in the final draft and has been signed off by the legal teams within EA and EDDC, the MOU is now with ETC for approval, once approved the documents will be signed off.

KI updated members that the Exmouth Coast Scheme modelling is underway and due to be completed in April 2024. Once completed updated flood maps of Exmouth will be used to update the maps available from the website and residents will be able to use them to update their home insurance. KI advised that the modelling will also allow them to make improvements to their flood warning response and criteria. CJ queried if the flood maps were like the ones in the emergency plan, KI confirmed that the maps would be updated versions for planning and risk of flooding from river and sea. CJ requested a copy of the maps once completed to update the emergency plan, KI agreed.

CJ confirmed that she would be meeting with the category A floodgate volunteers soon at Morton Crescent so would appreciate any updates on threshold criteria prior to the visit.

CJ has been trying to find someone in EA that can provide general updates for the WP meeting without success but hopes that KI will continue to attend. KI requested a list of meeting dates for next year and will investigate which EA representative can attend on a regular basis. CJ confirmed a list of dates will be provided once they have been agreed at the next Town Council meeting.

## **8. EDDC: General updates including Exmouth Beach Management Plan**

TBS confirmed that a consultant called ACOM has been appointed for the BMP and recently met with them at the town hall for an initial meeting. They walked the entire beach to look at all the issues. TBS is aware that they have not had a recent BMP meeting and that a chair needs to be appointed. TBS is hoping to arrange a meeting in December/January.

TBS updated members that the ongoing flooding issues in Manor Gardens seems to be resolved after cutting all the roots away from the pipes to get the cameras through although the images from the CCTV have not been returned for the work to be finalised. TBS advised that no other updates were available for Exmouth, but this may be due to the lack of significant rainfall and that there were no issues with assets.

CJ queried if any capital bids were going in for the BMP. TBS confirmed that a capital bid went in a few years ago which is paying for the BMP which includes the consultant's fee. TBS advised that capital bids cannot go in for the works as they do not know what the work will entail. TBS confirmed that the completion date for the BMP is the end of November 2024.

SG suggested putting marram grass where the sand dunes were located to stop the sand blowing onto the road. TBS has discussed this previously with his team and the consultants, but this area is very narrow and would entail a lot of maintenance. TBS added that it would not guarantee that sand would stay in place and if sand lands on the pavement, it goes back onto the beach but if on the highway it has to go to landfill.

## **9. DCC: Flood risk general update**

TA sent apologies prior to the meeting and no report was received.

## **10. DCC: Highways general update**

SC confirmed that the contractors have completed some minor drainage work improvements in New North Road which should resolve the surface drainage issues but will monitor the area. SG advised that due to recent heavy rainfall and a potential blockage the drain at the bottom of Belvedere Road that joins Exeter Road was overflowing, SC will submit a jetting request on SG's behalf.

PM referred to the earlier discussion about tankers going up Maer Lane to the treatment works and informed members that no matter what traffic restrictions are put in place there is a sub law that if a vehicle is making deliveries, they are entitled to use the road unless there is a structural reason such as low or weak bridge. PM confirmed that because of this sub law there would be no point in putting a traffic order on Maer Lane unless there was a structural reason. TD advised that the tanker route uses the small bridge in Littleham village which could be classed as weak.

PM left the meeting.

GD requested an update on the subway flooding issues. SC will contact bridges and structures to provide an update. CJ updated members that a recent DCC subway count was cancelled due to flooding although ETC have reported the flooding several times to DCC.

PS raised concerns about the gully filling up on both sides at the top of Hulham Road near Woodlands Drive on a regular basis, SC confirmed that this year there is an inspector checking for drains that need cleaning, but he will look himself. TD confirmed that historically a map was compiled which listed all the surface water problem areas in Exmouth which included the one near Woodlands Drive.

TD was concerned about the number of weeds in gutters around Exmouth that could potentially block drains, SC confirmed that is not a policy for DCC to treat weeds due to budget cuts. CJ is hoping to organise a volunteers clean-up week in the colonies in February

2024 for the roads and service lanes but is still waiting to hear back from PM re the road closure notices, SC will chase this up with PM. LV would like to volunteer for the clean-up.

#### **11. ETC Councillors: Reports and questions to representatives of external organisations**

No reports.

#### **12. AOB**

GD asked members if they knew anything about the work going on at Littleham brook and wondered if this could be related to the recent high sewage readings in the brook. Members could not provide any information so GD will speak to CJ after the meeting to request an answer from SWW.

CJ has been asked by Exe Estuary Management Partnership if there are any issues with the CSO as they would like to organise a beach clean at the Maer. CJ agreed to pass the query onto VG to reply directly.

#### **13. 2024 meetings:**

16 January 2024  
16 April 2024  
16 July 2024  
15 October 2024

The meeting ended at 15:16