EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Flooding & Water Quality Working Party

Notes of the Zoom meeting held at 2pm on Tuesday 14th January 2025

Present

Graham Deasy	GD	ETC Councillor, Littleham Ward (Chairperson)
Pauline Stott	PS	ETC Councillor, Halsdon Ward
Mark Williamson	MW	ETC Councillor, Littleham Ward
Tom Buxton-Smith	TBS	EDDC, Engineering Projects Manager
Scott Cummings	SCu	EDDC, Engineering Projects Officer
Chris Khan	CK	EA, Flood Risk Management Officer
Sarah Sharpe	SS	SWW, Local Government Liaison Officer
Jenny Eamer	HT	SWW, Waste Water Service Operations Manager
Thomas Aldridge	TA	DCC, Flood & Coastal Risk Management Officer
Stuart Coles	SC	DCC, Neighbourhood Highways Officer
Philip Morgan	PM	DCC, Neighbourhood Highway Engineer, Exeter Highway Team
Chetna Jones	CJ	ETC Deputy Town Clerk
Lisa Greenway	LG	ETC, Note Taker

Apologies

Steve Gazzard	SG	ETC & EDDC Councillor, Withycombe Raleigh Ward
Tim Dumper	TD	ETC Councillor, Halsdon Ward
Kris Inch	KI	EA, Flood and Coastal Risk Management Advisor
Hazel Tranchant	HT	SWW, Asset Manager
Alan Burrows	AB	SWW, Head of Local Government Liaison

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1. Welcome, introduction and apologies

GD welcomed members to the meeting, apologies were noted and members introduced themselves to JE, SCu and CK.

2. To approve the notes from the meeting on the 1st of October 2024

Members agreed the notes were an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Matters arising

No matters arising.

It was agreed that the EDDC and EA updates be brought forward on the agenda as both TBS and CK needed to leave early.

4. EDDC: General updates

TBS provided updates on the sea wall project in Exmouth, stating that the large sheet pile wall is progressing well and should be completed within a week or two. He also mentioned that the drainage issue at Manor Gardens has been approved for funding and will be addressed in the coming months. CJ raised concerns about the maintenance of floodgates, which TBS assured would be addressed before the next winter. PM informed members that the brackets for the highway drains (often referred to as donuts) on the beach should be installed soon.

5. EA: General updates

CK shared his role in the flood resilience team and an upcoming exercise with Exmouth community resilience volunteers on January 27th. He encouraged participation and offered to answer any questions.

6. Update on SWW upgrade work in Exmouth

JE discussed the progress of the Maer Road project, highlighting that the first phase was completed and connected just before Christmas. SWW has been monitoring the situation and it all seems to be working well,

They are currently assessing the bottom two-thirds of the rising main and are planning to start phase 2 in April, pending permits and permissions. JE also mentioned this included work on replacing the bottom section of the pipe, however this is still under discussion as to whether the whole pipe will be replaced or some parts re-lined.

SWW will review the condition of the original rising main in order to ascertain if the new pump regime from the Pump station upgrade can operate at an increased rate of 700 litres per second. In storm conditions the pumps will operate at this flow rate continuously.

Although the modelling work does show that the new pump regime will reduce flood risk from less to one in a year to one in 9 years. Climate change will require further modelling work on this to determine the benefits of upsizing or duelling at Maer Road outfall. Further work will take place in order to check potential rainfall events with tide events to make sure that SWW has the right design and the right solution in place.

When asked about flow rates and overflows now that phase one is complete JE said “We have been looking at the Maer Road pump station itself, doing a number of upgrades there, so part of that was about power, resilience, and another part was upgrading the pumps to be able to put more flow up to the Maer Lane sewage treatment works. Obviously, what we don't want to do is put that through while we’re doing that repair work. Even if we move forwards with upgrading the pumps, we don't want to put that pressure on the existing main. So, we're monitoring that at the moment. In storm conditions the flow rate is quite high, about 600 litres per second now. We are monitoring that, and the likelihood is we will not allow the pumps to pump too fast by using our variable speed functionality to adjust how much flow does go up the main. We won't be increasing that flow if we feel that that bottom section of rising main will be at risk of another burst by putting that additional flow through until the repairs are completed.”

The team also discussed the potential impact of the Maer Road pump station upgrade on the car park, the impact on tourism, and the need for monitoring flows and spills. JE confirmed that project planning will take place to ensure the mobilisation at Maer Road will be minimal.

JE mentioned that they are working on increasing the capacity at the Maer Lane sewage treatment works and that the environmental impact of the outfall will be less than if they were to go straight out onto Maer Rocks. Monitoring of flows are spills are all in place, in line with legislation.

JE was thanked for proving the very detailed technical update.

7. Exmouth Beach Management Plan – ETC response to the consultation

PS confirmed that a workshop took place on the 18th of July at the town hall to discuss draft proposals for a long-term plan to protect Exmouth beach and prevent the sea wall from collapsing in the future. Since this workshop there has been a public consultation held on 26th November 2024 and another to be held on 30th January 2025. Members discussed the progress of the Exmouth Beach Management Plan, with the Town Council confirming its response to the consultation and support for option two based on the current situation.

8. SWW: General updates

JE confirmed contractors were out analysing the sewage pipe across Withycombe Brook, and that a CCTV camera was used within the pipe to identify a small tear at a join. Repair work was scheduled for the upcoming weekend and has now been repaired. Members discussed the importance of communication and updates on the progress of projects so that the community can be kept informed.

9. DCC: Flood risk general update

TA informed members that due to long term sickness the modelling work to identify flooding in the town centre is delayed.

A discussion took place on the focus of DCC's involvement with managing water runoff from highways and its impact on sewer systems. TA clarified that their primary concern is flood risk management, not pollution. He also mentioned potential partnerships with SWW for surface water separation and flood risk management improvements.

10. DCC: Highways general update

SC advised members that there was not much to report.

PM shared that the capital budget for maintenance jobs is looking healthy, and he is hopeful about getting some quick turnaround on smaller jobs.

MW raised a concern about SWW's communication and management during a recent closure of Littleham Road and Maer Lane being impassable due to flooding. This resulted in considerable difficulties accessing East Littleham.

PM, GD, and MW discussed the flooding issue on Maer Lane in the area between Gore Lane and Maer Farm. PM agreed to investigate the maintenance schedule for the area and consider putting it on a 6-month cleaning schedule. He also noted that the area is in a flood zone, as per the 1 in 30-year flood event line on Carbon Tech. PM committed to looking into the maintenance issue and provide an update to CJ. MW will send a holding reply to the resident who raised the matter, referring the issue to DCC and PM's investigation.

CJ emphasised the importance of residents logging their problems with DCC to ensure proper tracking and action. PM and TA confirmed that if a problem is recurring, they will clear it more frequently once they are aware of it.

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

No matters were raised.

12. AOB

GD reported that the Town Council approved a budget for a survey to assess the potential impact on tourism following the August sewage incident. GD confirmed discussions are ongoing with potential data collection organisations.

GD attended the Water Summit meeting on the 12th of December 2024.

GD reported that the Water (Special Measures) Bill is currently going through Parliament, and he sent his personal written evidence to the Select Committee via David Reed MP.

CJ discussed a request from SWW about their potential daily presence in the town through a pop-up shop. The council will discuss this further and provide feedback.

13. Next meeting

29th April 2025

The meeting ended at 15:19