

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Exmouth Transport Partnership

Notes of the Zoom meeting held at 10am on Tuesday 27th February 2024

Present

Cllr Tim Dumper	TD	Exmouth Town Council (Chair)
Cllr Pauline Stott	PS	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Olly Davey	OD	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Andrew Colman	AC	Exmouth Town Council
Mike Tucker	MT	DCC Public Transport
John Petty	JP	Active Travel Exmouth, & Exmouth Community Association
Stuart Coles	SC	DCC Highways
Richard Easthope	RE	EDDC Parking Services Manager
Tony Jackson	TJ	ALRUG (Avocet Line Rail Users Group)
Lisa Bowman	LB	Exmouth Town Council
Lisa Greenway	LG	Exmouth Town Council (Notetaker)

Apologies

Cllr Ian Kirvan	IK	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr David Poor	DP	Exmouth Town Council
Simon Porter	SP	Stagecoach Assistant Operations Manager
Neil Herraghty	NH	Stagecoach Assistant Operations Manager
Chris Comer	CC	Stagecoach Commercial Manager
Simon Ford	SF	Stagecoach Head of Commercial
Jan Gannaway	JG	Active Travel Exmouth, & Sustrans
Stuart Jarvis	SJa	DCC Principal Transportation Planning Officer
Hannah Clark	HC	DCC Transportation Strategy Manager
Sam Jeffcoat	SJ	DCC PROW Warden for Exmouth

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

TD welcomed members to the meeting and noted apologies.

2. To approve the previous meeting notes from the 4th of December 2023

PS proposed and OD seconded the accuracy of the notes from the meeting on the 4th of December. TD requested that item 5 be slightly corrected to note that he was not in support of the subway being filled in, but it could go ahead with a cut and cover scheme to reduce material used and make sure the ramps are covered, LG will update the notes. The meeting notes were approved.

3. Matters arising from the previous meeting

OD made members aware that the work has been completed on the Exe Estuary Trail and it reopened early February.

PS queried if LB has heard back from Fernbank regarding the missing sedum on the bus shelter roof by Halsdon nursing home, although LB has had several conversations with them about a bus shelter on Salterton Road but the sedum shelter was not discussed. LG will follow this up.

TD has noticed that the bus shelter at All Saints Church on Exeter Road was replaced with a smaller dimension shelter which only has 1 bench seat as opposed to the original 2 and the end panel does not provide adequate shelter from the weather. LG will investigate further.

4. Stakeholder reports:

a) Stagecoach

There was no Stagecoach representative at the meeting however LB read out the following report supplied by CC who hopes to attend future meetings:

The difficulties that Stagecoach Devon experienced with staffing during 2022, as the industry went through the aftermath of the Covid pandemic, and the manpower shortages that affected many employers, were very well publicised.

Through the last 18 months, much of our network has undergone significant review and change in order to adapt to the changed operating environment and we are pleased to be able to say that this has enabled us to stabilise and position ourselves to identify future opportunities for growth whilst remaining mindful of the need to ensure that our network is appropriate for the current levels of demand.

Alongside this, we have undertaken an extensive recruitment process across our depots, which sees the company now fully staffed. As a result, whilst we continue to experience daily challenges due to roadworks and diversions – including those which affected Service 57 recently – our service reliability has improved significantly over recent months.

Our next service change date is on 14th April. Much of our focus will be on timetable amendments to improve service reliability, and we hope to be able to confirm the details of our revised timetables next week.

b) DCC Public Transport

MT updated members that DCC officer Rachel Phillips recently visited Exmouth to talk about real time screens being installed in bus shelters, the screens currently only show scheduled information with no prediction data. A new supplier is being trialled whose screens supply real time information and predicted data which they hope to install around the county as a phased implementation. TD attended the visit with Rachel Phillips, the Portfolio Holder, and senior members from Stagecoach and GWR, they looked around the forecourt and provided feedback on the current display information.

OD advised that real time signage is essential and would save public frustration as although he personally uses the APP which provides useful information not everyone has access to this. MT advised that once real time screens has been implemented there is an aspiration to add disruption data, although this would have to be serviced manually.

OD queried if the £2 bus fare uptake has made a difference to increase passenger numbers, MT confirmed that passenger numbers have increased by between 5 and 10 percent and the scheme has now been extended until December 2024 with the possibility of fares being simplified after that.

TD is aware that more services are becoming non-commercial and need support. MT confirmed that the industry is subject to high rates of inflation, the number of bus insurers is about to reduce by 50% and predictions show that this will double the cost of insurance. This may impact services leading to timetables becoming commercially unviable and Stagecoach requesting financial support from DCC.

c) EDDC Car/Cycle, Coach & Lorry Parks & Electric Vehicle Charging

As a result of the recommendations from the Campervan TAFF being deferred at EDDC cabinet and pushed forward to the Placemaking agenda for tabling and the Car Parking Strategy workshops run by RE, LB wanted to make sure that Exmouth ward members involved in the workshops were aware of the recommendations that had come through and why, to gain additional support for RE.

RE updated members that work has started to extend the estuary side long stay car park, providing an additional 73 spaces by using part of the coach park. This will not impact on coach park spaces as it will move further down to the boatyard end. The initial work costs were 60K which has now reduced to 20K as some of the groundwork initially proposed will not take place as the existing layout of the coach park will be used.

RE confirmed that the charge point operators are waiting for National Grid to perform the upgrade work in the Imperial Road car park for the EV chargers that currently have no power. Initially the EV chargers were supposed to go live in January 2024 but there was not enough grid capacity to power all the units meaning the first EV chargers installed used up all the power. RE does not have a timeline for this work to be completed.

