

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Exmouth Town Hall, St. Andrews Road, Exmouth on Monday 11 December, 2023 at 6.30pm.

Present:

Councillors

O Davey	(Chairman)	N Hookway
A Bailey		C Nicholas
B Bailey		M Rosser
A Boatwright		A Sadiq
F Caygill		P Stott
M Chapman		A Toye
G Deasy		L Venables
T Dumper		J Whipps
S Gazzard		A Woodward

Officers:

Lisa Bowman, Town Clerk

Apologies: Apologies were noted from Councillors Ian Kirvan, David Poor, Joe Whibley, Daniel Wilson, Matt Hall and Mark Williamson.

The Chairman then welcomed all to the meeting.

Public Forum: John Petty and William Lodge spoke in respect of agenda item 7 about the Exmouth Gateway proposals. John Petty raised concerns about the justification for the proposed infilling of the subway. William Lodge raised concerns about the method of data collection and systems analysis which has been used to support proposals for changes to road layouts and the roundabout.

C23/186. Council meeting minutes

Councillor Tim Dumper proposed, Councillor Pauline Stott seconded, and it was agreed by all that the minutes of the previous meeting be accepted as a true record.

C23/187. Matters arising from previous minutes.

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

C23/188. Declarations of pecuniary interests and dispensations

Item	Declaration Type			Reason
	Councillor	Pecuniary	Personal	
C23/191	Andrew Toye		X	Works for Defra

C23/189. Exclusion of the Press and public

There were no items on the agenda which necessitated the exclusion of the press or public and would be considered in Part ii of the meeting.

Councillor Olly Davey moved and it was agreed by all that agenda item 7 should be brought forward to facilitate an early debate about Councillor Mike Rosser's motion.

C23/190. To receive and discuss a motion from Councillor Mike Rosser:

Devon County Council's (DCC) stated carbon reduction policy includes promotion of active travel (cycling and walking). However, within Exmouth, DCC is doing little if anything to promote active travel. There are no plans to invest in creating a network of safe cycle and pedestrian routes around the town. Meanwhile, DCC is planning to invest £4.5 million in the Gateway project that, while possibly making some improvements to the pedestrian area near the station, will do little if anything to promote active travel around the town.

On 13th June 2022, Exmouth Town Council agreed by majority to contribute £400,000 from its CIL budget (the largest payment made from this budget) towards the cost of extending the Dinan Way and creating the Gateway project. During this meeting, concerns were raised about the Gateway Project – specifically about filling in the underpass by the station. Assurances were sought and made that the views of the Town Council would be considered when developing this project.

The Town Council also asked DCC to ensure that the Littleham housing estate would not become a 'rat run' for traffic coming from Dinan Way and heading towards Sandy Bay. The Town Council is disappointed that it appears that this request has not been actioned.

The Town Council considers that any benefits from the Gateway project do not justify the cost of £4.5 million, the loss of an underpass and carbon emissions resulting from this work.

The Town Council is disappointed that the County Council has not explored the possibility of using land owned by EDDC next to the leisure centre to create more space for pedestrians and cyclists without incurring the expense of filling in the underpass.

The Town Council believes that the town is served best when all levels of local government cooperate and work together.

As such:-

- The Town Council will write to the leader of DCC and EDDC and ask for a commitment to work in partnership and with ETC to ensure that the benefits, both globally and to the town, of projects within the town are of best financial and environmental value;*

- *The Town Council has acknowledged that there is a climate crisis and, as such, asks that projects that will most effectively reduce carbon emissions, are prioritised for funding;*
- *The Town Council will ask that all levels of local authorities commit to regular ward meetings of councillors to facilitate communication and working together;*
- *The Town Council will issue a press statement concerning its position regarding the Gateway project.*

Councillor Rosser was asked by the Chairman to introduce his motion. Councillor Rosser proposed an amendment in respect of paragraph three, such that Exmouth Town Council would write to the senior officer at Devon County Council and Stuart Hughes, Devon County Council Portfolio Holder for Highway Management, to seek a positive response to concerns raised about the knock on effect of traffic heading to Sandy Bay when the Dinan Way extension is complete. Councillor Fred Caygill seconded the amendment.

Members debated the scope to include traffic management concerns affecting Littleham (and potentially other wards) within the framework of the Levelling Up Bid.

It was suggested by several Councillors that a comprehensive traffic management plan needed to be drawn up by the County Council to mitigate any adverse impacts of the scheme.

