

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Flooding & Land Drainage Working Party

Notes of the Zoom meeting held at 2pm on Tuesday 16th April 2024

Present

Steve Gazzard	TD	ETC & EDDC Councillor, Withycombe Raleigh Ward (Chairperson)
Pauline Stott	PS	ETC Councillor, Halsdon Ward
Graham Deasy	GD	ETC Councillor, Littleham Ward
Tim Dumper	TD	ETC Councillor, Halsdon Ward
Cherry Nicholas	CN	ETC Councillor, Brixington Ward
Mark Williamson	MW	ETC Councillor, Littleham Ward
Chetna Jones	CJ	ETC Deputy Town Clerk
Vicky Pyle	VP	EDDC, Engineering Assistant
Hazel Tranchant	HT	SWW, Asset Manager
Stuart Coles	SC	DCC Neighbourhood Highways Officer
Kris Inch	KI	EA, Flood and Coastal Risk Management Advisor
Kevin Ward	KW	EA, Water Company Account Manager (Southwest)
Mischka Hewins	MH	EA, Land and Water Team Leader (Devon)
Lisa Greenway	LG	ETC, Note Taker

Apologies

Louise Venables	LV	ETC Councillor, Town Ward
Andrew Colman	AC	ETC, Councillor, Brixington Ward
Ian Kirvan	IK	ETC Councillor, Brixington Ward
Olly Davey	OD	ETC Councillor, Town Ward
Tom Buxton-Smith	TBS	EDDC, Engineering Projects Manager
Thomas Aldridge	TA	DCC, Flood & Coastal Risk Management
Jay Harris	JH	SWW, SWW, Regional Operations Manager
Jon Snowden	JS	EA, Senior Advisor Public Health
Russell Craig	RC	EA, Flood Resilience Team Leader

1. Welcome, introduction and apologies

SG welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted, KW, MH and VP introduced themselves to members.

2. To approve the notes from the meeting on the 16th of January 2024

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

3. Matters arising

No matters arising.

4. To agree to recommend the amended Terms of Reference

A copy of the amended Terms of Reference was circulated prior to the meeting.

CJ explained that the Terms of Reference have been slightly amended to enable members to look at not just flooding but sewage and water quality risks in Exmouth. CJ advised that if

members agreed to the amendments a recommendation would go to Full Council in May to approve. GD Proposed and CN seconded that the amendments should be made, and all members were in favour. The proposal was carried, and the amended Terms of Reference will go to Full Council for adoption.

5. Update on Maer Rock investigations and Phear Park Pumping Station work

HT updated members that dye trace investigations will take place next week. The details are currently being finalised and members will be notified shortly of these details. The proposal has been approved by the EA and the MMO and the plan is to use tankers to collect the sea water which will be mixed with dye then discharged through the outfall pipe. Various CCTV surveys have taken place already and it has been identified that the pipe goes off the end of the rocks and dives down 45 degrees. The CCTV is consistent with the old drawings from the 1970's, so all the records are tying in together. The dye trace will confirm where the outfall is and divers will follow up with CCTV to check that the 45 degrees fall off is bending into the seabed.

GD queried the distance of the outfall end from the rocks as it is in the vicinity of a popular bathing area near the lifeboat station, HT will check the distance but assured GD that it was a good distance away from the rocks.

SWW Chief Operating Officer John Halsall did a YouTube video to let people know that the rising main work in Phear Park has now been completed and apologised for the tankering and delay in completion. The entire length between Phear Park pumping station and Maer Lane sewage treatment works has been either lined or replaced and testing has been completed.

HT updated members that the Maer Road rising main in the field before the treatment works which has historically burst has been repaired and replaced but will eventually need to be redirected into the new extended treatment works field. SWW are currently in discussion about how to replace and divert the rising main from the top half of the main road into the extended field.

HT provided members with details of Amp 7 and 8 phase work that has been completed or scheduled to start as well as upgrade works that have started or are being planned.

After the SWW roadshow in Exmouth GD had an informal follow up meeting with Grace Gladding who works in public affairs and asked if they would be prepared to talk to members of this working party about SWW Strategic Plans relevant to Exmouth. GG confirmed that they had indicated that they would be happy for a representative to talk to members about the effect of the strategy on Exmouth and the water quality. CJ will investigate this further and make any necessary arrangements.

CJ had attended a Devon Community Resilience workshop a few weeks ago where SWW representatives mentioned proposals to have a SWW presence in Exmouth through a shop/space and wondered if HT had any further information. HT informed members that drop-in sessions have been arranged to take place once a week over a 6-week period in Ocean, Exmouth, but the dates have not yet been confirmed.

SG thanked HT for the informative report and asked that thanks are passed on to SWW.

6. SWW: General updates

General updates were discussed in item 5.

7. EA: Tidal Defence update and general updates

KI had planned to provide an update on the tidal defence snagging issues, however the project manager has not been available so KI will send this over via email after the meeting.

