

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL Waterfront Working Party

Notes of the meeting held at 10am on Tuesday 23rd January 2024 via Zoom.

Present

Councillor Pauline Stott	ST	Exmouth Town Council (Chair)
Councillor Tim Dumper	TD	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Mark Williamson	MW	Exmouth Town Council
Chetna Jones	CJ	Exmouth Town Council
Sam Dorman (note taker)	SD	Exmouth Town Council

Apologies

Councillor Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Ian Kirvan	IK	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor David Poor	DP	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Louise Venables	LV	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Joy Whipps	JW	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Jeff Trail	JT	Devon County Council
Simon Kennedy	SK	EDDC
Peter Blyth	PB	EDDC Streetscene Beach Safety Officer
Dave Radford	DR	Exmouth Sea Scouts

1. Welcome and apologies

PS welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted.

2. To approve the notes of the last meeting dated 27th June 2023 and the inspection form dated 26th September 2023, with updates from Pete Blyth and matters arising from therein

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

Matters arising from Inspection form

PB gave updates for the Inspection form prior to the meeting.

PS updated members that the shelters opposite the Pavilion have now been painted but the windows have not been cleaned. At the last COLP meeting PS reported this and Andrew from Streetscene said he would see what he could do.

The pothole in the pavement opposite the Imperial hotel needs to be reported to Devon County Council as well as the blocked drain.

MW reported highway issues on the seafront with standing water on the seaside of the road and said that the drains cannot be working as they should be. He

understands this has been reported at Flooding and Land Drainage WP meeting. PS confirmed that the gully's are only cleaned out every three years unless there is a real problem with standing water for over 24 hours. The gullies have become a problem due to sand blocking them and the exceptional rainfall we have had. TD added it would be useful to report to the County Councillors so they can take action.

CJ added that there was an informal arrangement where East Devon District Council and Devon County Council take it in turns to clear the sand from the roads.

Several of the issues from the inspection form have been dealt with and members will check this on the next walkabout.

3. To receive an update on the proposed repairs to the damaged sea wall

The work to the sea wall will be starting at the end of February 2024. It is presumed that the road will be closed to allow materials to be delivered and for the works to take place.

It was suggested by Geoff Jung that a presentation of the sea wall be held at the same time as the Beach Management Plan consultation meeting and subject to confirmation this will be on 15th February 2024.

The sea wall was discussed and how the repairs might happen. The matter was discussed at the recent Beach Management Plan Steering group meeting and there was some concern about losing the stone wall and replacing with sheet piling and whether the stones could be reused as cladding.

CJ to follow up with Tom Buxton Smith to see if there is a separate consultation for the sea wall, to ask who the consultancy firm are and if they are reusing or disposing the sea wall stones.

ACTION(s): CJ to liaise with Tom Buxton Smith regarding the sea wall.

4. To receive an update on the EDDC Beach Management Plan

Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole (BCP) Council are going to project manage the EDDC Beach Management Plan. The Consultancy firm appointed to prepare the Beach Management Plan are AECOM.

The first phase of the consultation will start mid-February 2024 where AECOM will conduct an initial consultation on the proposals to be included in the Beach Management Plan.

Tom Buxton Smith has instructed the consultants to develop two versions of the beach management plan to account for:

- 1) What can to be done to protect the beach with limited funds. This will be the basic version.
- 2) What could be done on the beach to protect it fully provided there was additional funds. This will be the gold standard version.

The second phase of the consultation will take place in the Autumn of 2024. Proposals for both versions of the plan will be available for review and comment. It will then go to the steering group to have a discussion and make any changes and culminating in Cabinet approving the last version by the end of the year.

Members discussed the Beach Management Plan and where the initial source of funding will come from. CJ said that East Devon District Council will fund the work to develop the Beach Management Plan. However, funds will be needed to carry out the proposed work as identified in the final beach management plan. It is hoped that funds can be obtained from the Environment Agency and Central Government.

CJ will circulate the date of the first consultation as soon as it confirmed by EDDC.

5. To receive an update on the Maer Rocks investigations carried out by SWW and the beach water quality

CJ updated members about the Maer Rocks investigations and explained that previously SWW had investigated with divers, and it was thought there were some partial blockages caused by sand build-up.

In the Flooding and Land Drainage WP meeting, SWW confirmed that a long hose with a camera attached was fed through the pipes. Some sand could be seen but not enough to cause any blockages. However, the hose was not long enough to get to low water level so this will be completed again with a longer hose.

PS queried about the removal of pipes, and which one was under investigation. CJ said she was not aware of any pipes being removed and explained to members that the pipe being investigated is on Maer rocks. This pipe goes from Maer Road pumping station, under the road and beach, under the rocks and is discharged out to sea. However, SWW think there are two pipes there, but they cannot confirm this, and they have been struggling to identify where it discharges. This is all part of their investigations. SWW do not believe there is a blockage or that they have been discharging closer than 150 – 200 metres out to sea but are yet to prove this.

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

No update from EDDC except for the updates on the Inspection form.

CJ explained that EDDC are not being officially informed about the pollution to the sea and this is being raised through the Scrutiny Committee to SWW. EDDC need to be informed straight away to enable them to display red flags especially on winter

when there are no lifeguards. Many beach users are not aware of EA's pollution forecast alerts and assume if there is no flag on display it is safe to swim in the sea. There needs to be something physical on the beach about warning beach users.

TD added that PB provided a presentation at the EDDC Overview Committee recently, and he has also prepared a draft Beach Amenity. The Committee has recommended it be approved by Cabinet.

7. To receive an updated on the Beach Wheelchair project

The beach wheelchairs are in the process of being inspected. One of the chairs is no longer usable so a couple more may need to be purchased. The hut may also need a new roller door as the current door is too heavy to lift.

The coordinator is looking into grants to help fund new beach wheelchairs and a remote roller door.

The Beach Wheelchair hut was used by 173 people during 2023, with users coming from Cornwall and as far as Bristol as there is nowhere else that provides this service except Lyme Regis who now have three beach wheelchairs.

Members discussed matting and how Seaton are putting matting down to allow wheelchair users to access the pebble beach. PS said that matting on Exmouth beach would be no good as Exmouth is a tidal beach. She has asked EDDC to put some money aside to make the ramp not so steep.

TD wanted to record his thanks for all who have been involved in the Beach Wheelchair project.

PS said she is so pleased that so many people get good use out of this service and wanted it noted that Mollie Carey, an employee of Exmouth Town Council, has done a marvellous job with co-ordinating with volunteers and clients and has always stepped up if no volunteers are able to open the hut.

8. Any other business

CJ said that she may be away for the next meeting which is a walkabout one. She asked if members were able to proceed without her and that SD would be happy to take notes. CJ would follow up any actions on her return.

9. Date of next meeting: 12th March 2024 – Walkabout meeting

To meet at Orcombe Point at 10am on the 12th March 2024.