The amendment was put to the vote but failed (6 votes in favour; 9 against; 3 abstentions).

Councillor Rosser then explained that he had put forward the original motion due to his frustration about the extent of expenditure planned for the Gateway proposals with seemingly little gain.

The Chairman opened the matter up for debate and points raised during the discussion included the following:

- The majority of respondents to the initial engagement exercise had opposed the closure of the underpass;
- Concerns about the crossing point and dropping off lay-by at the station;
- Need for a comprehensive transport plan for Exmouth which looks at transport holistically;
- Relevance of the motion in the context of a recent meeting with Devon County Council when assurances were sought, and received, about the scope to make changes to the scheme when the results of the ongoing, formal consultation are known;
- Scope for representations to be made direct to the Department for Transport;

- Motion does not address the need for a transport interchange and integrated sustainable transport;
- Concerns about the decision-making process and lack of trust in Devon County Council;
- Climate change concerns associated with the Gateway proposal;
- Cost benefit analysis has not been provided;
- Relevance of motion in context of offer by Devon County Council to meet with the Town Council in the New Year to discuss the consultation results.

Following an invitation from the Chairman to sum up, Councillor Rosser stressed the need for all Councils to work together, along with his view that the money could be spent on better active travel improvements.

Councillor Fred Caygill subsequently seconded the motion and it was put to the vote but failed (4 votes in favour, 12 against, 2 abstentions).

C23/191. 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 Andrew Woodward seconded, and it was agreed that the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 6th November and 20th November 2023 be accepted as a true record.

Councillor Alex Sadiq proposed, Councillor Andrew Woodward seconded, and it was agreed that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee held on 16th November 2023 be accepted as a true record.

The following were also noted:

Notes of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Party held on 7th November 2023 and a verbal update of the meeting held on 6th December 2023. In respect of the associated recommendations to Full Council, Councillor Tim Dumper subsequently proposed, Councillor Louise Venables seconded, and it was agreed that the Town Council adopts the Plant Based Treaty as presented to the meeting and the Terms of Reference for a Tree Forum.

RESOLVED that the Town Council adopts the Plant Based Treaty and the Terms of Reference for a Tree Forum.

Notes of the Community Organisation Liaison Panel Working Party held on 20th November 2023.

A verbal update from the Exmouth Transport Partnership Working Party held on 4th December 2023 by Councillor Tim Dumper, who confirmed that a discussion had

taken place about the emerging Gateway proposals and that he had provided an update following his attendance at the rail forum. It was noted that stakeholder attendance at the Partnership meeting had been poor.

Notes of the Flooding and Land Drainage Working Party held on 17th October 2023 and to agree to give the Deputy Clerk delegated authority to sign the tri-party memorandum of understanding for the operation of the tidal defence scheme flood gates. Councillor Steve Gazzard proposed, Councillor Graham Deasy seconded, and it was agreed by the Town Council gives the Deputy Clerk delegated authority to sign the tri-party memorandum of understanding for the operation of the tidal defence Scheme flood gates.

RESOLVED that the Town Council gives the Deputy Clerk delegated authority to sign the tri-party memorandum of understanding for the operation of the tidal defence Scheme flood gates

Notes of the Festival and Events Working Party held on the 9th November 2023 Councillor Joy Whipps also applauded the success of the recent Winter Festival and Lantern Parade.

Notes of the Town Maintenance Overview Working Party held on 16th November 2023 and to ratify the purchase of a weed ripper, funded from Town Maintenance reserves, at a cost of £4994.92. Councillor Olly Davey subsequently proposed, Councillor Steve Gazzard seconded and it was agreed by all that the purchase of a weed ripper should be funded from Town Maintenance reserves.

RESOLVED that the Town Council purchases a weed ripper, funded from Town Maintenance reserves, at a cost of £4994.92

Reports from members who represent the Council on Outside Bodies

- **DALC Larger Councils Forum:** Councillor Olly Davey provided a verbal update, primarily the forum's discussion about the devolution deal for Devon.
- **Exmouth and District Allotment Association Committee Meeting:** Councillor Olly Davey highlighted that the committee notes had been circulated.

District Councillors' Reports: Several District Councillors had circulated reports prior to the meeting see Appendix.

In addition, Councillor Nick Hookway provided a verbal update about the impending repairs to Exmouth sea wall and the associated arrangements for a contractors' compound when works commence in the New Year.

