EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Festival and Events Working Party

Notes of the virtual meeting held at 1000 on Thursday 12th December 2024 via zoom

Present

Cllr Joy Whipps (Chair)	JW	Exmouth Town Council
Jess Magill	JM	Exmouth Town Council
Lisa Bowman	LB	Exmouth Town Council
Lisa Greenway	LG	Exmouth Town Council

Apologies:

Cllr Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Nick Hookway	NH	Exmouth Town Council
Chetna Jones	CJ	Exmouth Town Council

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

JW welcomed attendees to the meeting.

2. To approve the notes from the meeting on the 24th of October & matters arising

Members approved the notes of the meeting held on the 21st of November and there were no matters arising.

3. Wash up for the Winter Festival

JW was generally pleased with the overall atmosphere of the event but noted that the band had stopped at times along the parade route, it was noted that this could have occurred as the band members find it difficult to play the wind instruments whilst walking, which could explain some of the pauses. LB observed that the positioning of the band in the middle of the parade contributed to a less impactful experience for those in the Strand, it was suggested that the band should have been at the front of the parade when entering the Strand to create a stronger, more noticeable presence.

JW suggested that next year the language schoolteachers should be briefed prior to the parade to ensure that their students remained within the parade queue and congregate at the Church with the other schools rather than halfway down the driveway to maintain the flow and organisation of the parade. JM noted that road closures may be necessary for next year's event to ensure smooth logistics and safety.

JM was concerned about securing Christmas entertainers for next year's event as performers are often booked well in advance, a decision on the 2025 date would need to be made soon

In terms of activities and stalls, JM noted that the activities had worked well and that the event could potentially benefit from having more stalls in the future. LB stated that there are logistical issues with electric hookups in the Strand which would need to be addressed if more stalls attended.

4. To discuss the Jingle & Mingle community event

The event will be held in the Christmas Village marquee on 18th December 2024 from 10am to 4pm. So far, 40 organisations have signed up, requests for tombola's or selling items have been declined as the event is not for street trading but to focus on showcasing what organisations do and recruit volunteers.

ETC staff and councillors will have tables to promote Beach Wheelchairs, TIS, Community Resilience, Climate Emergency, and Exmouth Town Council's roles. JM expressed interest in promoting the festival, and LB suggested using the ETC stall to encourage people to sign up as volunteers. If successful, the event could become an annual occurrence. LB also has an aspiration to create a legacy booklet containing the contact details and descriptions of community associations.

The event is being promoted through the Christmas Village and via ETC's social media channels.

5. To discuss the Summer Festival 2025

JM confirmed that the budget for next year is smaller due to the lack of involvement from Sideshore. There are still unanswered questions about using Queen's Drive as a third space and after JM reviewed the costs of operating two sites versus three, it seems manageable with two, but not with three unless additional funding is secured. A key concern is that losing the third site would significantly reduce opportunities for live music performances. The Strand doesn't suit all types of music, especially the edgier or less family-friendly kinds. Manor Gardens is more suitable for family-friendly music, losing the third space would limit the range of performances directed at young adults.

JM has been exploring an idea that involves an oral history project focused on Exmouth residents with ties to the sea, such as fishermen and dock workers. JM hopes to work with some of the schools and the Exmouth Shanty Men to turn stories into songs, people will be singing the songs of the lives of people from Exmouth and then performing them at the festival.

LB is aware of a project currently being run by Exeter University in collaboration with Exe Estuary Partnership involving a trail that starts in Lympstone, goes through Exmouth, and passes by various locations, including the sailing club. The project includes a series of oral history interviews, which have already been completed. The trail will be supported by a leaflet, and there are plans to install a mural, with a local artist having been commissioned for this task. The trail will also feature viewpoints where participants can scan a code and listen to interviews, which share stories of life on the estuary. The project is expected to launch in April, and TIS has been involved in helping promote it. LB will provide JM with contact details for the anthropologist who is working on the project as this could potentially be tied into the festival.

JM has plans to support fringe events, such as the Bicton pub who have previously closed the road to create an on street stage. The deaf school is enthusiastic about getting involved again and potentially sponsoring, they are preparing for a big program in 2026 to celebrate their 300th anniversary and are considering hosting a deaf rave that allows participants to "hear" the beat through special vibration t-shirts. They are interested in holding the event in the Manor Gardens but as JM has some concerns that it would take time away from other live music programming, so the Pavilion is also being considered.

6. Any other business

No other business.

7. Date of next meeting 23rd January 2024

JW was unable to attend on this day, so the meeting was rescheduled to the 16th of January 2025.

The meeting ended at 10.42