PS is concerned that car parks are full due to the knock-on effect of the residents parking scheme and SWW taking up spaces in the Imperial Road car park, people have started to use the lorry park. PS queried if they would receive parking fines and how long SWW would be using the spaces, RE confirmed that cars using the lorry park would be ticketed but they can appeal in the current circumstances and EDDC have been lenient. RE was aware that SWW were cleaning the underground sewage chambers and were due to depart last Friday so maybe they have been delayed.

RE will be reviewing the winter parking offer this summer to change the terms and conditions which are not currently working.

RE is aware that a few van lifers have moved into the Maer Road car park paying for parking sporadically or purchasing monthly permits and denying they are sleeping overnight. When a family of a large recreational vehicle was approached by EDDC staff they became aggressive so have been asked to leave by the end of the week, they have also received multiple PCN's for sleeping in the vehicle and RE has been informing them and cancelling the monthly permits they are buying as they are in breach of the terms and conditions.

TD confirmed that the residents parking will be reviewed at the next HATOC meeting in April which could lead to residents parking areas being expanded. RE has a meeting with all the Devon parking managers including DCC on Thursday where they will discuss a joined up approach to displacement issues.

d) Active Travel

JG was helping at the Tiny Forest planting site so was unable to attend the meeting, the following report was supplied prior to the meeting:

We are currently busy setting up 'Active Travel Day' at Sideshore for Saturday the 11th of May. We are getting a very good response from the groups that have been invited. Hoping for better weather this time as we had to cancel last year.

Catherine Causley tells me that cycle parking is now being installed in various places in the town and the seafront. This has taken a long time, and she has had various complications along the way but is now going ahead on the sites I suggested.

Work at Bapton Valley Park will begin soon to upgrade to a shared path for cycling and walking and inappropriate barriers are being removed. This project is being promoted by the

PROW WP but I thought ETP members would be pleased to hear that it is now going ahead.

OD was keen for more cycle parking to be installed on the seafront and in Phear Park which should be an easier process to implement being on EDDC land.

e) Taxis

There was no Taxi representative at the meeting and no report was received.

f) GWR

There was no GWR representative at this meeting and no report was received.

TD recently spoke to DW about meeting attendance, DW explained that it is increasingly difficult to attend all meeting requests across Devon and Cornwall as GWR do not have the capacity to accept the high level of invites.

g) ALRUG

TJ expressed his disappointment that no GWR representative was present but hopefully any future plans will be discussed at tonight's GWR webinar.

Although all the trains are running, they are not of a suitable length, short form trains have been particularly bad this week with only 2 out of 7 diagrams having more than 2 cars yesterday, although it has improved slightly today. Problems continue across GWR who are attempting to run services with 40 year old rolling stock which does not always work. TJ hopes to receive an update in tonight's Webinar about possible rolling stock coming over from Transport for Wales, but even if this materialises it will take months of driver training.

TD raised concerns that the 0754 train from Exmouth to Exeter is dangerous due to the number of students having to stand when short form trains are in service, TJ is aware of the 0754 issue which is on ALRUG's radar.

TJ confirmed that there is no change to the new timetable being published in June.

h) DCC Highways

SC updated members that as they are rapidly heading toward the end of the financial year, they are currently chasing up orders with contractors to get the work delivered.

Unfortunately, rainfall and low temperatures within the last 12 months has caused pothole delays. PS queried why only selected potholes are filled when there are multiple ones nearby, SC explained that the contractors can only fill in the potholes that they have been contracted to fill. SC confirmed that non safety defect depressions are being addressed which should improve roads for cyclists and motorbikes, TD commented that many damaged sections of road are indeed often dangerous especially to road users on two wheels.

OD queried how long the traffic lights would be in place at Courtlands, SC confirmed that the utility works are moving to side roads so the lights should be removed shortly from the main road, LB added that the road closure notification is in place until the 8th of April 2024.

5. To receive an update on the Levelling Up project

LB has tried to contact HC several times to find out when the results of the public consultation will be made public but has been unsuccessful, so no update is available.

LB attended an in-person meeting with DCC last week and provided feedback from Town Councillor's on ETP for the Signage Strategy that DCC are drafting for the new Dinan Way extension, DCC were grateful for the input provided.

TD met with DCC Councillor Andrea Davis, DCC Senior Transport Officer Rachel Phillips, Managing Director for Stagecoach Southwest Peter King and David Whiteway from GWR at the station forecourt and among other things spoke about the aspiration of a transport interchange. Stagecoach had previously stated that having a transport interchange behind the station would cause bus time constraints and not be commercially viable.

JP is concerned about the proposed closure of the subway and thought the consultation showed a lack of transparency. JP received a draft copy of the final bid application and noticed that a MOU was included that laid out the procedure of making changes on any ground as long as they were agreed. The Destination Exmouth Programme Board at DCC meet monthly for whose minutes are not available to the public, JP was concerned that ETC and EDDC representatives are not members of this board even though they are partners in the project.

Members had not heard of the Destination Exmouth Programme Board; JP submitted a FOI request to DCC to find out more information and provided members with a list of board members and where they meet monthly. TD assured members that the board will be investigated further, and more information will be released when the consultation results are in the public domain.

6. Any other business

AC wanted it noted that the van lifers are in their position due to the housing crisis.

7. Dates of 2024 meetings:

25th June

17th September

3rd December

The meeting closed at 11:53