EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Flooding & Water Quality Working Party

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

Present

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
Ian Kirvan	IK	ETC Councillor, Brixington Ward
Tom Buxton-Smith	TBS	EDDC, Engineering Projects Manager
Sarah Sharpe	SS	SWW, Community Engagement Officer
Hazel Tranchant	HT	SWW, Asset Manager
Stuart Coles	SC	DCC Neighbourhood Highways Officer
Chetna Jones	CJ	ETC Deputy Town Clerk
Lisa Greenway	LG	ETC, Note Taker

Apologies

Steve Gazzard	SG	ETC & EDDC Councillor, Withycombe Raleigh Ward (Chairperson)
Olly Davey	OD	ETC Councillor, Town Ward
Thomas Aldridge	TA	DCC, Flood & Coastal Risk Management
Philip Morgan	PM	DCC, Neighbourhood Highway Engineer
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)
Clarissa Newell	CN	EA, Land and Water Manager

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1. To elect a chair

CJ welcomed everyone to the meeting and requested nominations for the election of the chair of this working party. TD nominated GD, and this was seconded by IK. No further nominations were received. Members were asked to vote, and GD was duly elected as chair.

2. Welcome, introduction and apologies

GD welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted. GD thanked SG for chairing this WP for the past year.

3. To approve the notes from the meeting on the 16th of April 2024

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

4. Matters arising

No matters arising.

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

HT confirmed that the rising main in from Phear Park has been replaced and work has now finished. The Maer Rock investigations are also complete, and work has turned to the Maer flooding incidents. SWW were focusing on keeping any potential overflows to the Maer area rather than overflowing into the sea.

CJ queried what the outcome was from the second dye test investigations where the dye appeared visibly closer to Maer rocks. HT explained that there are two pipes in that area with an additional interconnected pipe. It appeared the levels were never high enough where the interconnecting pipe was used and so nothing was ever discharged into the outfall pipe. This is why the dye was visible closer to the rocks. TD stated that the dye test was to confirm or deny that the dye would dispel 150 metres off the rocks, however it was dispelled much closer to the rocks. HT clarified that two pipes go out across the rocks; one is the overflow pipe that dispelled further away from the rocks and the other pipe that dispelled closer to the rocks is the old watercourse pipe that has now been closed off to the outfall pipe.

6. SWW: General updates

SWW are looking at smaller scale additional works to increase the capacity of the outfall to reduce flooding on the Maer. Hydraulic modelling has taken place to show that with a clean pipe and everything functioning, flooding still occurs. HT provided members with options available to SWW to reduce flooding.

HT confirmed that the area would be protected while ongoing work was taking place by putting up fencing with a solid base to retain the flood volume in that area and manhole level sensors are in place with alarm systems to alert SWW teams to go out and proactively clean up any debris.

MW was keen to know how often the outfall has been used when the CSO reaches capacity in the past 12 months and will the work being carried out on the outfall pipe near Maer rocks be seen from the beach. HT advised that spill frequency is calculated using 12/24 counting so if spills are happening intermittently not all spills are counted individually. Any spills within 12 hours are counted as one spill and then any additional spills within the next 24 hours are counted as another spill. Maer Road stats confirm that 74 spills occurred in the past 12 months. HT thought it was too early to say if any work would be seen from the beach as SWW have not ascertained what work would take place.

PS queried if SWW could cope with the additional houses being built in Exmouth, HT reassured that any new developments discharge foul only into the network and SWW have taken this into account through their modelling which has a design horizon until 2055.

In the recent works carried out at Imperial Road CSO, not all the rising main has been replaced as some of the pipe was encased with concrete. Unfortunately, this has burst again, and work is currently taking place to replace it. HT will investigate this further and provide an update in due course.

SWW were hoping to start separation work at Denning Court yesterday for completion by the end of the school holidays. The outfall pipe from the Maer Lane treatment works out to Sandy Bay has been put in and SWW divers had planned to fit diffusers onto the end, but work has been slightly delayed, and it is now expected to start in October/November 2024.

CJ and TD queried if additional tankering would occur when the treatment works is upgraded, HT stated that the upgrade is to treat more sewage in Exmouth not sludge, so

additional tankering would not happen unless other sludge treatment centres could not take it.

GD shared concerns that the WaterFit colour coding is hard to read and suggested they are changed, HT confirmed that the colours match the national hub but will take it back with a request for colour change.

7. EA: Tidal Defence update and general updates

CJ provided the following Tidal Defence report from KI:

- The Exmouth post-scheme flood modelling is progressing, and we are expecting initial draft outputs in the coming weeks. It has taken us longer than anticipated to get to this stage due to difficulties in calibrating the model to make it as accurate as possible. We finally reached an acceptable level of calibration a few weeks ago so are now progressing with the core model runs. Following this, we will use the mode to evaluate and potentially improve the current flood gate groupings and closure criteria.
- The EA and EDDC had a meeting recently to discuss moving from the interim gate closure procedures that are currently in place, to the full procedures which would include operational messages being issued to the gate volunteers when closure of their gates is required. The target date for the full procedures going live is currently August 14th, 2024. We will be in touch with Exmouth Town Council soon to discuss the possible need for providing refresher training to the gate volunteers.

