

# EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Exmouth Town Hall, St. Andrews Road, Exmouth on Monday 19 February, 2024 at 6.30pm.

### Present:

### Councillors

O Davey	(Chairman)	C Nicholas
A Bailey		D Poor
B Bailey		A Sadiq
F Caygill		P Stott
M Chapman		A Toye
A Colman (arrived 1846)		L Venables
G Deasy		J Whibley
T Dumper		J Whipps
M Hall		M Williamson
N Hookway		D Wilson
I Kirvan		

### Officers:

Lisa Bowman, Town Clerk

**Apologies:** Apologies were noted from Councillors Angela Boatwright, Steve Gazzard and Michael Rosser.

The Chairman then welcomed all to the meeting and it was agreed that item 7 on the agenda would be brought forward.

### Public Forum:

No members of the public had registered to speak.

### C24/008. Council meeting minutes

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

### C24/009. Matters arising from previous minutes.

None

### C24/010. Declarations of pecuniary interests and dispensations

There were no declarations of pecuniary or personal interest.

### C24/011. 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.

**C24/012. To receive a presentation from 5th Exmouth Sea Scout Group**

Mike Lee and Rob Masters attended on behalf of the 5<sup>th</sup> Exmouth Sea Scout Group to provide an update on the status of its new scout hut. Mr Masters explained that there had been a long-held ambition to replace the old scout hut on the Imperial Recreation Ground with purpose-built facilities but real momentum for the current project only started to gather five years ago. The current facilities are inadequate, with no mains electricity or running water.

The Group provides a range of activities for its members and the new facilities will provide a hall, boat store and accessible changing rooms which will be available for other community groups to use. Kier installed service ducting from the nearby carpark as part of the recent flood defence works on the Imperial Recreation Ground, but the Scout Group still has some way to go to meet its original budget of £600,000 and further fund raising is necessary. A buy-a-brick campaign has also been launched.

It was also noted that the Scouting organisation in Exmouth is short of adult leaders.

Mr Lee and Mr Masters responded to questions from Members, who agreed to share details of the fundraising initiatives.

**C24/013. 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 Joe Whibley proposed, Councillor Tim Dumper seconded, and it was agreed that the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024 be accepted as a true record.

The following were also noted:

Notes of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Party held on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024. Councillor Tim Dumper also provided a verbal update of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024, including details of a recent meeting with Plastic Free Exmouth, the upcoming thrifty festival, a tiny forest initiative and the plant-based treaty.

Notes of the Community Organisation Liaison Panel Working Party held on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

Notes of the Festival and Events Working Party held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

Notes of the Public Rights of Way Working Party held on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023. Councillor Mark Williamson provided a verbal update of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at which a report on the status of all 25 footpaths had been presented. It was also noted that the annual return to Devon County Council's P3 scheme had been submitted and that it reflected 76 hours of work by the Town

Maintenance team on public footpaths. Councillor Williamson also updated members on progress at Bapton Valley.

Notes of the Town Maintenance Overview Working Party held on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023. Councillor Ian Kirvan also highlighted an upcoming partnership initiative with Devon County Council and East Devon District Council in the Colony which will require modest road closures for gully cleansing, weeding and litter picking etc.

A verbal update of the Town Premises Working party held on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024. It was reported by Councillor Fred Caygill that the working party had met to sense check previous decisions by the Town Council in respect of public toilets. This was in response to an offer from East Devon District Council to acquire the freehold for the toilet blocks at the Maer and on the Imperial Recreation Ground. Members concurred with the Council's previous decisions *not* to progress the acquisitions but expressed concern about the future of the toilets by the railway station. It was agreed that the Clerk will investigate further and report back.

Notes of the Flooding and Land Drainage Working Party held on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024. The forthcoming Southwest water roadshow in the Town Hall was highlighted by the Clerk and it was noted that a motion has been put forward to East Devon District Council's Full Council meeting on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> February which effectively represents a vote of no confidence in South West Water.

Notes of the Waterfront Working Party held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024.

### **Reports from members who represent the Council on Outside Bodies**

- **Woodbury, Exmouth & Budleigh (WEB) Community Health \* Wellbeing Board:** notes were circulated with the agenda.
- **Exmouth and District Allotment Association:** Councillor Olly Davey provided a verbal update and highlighted a number of initiatives which are ongoing, including ongoing maintenance works at both sites.
- **Exmouth Beach Management Plan Steering Group:** it was reported that the recent consultation at the town hall had been well attended by the local community and comments received will feed into the beach management plan. It was also noted that the repair works to the sea wall have been delayed until March.
- **Placemaking in Exmouth Town and seafront:** Councillor Graham Deasy provided an update and confirmed the intention to facilitate better coordination between the three Councils responsible for Exmouth.
- **Exe Estuary Management Partnership:** Councillor Graham Deasy provided an update from the Winter forum held on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at which the roles of the various organisations involved with water quality had been presented as well as an update on the Harbour Revision Order.
- **Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC):** Councillor Aurora Bailey reported on graffiti issues at Phear Park. Members discussed the matter briefly and it was suggested that the Town Maintenance Working Party should pick up the broader issue of graffiti in the Town.