KI explained that there was some confusion last week amongst the volunteers when the floodgates were closed by EDDC, as they did not receive any notifications to close the gates. EA duty staff currently call EDDC directly to inform them of the situation and what gates are required to be closed, EDDC then close the relevant gates. No formal messages are currently sent to volunteers as the scheme has not been handed over. Once the snagging issues are resolved the scheme will go live and the volunteers and everybody else will start receiving alert messages. KI will contact CJ before this happens as there will be a test run first.

KI was aware that some photos of floodgate one at Camperdown Terrace were posted on social media showing the floodgate open with partial flooding to the road which caused concern about why the gate was not closed. KI explained that the criteria required to close gate one was not met and there was no risk to property flooding. As this caused confusion, which could potentially cause reputational damage, EA will look at either doing more engagement or reduce the criteria for the gate closure to prevent water from crossing the threshold.

KI informed members that the post scheme modelling is underway but behind schedule, EA are looking to complete at the end of 2024. Once completed and signed off, the online flood maps will be updated allowing people to inform their insurance providers. Members will be notified of any updates going forward.

Upon invitation to attend the meeting EA asked CJ to identify areas of concerns:

- What action has EA taken with regards to the sewage incidents in December and January
- Water quality testing and results
- Addressing concerns that sea water contamination is affecting the health of people and dogs
- Any other updates of the work EA are doing that may affect Exmouth

MH advised that burst rising main spills are currently being investigated which should take a couple of months to complete and questions are being raised with SWW. Usual pre-bathing water inspections of SWW assets are currently taking place and should be in Exmouth in the next couple of weeks, twenty-two bathing water samples have been taken so far over the winter period, but the results have not been analysed yet. EA regulatory staff are currently still dealing with a large volume of Freedom of Information and environmental requests for information from a lot of groups and residents in Exmouth. The government announced that they want to dramatically increase the number of EA inspections of water companies that take place every year so a new specialist team in Devon and Cornwall will be formed who

will focus on water company inspections. The new team is due to start in June 2024 and their focus will be on inspecting sewage assets.

SG queried if the bathing water samples are taken from different areas along the seafront. KW advised that the samples are only taken from one place which has been identified as the highest density of bathing.

GD is aware that citizen water testers are testing as well as EA on agricultural, water courses, brooks and so on, and wanted to know whether EA consult with these testers like West Country Rivers Trust to compare or combine results. MH confirmed that EA teams work with these groups providing specific training so that they can provide the results and if they meet one of the trigger levels EA will go out and investigate based on the results received. EA are keen to work with other groups but must make sure that the testing is done in a legitimate, usable, and authentic way, hence the training provided.

CJ queried where results from investigations and water testing are published and if alerts could be set up so that members are notified of any updates or test results. MH is aware that bathing water sample test results which are taken during the bathing season are published on their website and social media but was unsure where the water trial testing results would be published, however once known CJ will be notified. KW added that successful outcomes of prosecutions of water companies are publicised online and covered on local/national news. EA are aiming for an additional 4,000 inspections nationally this year and up to 10,000 in 2025.

EA recently met with ESCAPE members to discuss their concerns and hope to make this a regular meeting, HT asked if SWW could join future meetings so that there would be a more joined up approach and more concerns could be answered. KW will pass this request onto the relevant team.

KW provided members with a brief update of the 5-year process and how they work with water companies to improve treatment works/assets and reduce risks to public health.

8. EDDC: General updates including Exmouth Beach Management Plan

VP attended on behalf of TBS and provided the following report:

- BMP: progressing well, beach surveys and condition surveys completed, information for business case shared from seawall repairs.
- Seawall repairs: behind schedule due to weather and additional emergency works, NCI hut due to be demolished today, slipway will be demolished soon as unsafe.
- DCC Carlton Hill drainage chambers: EDDC has confirmed that this was not an asset of theirs and has passed this on to DCC.
- Manor Gardens: drains are not working again, this is because the soakaway is blocked, will look at another temporary jetting and pump then design a more permanent solution replacing the drainage soakaway.
- EDDC closed the Flood scheme gates as per instructions from the EA. We are currently on a special action memo (SAM) which means EDDC close all gates. Hope to transition to finalised procedures soon, where residents will close their gates.

CJ noticed during the Waterfront WP walkabout that the Sideshore seawall repair board showed a smaller section being repaired than originally anticipated. PS was under the impression that they were only repairing a small section to finish before the tourist season starts then finish the other section from September when the tourist season is over. VP has not been involved in this project so will ask TBS to provide an update

9. DCC: Flood risk general update

No representatives were in attendance and no report was received.

10. DCC: Highways general update

SC provided the following update:

- The collapsed pipe in Marley Road will be replaced this year.
- The annual clean of highway gullies on the primary and secondary salt routes is 2 weeks behind schedule due to bad weather.
- DCC are working with EA to educate farmers that it is their responsibility to provide adequate drainage ditches to prevent surface water running off onto the highway.

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

CJ and SG thanked the external stakeholders for their excellent detailed updates and were grateful for their participation.

12. AOB

No other business

13. 2024 meetings:

16 July 2024
15 October 2024

The meeting ended at 15:12