EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Town Maintenance Overview Working Party

Notes of the meeting held on Thursday 10th October 2024 at 10am via Zoom.

Present

Councillor Ian Kirvan	IK	Exmouth Town Council (Chair)
Councillor Olly Davey	OD	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Maddy Chapman	MC	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor David Poor	DP	Exmouth Town Council
Chetna Jones	CJ	Exmouth Town Council
Sam Dorman (note taker)	SD	Exmouth Town Council

Apologies

Councillor Dianne Conduit	DC	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Joy Whipps	JW	Exmouth Town Council

1. **Welcome and apologies**

IK welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies were noted as above.

2. **To approve the notes of the meeting held on 12th September 2024 and any matters arising therein**

The notes of the previous meeting held on 12th September 2024 were proposed for approval by MC, seconded by OD, and agreed by all.

Matters arising –

Action from Item 6 – CJ to arrange a meeting with Steven from Idverde and to go back to the resident with outcome.

CJ has made several attempts to email Steve at Idverde but has not received a response.

Some grass cutting has occurred, but there are no updates on specific tasks, especially concerning the top of Dinan Way.

CJ plans to call Steven to clarify the situation, as emails seem to be delivered but unanswered. The resident inquiry remains unresolved, pending communication with Steven.

ACTION: CJ to call Steven from Idverde.

3. To receive an update on graffiti within Exmouth

IK raised concerns about a recent increase in graffiti, particularly on bus shelters, and noted that about half of the graffiti listed in previous communications remained unaddressed.

CJ explained that staffing shortages had hindered removal efforts, as workers were focused on footpath maintenance.

IK specifically highlighted a bus shelter with graffiti that had been there for two months, expressing frustration at the delay. CJ agreed to prioritise graffiti removal in the next couple of days. IK will email CJ with a list of graffiti.

ACTION: IK to email CJ with a list of graffiti.

4. To receive an update on grass cutting

CJ provided an update, indicating that to date three cuts have been completed and paid for and clarified that payments are made only once the completed work has been signed off. She expressed concern over lack of communication from Steven from Idverde who has not responded to emails and planned to reach out via a phone call.

Some areas, such as the road junction near the shops and sections along Bradham Lane, were reported as missed or inadequately cut.

Members discussed the strimming work, noting it wasn't performed as agreed.

The possibility of postponing the sixth cut to spring was discussed and would be part of the current financial year.

5. To receive an update on general Town Maintenance work

Tony has successfully completed a refresher course on Chapter 8 training, which is now valid for five years (previously lifelong). Devon County Council covered the costs for the course, which was cancelled once due to Tony's injury.

Recent wet weather has disrupted planned activities. The team has focused on road weed clearing and footpath work in the past weeks. Statutory in-house training is scheduled for the team.

Going forward the team will focus on annual maintenance work and winter planting.

Members discussed grass cutting on Marine Way as the previous contractor used was no longer available. It was agreed that CJ will approach other contractors for this work.

Members discussed issues with overgrowth on Pound Lane and this included the presence of protected slow worms' which is complicating completing maintenance work. Access issues and nearby parked cars also makes it difficult to complete the work. Conversations with DCC may be required to put in a temporary parking order to complete the work properly.

Members suggested names of local contractors to contact regarding Marine Way annual cut.

6. **To discuss types of equipment and costs for improving and assisting with road weed clearing**

Member discussed making road weed clearing more efficient by using equipment such as a multi-use road sweeper but was concerned whether they would struggle with dense and wet debris, leading to inefficiency and mess.

However, from the research CJ has carried out, a compact sweeper is likely to cope with the work. It was noted that driving licenses may require additional qualifications for vehicles over 3.5 tonnes.

Members discussed reaching out to neighbouring councils (like Exeter and Newton Abbot) to learn about their weed management practices and they may be using.

Members discussed storage for any new equipment considering current space limitations.

CJ will arrange for further information about various machines and their costs including maintenance.

ACTION: CJ to email details of various models and associated costs

7. **To receive an update on the presentation by Devon County Council at the DALC conference**

CJ shared insights from the DALC Conference. Donna Manson is the new CEO, replacing Phil Norrey.
DCC is prioritising highway repairs. They've secured an additional £12 million for highways and anticipate further funding from HS2 funding.
Road conditions were addressed, and it was said that for A roads there were less than 3% that are in poor condition. However, it was very different for B roads and unclassified roads. These were deteriorating significantly, with the number in poor condition nearing 20-29%.

DCC aims to improve cooperation with town and parish councils for local maintenance and there were discussions on enabling councils to handle pothole repairs and other tasks.

Members voiced concerns over DCC's response times and resource constraints affecting service delivery.

8. Any other business

MC raised concerns about the overgrown hedges in Brixington Park encroaching onto Brixington Lane and was specifically concerned about the brambles blocking the pavement and posing safety risks to pedestrians.

Members discussed the frustration with EDDC customer service responses and MC said she will report issues directly to the Parks and Countryside team.

CJ confirmed that Exmouth in Bloom received several awards, including:

- A Gold Award for the Tiny Forest project.
- Additional trophies for environmental contributions, best pub display, and youth initiatives.

The judges praised the strong collaboration between councils and voluntary groups, noting significant achievements in sustainable planting for climate change in Exmouth. They highlighted the town's sensory garden and the newly reinstated rockery in Manor Gardens as excellent examples of sustainable drought-tolerant planting.

The judges appreciated various floral projects, including:

- A wildflower bank along Marine Way.
- The station roundabout and cobbled verge areas.
- Improvements made through the Lambeth Walk project.

CJ spoke about the plans for winter planting and the maintenance of flower towers.

In early November the plants will be replaced in the flower towers, with ongoing care for existing beds until frost occurs.

A significant cut-back of overgrown plants is planned for early next year

9. To note the date of the next meeting.

14th November 2024 – 10am. Reminder - a meeting will not be held in December.