**District Councillors' Reports:** Councillor Maddy Chapman reported that East Devon District Council's Scrutiny Committee had been busy with South West Water issues and that the personnel committee would be interviewing for a new CEO imminently.

**County Councillors' Reports:** there were no County Councillors present.

**C24/014. To note that the Annual Town meeting will be held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024.**

The meeting concluded at 20:14.

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

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## Appendix – Exmouth Town Councillors' Reports

### Exmouth Town Councillor Graham Deasy

#### Exe Estuary Management Partnership Winter Forum – 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024

The aim of the event was to gain a better understanding of:

- the current status of water quality issues relating to the Exe Estuary
- the roles of different organisations
- Plans, actions, wishes, expectations
- What everybody can do to help

#### **Presentations given:**

Water Quality at a Catchment Level: A high-level overview *Environment Agency*

*Ecological targets failures due to not meeting environmental targets for Phosphates, Macrophytes (Algae) & Fish*

Water Quality of the Exe Estuary *Exe Estuary Mgt Partnership*  
*Impact from Nutrients, CSOs, Climate change, Human activity e.g. car tyre run-off*

South West Water: A water company perspective *South West Water*  
*Draft Water Resources Management Plan 2025 -205; Storm Overflow Action Plan*

Environment Agency: Enforcement and Monitoring *Environment Agency*  
*Priorities are to: manage the use of resources; increase the resilience to flooding risk & coastal erosion; improve the way we work as a regulator.*

Environmental Campaigning Group: *Surfers Against Sewage*  
*Creating activists; campaign to end sewage pollution; nature led solutions.*

River User Action Groups: *ESCAPE, Friends of the River Exe (FORE)*  
*ESCAPE – need for national standards for reporting storm overflows + real time traffic-light system re bathing safety.*  
*FORE- seek funding for Fundraising continuous water quality monitoring.*

#### **Three further presentations were received.**

- 1) Update on the Harbour Revision Order - Harbour Master (Exeter Port Authority)  
Drop in event Tuesday 20 February, 6pm to 7.30pm, The Exe Sailing Club  
HRO is a set of rules which govern what the authority can do and the powers that it has within the boundaries of the River Exe. The HRO will help to secure the improvement, maintenance and management of the Port in an efficient and economical manner and provide the Council with a set of flexible statutory powers.
- 2) Opening of the Lower Otter Restoration Project - Otter Estuary Ranger
- 3) Exmouth Sea Scouts - Scout Leader

## **Appendix – East Devon District Councillors' Reports**

### **Councillor Joe Whibley**

I have attended numerous meetings over the past month, the most notable of which have been EDDC's scrutiny committee with South West Water, a couple of hours which left me both gobsmacked and disheartened. Bearing in mind they occurred before the most recent pipe break; I got the sense that they continued to be elusive and somewhat slippery. There were no 'technical staff' with an overview of problems throughout the district, for example – many questions were 'taken away' to be answered elsewhere or at a later date. I do feel it unfortunate that whoever the current incumbents in strategic roles are having to answer for long term problems that haven't been addressed for a long time.

My final thought is that yes, SWW now have supposed long term plans, but before the recent, emergency, events, we were still having significant amounts of sewage pumped into the sea. Where was the urgency from SWW then? Why has it taken this to get them, or our MP, to do anything significant?

I have dealt with several licensing issues away from meetings and chaired a couple of sub-committees. They should remain in the 'part B' section due to their nature but suffice to say that I am satisfied with the results we achieve and believe they will help keep EDDC a safer place.

I won't speak about the Gateway here, as it is well covered pretty much everywhere else.

I have dealt with numerous enquiries from residents, notably this month to do with education and issues they are having at the Comp. I have signposted people to the correct agencies but feel it would be useful for me and anybody else who wishes to, to enter into dialogue with the new head there.

### **Councillor Tim Dumper**

There's been a lot happening, overlapping with Town Council and Devon County Council - sewage and South West Water (can anything else go wrong?), Exmouth "Gateway " Levelling Up project etc.

However, a number of long-term planning, review, and benchmarking of District services have taken place, or just starting:

New Council Plan - I took part in the third and final workshop which we hope will lead to better focus on our core aims, and a better service to our communities and partners e.g. local councils.

Peer Challenge - a benchmarking exercise, led by the Local Government Association (LGA), in which a 5 strong team of senior local government officers and councillors visited, listened and questioned us as Councillors, staff at all levels, and outside stakeholders for an intensive 3 day period, and have delivered an interim report on how we compare with others. I attended both their listening session and

their interim feedback session. The latter was positive, and they were very keen to say that the culture is very positive, people enjoy working for EDDC and no evidence of a bullying atmosphere which they heard rumoured.

They were keen that we appoint a new Chief Executive as soon as possible. They acknowledged problems with various services e.g. housing but recognised the well-directed efforts to get things back on track.

Their final plea to the Council was - Please, no more reviews for now! Time for getting on with the job!

New Constitution - this is to recognise new approaches for the future. The work on this starts tomorrow through a new working group of which I will be a member (in addition to being on the selection panel for the new Chief Executive).

Report of the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny - this has just reported back on these aspects of EDDC. Details later.