EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Town Maintenance Overview Working Party

Notes of the meeting held on Thursday 14th November 2024 at 10am via Zoom.

Present

Councillor Ian Kirvan	IK	Exmouth Town Council (Chair)
Councillor Maddy Chapman	MC	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Dianne Conduit	DC	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Joy Whipps	JW	Exmouth Town Council
Chetna Jones	CJ	Exmouth Town Council
Sam Dorman (note taker)	SD	Exmouth Town Council

Apologies

Councillor Olly Davey	OD	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 10th October 2024 and any matters arising therein**

The notes of the previous meeting held on 10th October 2024 were proposed for approval by MC, seconded by IK, and agreed by all.

Matters arising –

Action from Item 8 – Any other business

MC confirmed that the hedge at Brixington Park had been cut.

3. **To receive an update on graffiti within Exmouth**

Members discussed the current status of graffiti in the area, IK reported that there had been a significant decrease in graffiti sightings, with only minor tags observed. The issue with “this is not a bin” tags, which had been relentless previously, appears to have subsided.

4. **To receive an update on grass cutting**

CJ provided background information on grass cutting services and the contract with Idverde, and how the service had been unsatisfactory due to delays and incomplete work. However, CJ mentioned that the contractor had made efforts to improve,

including hiring someone to handle administrative tasks and checking the work more frequently. Members agreed to continue monitoring the situation and push for better service if necessary.

Concerns were raised about the quality and timeliness of the cuts. Several areas have been missed or inadequately trimmed. Strimming along roadside edges has not been adequately carried out, and there is damage to manhole covers. It was noted that more attention to detail is required, especially regarding the trimming around barriers and road signs.

Members discussed the resident enquiry regarding the grass cutting between Shakespear Way and Byron Way and IK reported that this section was uncut as of yesterday.

SG added that the recent cut was better than the previous one in his area but noted that the paths were becoming narrower due to the grass growth. Members discussed two main solutions for addressing the overgrowth:

- Strimming the paths back however there's concern that doing so might break up the fragile footpath surface.
- Weed spraying using a drip spray as a more controlled method, to kill back the overgrowth without damaging the footpath.

JW was asked to check if the grass had been cut in her area and to report back to CJ.

CJ suggested that they might need to consider adding areas currently part of the visibility displays cut by Devon County Council.

Members also discussed the need to trim the grass around the steps at the bottom of Marpool Hill and the possibility of removing that task from the contractors.

ACTION: JW to email CJ with update on the grass cutting in her area.

5. **To receive an update on Marine Way grass cutting**

CJ discussed the challenges faced in finding a suitable contractor for the annual grass cutting of Marine Way. She mentioned that one contractor's quote was too high, and the other two potential contractors did not provide quotes. As a result, a further quote was obtained at a cost of £936. Members agreed that this was a reasonable cost and decided to proceed with this quote.

6. **To receive an update on investigations regarding potential road sweepers**

IK provided background information on the issue of roadside weeds, which have been a problem for years due to the lack of spraying by Devon County Council. Members discussed the need for a more efficient and effective solution for weed removal.

CJ conducted research on potential options and considered various models which included the Hako City Master and the Bucher Johnson, weighing factors such as cost, maintenance, and performance. CJ highlighted the possibility of leasing the machines, which would include repair and maintenance costs. She mentioned that the machines are not cheap and may not last for very long, with a typical lifespan of five years. Electric versions of the machines were discussed but members decided against them due to their lack of power and high cost.

CJ discussed her plans to book demos for the Hako City Master and the Bucher Johnson in January to assess their effectiveness. Members discussed the potential benefits of these machines, including the ability to interchange attachments for sweeping and weed ripping, and the potential to save time and money by reducing the need for multiple staff members. However, there were concerns about the cost and the need for the Town Council to approve the expenditure.

Members discussed the budget for acquiring a road sweeper. The cost of the acquisition, including repair and maintenance, was estimated at £45,000 per year. It was suggested that the working party should ask for more funds to go into the budget, as the current budget of £30,000 put in last year towards acquiring equipment and expanding the Town Maintenance team would not be sufficient for their needs. MC suggested the budget should be increased to £50,000 to cover the costs of acquiring equipment and replacing tyres and other parts rather than building the reserves for expanding the team. Members agreed to this proposal. They also discussed the possibility of moving a town maintenance meeting to after the two demos scheduled for the 8th and 15th January. CJ suggested this to allow for discussion after the demos. Members agreed to this proposal as well.

CJ reminded members that a recommendation to the Town Council would be needed, subject to due diligence and demonstrations to verify the increase in productivity.

IK proposed **"To recommend to the Town Council that subject to carrying out due diligence and demonstrations to verify the increase in productivity of the town maintenance team to improve the overall appearance and cleanliness of the town, that the town council acquires by contract hire a road sweeper and associated attachments at a cost of £45,000 per year (including Repair & Maintenance).** The proposal was seconded by JW, and the vote was agreed by all. The working party members planned to support IK during the budget discussions and the Town Council meeting.

7. To receive an update on general Town Maintenance work

JW expressed concern about the overgrown weeds on Fairview Terrace and the need for maintenance. IK clarified that the responsibility for maintenance lies with the

property owners and suggested reporting the issue to Devon County Council. CJ updated members on the ongoing maintenance work, including the clearing of roads and flower towers, and the plans for footpath work and the winter festival. Lastly, IK raised a concern about the need for the footpath on Brixington Lane to be swept, and CJ agreed to schedule this work.

8. Any other business

CJ discussed the process of registering the town council as a waste carrier and applying for tickets to dispose of van loads of green waste. She also mentioned that the tickets were posted physically, and suggested getting several at once to keep the postage cost down. The working party also discussed the issue of dog mess on footpaths and pavements, with DC expressing concern about public health hazards. It was advised that DC contact East Devon District Council REACT team for assistance in clearing up the mess.

DC also raised the issue of yellow barriers left behind after gas works on Douglas Avenue opposite Mayfield Drive. CJ suggested contacting DCC highway officer Emma Stamp to remove the barriers.

9. To note the date of the next meeting.

CJ reminded members that there will not be a meeting held in December and the next meeting will be held on Thursday 16th January 2024.