Councillor Toye confirmed that category B and C toilets have been given a stay of execution until 2025.

County Councillors' Reports: Councillor Richard Scott was in attendance and answered queries relating to the Devolution Deal, the impending review of the residents parking scheme, yellow lining policy and the scope to introduce 20mph as a default speed limit in the Town. In respect of the residents parking scheme, Councillor Scott confirmed that he will be meeting with the traffic management team to discuss the legal status and process for small changes versus larger changes. In respect of a default 20mph limit, he reiterated that support is not lacking on the part of Devon County Council for 20mph schemes, however there is a bidding process, as previously circulated by the Town Clerk, and support will only be forthcoming where appropriate, e.g. outside schools and any new developments.

C23/192. To note that the meeting scheduled for 10th March 2025 is the Annual Town Meeting. Noted.

The meeting concluded at 20:33.

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

Appendix – East Devon District Councillors' Reports

Councillor Tim Dumper

As a member of Standards Committee, I was involved in the detailed consideration of the revision of the local Complaints Procedure against local District, Parish or Town Councillors felt to have breached their Code of Conduct. These recommendations for revision were adopted by Full Council last week. Up till now, Exmouth Town Council has used the EDDC model, so this will have an effect here. The aims of the revisions are, it is hoped, to make the system quicker, fairer, and easier to understand for all involved, the person or people making the complaint, the Councillor complained about, and, of course, the general public. The target time for dealing with a complaint was dramatically reduced from 10 to 4 weeks, with more delegation to the Monitoring Officer. This brings EDDC into line with many other Councils and accords with national guidance.

At Licensing Committee we had a presentation from Dawn Dines, the CEO of Stamp Out Spiking, who lives locally, asking for help and support for their campaign for what was described as a surprisingly common issue. The effects on victims can be devastating. Both our Chair, Cllr Joe Whibley, who echoed her concerns, and others offered what support they could. Some changes were endorsed (later also signed off by Council) to taxi ranks across the district including in Exmouth which will now be discussed with local taxi operators.

A new version of the EDDC Council Plan is being worked on, and a series of 3 Workshops are being run to support this. Each Workshop has been run in 3 sessions on the same day, one for Stakeholders (Parish and Town Councillors and other outside Bodies with frequent contacts with EDDC), one for Cabinet members and one for all District Councillors. A key aim was to ensure it works well for all concerned. So far, I have attended the Stakeholders sessions, because I have had other things on during the Councillor sessions, but it has enabled me to see a wider picture - also pleased to accompany our Town Clerk, and Deputy who each went to one. I was a bit disappointed with the overall attendance by Stakeholders and hope that the final session at the end of January, when consultants collate everything for a final report for consideration that more will go. We in Exmouth have had plenty of issues in dealing with EDDC, and I know there are cynics here, but I would appeal to them to ensure they take part in what feels like a genuine attempt to reach out!

On behalf of EDDC, I also took part in a recent Devon Rail Forum meeting, chaired by DCC. Very interesting presentations about the reopening of stations at Cullompton and Wellington, now scheduled for 2025 - these stations were closed many years ago, and it is great that important local towns are at last to regain train services. On a local note, I was disappointed to hear that there are no current plans to introduce through Rail and bus ticketing which is now planned for those places branded "Rail Link" eg Barnstaple and Okehampton. I have argued Exmouth's case for better bus and rail integration here at several meetings now and am hopeful our representations are at last being listened to!

Councillor Joe Whibley

Hi All - A Special Request!

Hi all - first of all, is everyone OK? We can't do what we do unless we are - let someone know if you're not.

Other district councillors will have updated you on the comings and goings of the district council and I've been involved in a similar way.

This month and following on from our Licensing and Enforcement Committee meeting and our speaker Dawn, from an anti-spiking charity, I'd like to ask a quick question and request that you get in touch if you feel you need to.

Have you heard of, seen or been the victim of a spiking or needling incident in any setting in Exmouth?

These crimes, where drinks subtly have things such as sedatives added when the 'owner' is not present / not looking, are massively under-reported and there is a large amount of confusion / disparity in the way in which licensed premises deal with such incidents.

It'd be good to build as wide a picture as we can, even anecdotally, in order to try and engage with the trade, the police and any interested parties in the most effective way possible.

Please just email me if you have any experiences or thoughts.

Thanks, and have a brilliant festive period.

Joe