The following report was received from CN (EA):

I can update you that we are in discussions with SWW on improvements to the sewer network at Exmouth. We have a meeting this afternoon with ESCAPE group to update them on our progress.

My colleagues in our Flood and Coastal Risk Management can report the following items:

- EDDC led Exmouth Beach Management Plan (BMP) options workshop at Exmouth Town Hall this Thursday 18 July
- EA has approved £1.7 million grant funding toward £2.8 million total funding for EDDC Exmouth seawall repairs following recent failure along Queens Drive
- Ongoing EA project to finalise post-scheme mapping following completion of Exmouth Tidal Defence Scheme in 2023
- EA looking to progress update to existing Exe Estuary FCERM Strategy in 2025 for delivery by 2027. Consultation will progress in 2025/26

CJ and GD attended a SWW BeachWise Forum where they spoke to Paul McNie regarding water quality in Exmouth. They discussed Littleham Brook and PM asked if we were aware if any water testing had taken place here as the poor water quality was not necessarily a SWW issue and could be a multitude of things such as agricultural wash off or run off from the highway. He confirmed he would email the EA and they have been following this up.

EA's latest bathing water sample results for Devon were provided by MH and circulated to members in his absence. MH also provided the following report:

The results for Exmouth and Sandy Bay bathing waters are included in the results circulated, along with sample results from monitoring of the Littleham Brook at three locations.

The latest samples taken on the 9th of July, show elevated bacteriological levels that are likely associated with the recent wet weather. Investigation into the sources of these levels continue and we will likely conduct microbial source tracking on these samples to determine the source, i.e. human, ruminant, dog.

8. EDDC: General updates including Exmouth Beach Management Plan

The BMP engagement event will be taking place on Thursday the 18th of July 2024 in the Town Hall. TBS confirmed that everything is progressing well, and they are still on target for a January 2025 finished document.

A higher than anticipated central government grant from the Environment Agency was received for the seawall repairs. This information has been fed into the BMP to see if there are any other avenues for funding. CJ queried if there was likely to be any funding left to implement anything that comes out of the BMP. TBS will provide an answer in due course.

The seawall is complete and has reopened. EDDC are now trying to finish the slipway which should be completed in a week's time. Now that phase 1 is nearly complete, phase 2 will start in mid-October 2024.

EDDC will need to put in a capital bid for new drainage system in Manor Gardens as the existing drainage is too damaged to repair. If the bid is successful, installation will start in the next financial year.

EDDC, EA and ETC are working together on the Tidal Flood Scheme and hope to go live soon with the correct system in place to send messages out to residents to close the gates. CJ received queries from Morton Cresent residents about ongoing maintenance of the gates. TBS confirmed that EDDC inspect the gates annually and provided members with the EDDC email address to log any additional work that is required.

CJ has reported lots of problems to EA after the last gate training day but has not received an update. TBS will contact KI to see if the issues have been remedied. GD thanked TBS and his colleagues for all the work that has gone into the seawall.

9. DCC: Flood risk general update

No representatives were in attendance and no report was received.

10. DCC: Highways general update

SC updated members that the drainage scheme in Marley Road was completed in May although it was slightly delayed due to a longer section of pipe being replaced than originally anticipated

IK requested that DCC look at the drainage ditch in Gorse Lane which no longer gets cleaned out as a resident keeps dumping rubble there and the water is now lifting the road surface. SC is aware of this request, unfortunately this ditch is not part of the highway and there is no landowner on Land Registry. SC thinks that this will fall to DCC to rectify as the highway drainage goes into this ditch. SC will chase this up with the contractor although they usually complete this type of work in the winter.

MW queried the road closure on Albion Street. SC confirmed that this is a SWW issue resulting in road closure to fix a burst water main and sewer repair which has affected the highway gullies on the corner of George Street. HT will investigate.

CJ receives lots of complaints about overgrowth in water courses in front of people's properties, especially in Littleham Village and would like DCC to provide a message that can be passed onto residents. SC provided the following link to the DCC land charges record which identifies if the land is part of the public highway, if so, it can be reported online through the DCC website:

https://www.devon.gov.uk/environment/common-land-and-town-and-village-greens/land-charges

SC confirmed that if there is no registered landowner DCC can take responsibility or if the land is privately owned the flood risk team can contact the landowner to request action.

SC urged members to look at the Riparian ownership and living with water leaflet that is available on their website using the following link:

Riparian Owner Responsibility - Flood Risk Management (devon.gov.uk)

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

GD provided members with a brief outline of the BeachWise Forum which he attended in June with CJ and was impressed with a swimmer's app called MyCoast developed by a lady called Jo Murrey which provides real time information for swimmers. Unfortunately, it is currently only available in Cornwall for now. CJ thanked SWW for organising the forum.

12. AOB

No other business

13. 2024 meetings:

15 October 2024

The meeting ended at 15:33