EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Party

Notes of the meeting held at 6pm on Tuesday 14th January 2025 in the Town Hall Chamber

Present

Councillor Tim Dumper	TD	Exmouth Town Council (Chair)
Councillor Louise Venables	LV	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Mike Rosser	MR	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Dan Wilson	DW	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Olly Davey	OD	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Andrew Woodward	AW	Exmouth Town Council
Lisa Bowman	LB	Exmouth Town Council
Zoey Cooper	ZC	Exmouth Town Council
Catherine Causley	CC	East Devon District Council
Lou Doliczny	LD	Transition Exmouth

Apologies
No apologies noted

1. **Approval of previous meeting notes held on 12th December 2024 and any matters arising therein**

The notes of the previous meeting were proposed for approval by MR, seconded by OD, and agreed by all.

Matters arising:

There was a question from MR regarding the progress of requesting additional support for ZC. LB confirmed that this was indeed on the agenda for the next HR meeting but stressed the importance of a holistic approach to staffing needs across the council, especially in light of the requirement for a strategic plan and an updated Neighbourhood Plan. LB explained that forward-thinking staffing was required to manage upcoming challenges, such as biodiversity net gain legislation and interpreting planning applications. The importance of addressing ecological issues in any reorganisation or policy changes was stressed.

There was consensus that the council must remain adaptable and future-ready.

2. **To receive an update from EDDC**

CC is still working on the Climate Change Action plan strategy. At present, she is dealing with immediate priorities, but there is a delay in some decisions due to external factors, such as local government restructuring. A new support officer, Lewis, has joined, following a rigorous recruitment process. He will focus on legacy projects and partnerships.

Carbon literacy training is ongoing. There will be a new initiative to support Town and Parish councils with advice on how to tackle the climate and nature emergency, with an emphasis on showcasing practical actions that are already being taken in neighbouring towns. Best practices from other areas (and the value of reaching out to local community groups) will also be shared to encourage progress.

There was an update on cycle parking, with 28 new bike parking spots installed in 2024. This initiative was seen as a quick, low-maintenance project with immediate benefits.

3. **To receive an update from Transition Exmouth**

Transition is continuing to network and support other community groups in Exmouth. They are currently working on being eligible for GiftAid. They've received significant donations and are planning how to use them in the year ahead, along with expanding their staff and community involvement.

One of the groups they are supporting (with insurance) is the “Tiny Forest”. Planting of a new Tiny Forest will take place on Friday 17th January 2025 from 10am onwards in Brixington Park. Yonder Oak Wood has x2 tree-planting sessions on (18th January 2025 and 14th February 2025).

Additional funding is being provided for the "Friends of the River Exe" project. Efforts to formalise an agreement with Sustainable Tiverton are underway. Additionally, there’s a resurgence of the Mushroom Food Alliance project. Work on food resilience is progressing, including community events like soup-making and bread-making sessions to foster local food networks.

There is an involvement with a local Climate Choir, part of a national movement aimed at promoting environmental causes through music.

Transition is looking towards hiring more paid staff, via funding applications.

4. **To receive a brief update from ZC regarding projects and resources for 2025:**

Waste – relaunch the Exmouth cup (spring); reusable period products and real nappy project (ongoing); cigarette butt ballot bins (press release)

Plans are underway to relaunch the Exmouth Cup in the Spring. A survey has been sent to local cafes, and an intern will conduct interviews to refine the list of participating cafes.

The working party will continue supporting initiatives like reusable nappies and period products.

We now have three cigarette ballot bins and ZC plans to take photos of the two new bins for promotion, with a press release to follow.

Samudra (recycling collection "sea monster" at Sideshore) needs some maintenance since she has been out all winter. ZC will contact one of its creators for TLC and may move it to a new location, possibly outside Sideshore on the grassy area instead of the plaza.

Energy – retrofit project with Eco Advice

Our primary focus will be on the retrofit projects that Harry Bonnell has previously discussed with the working party. The project is now moving forward, with plans to finalise the application process in the coming days. A meeting is scheduled for tomorrow to further discuss the details.

There was discussion about promoting energy-saving advice for households, especially during the winter. Devon Communities Together offers advice through home visits and warm spaces in libraries. There was a suggestion to use social media and community spaces like

libraries and doctor's surgeries to share this information. Some limitations exist regarding linking from the office Exmouth Town Council website (although it may be possible to link to the EDDC one that also contains valuable information on this topic). .

Travel – support the Active Travel group (ongoing)

The working party will continue supporting the Exmouth Active Travel Group throughout the year. A potential funding opportunity for projects promoting sustainable travel is available through a group called "Nature Serve." A meeting is planned for next Tuesday to discuss this, with a deadline for applying by the end of the month.

There will be a focus on identifying barriers to active travel, such as walking and cycling. Members want to shift the focus from infrastructure to mindset changes to encourage more sustainable travel. There was some concern about duplicating efforts with other local initiatives, like public rights of way group (PROW) and the Transport Partnership. It was agreed that attendees from the Exmouth Active Travel Group would share a short meeting update with the various other groups.

Food – Green Cuisine Expo (spring)

To support the signing of the plant-based treaty, we plan to revisit the Green Cuisine Expo, which was postponed from last year. The event is potentially scheduled for Spring and aims to be a larger gathering, involving the Salvation Army, the museum, and possibly the nearby pub. There are also considerations to close the road to create a festival atmosphere.

Film Screening

ZC discussed the possibility of hosting a film screening of “II could never go vegan” at Scott cinema, with a focus on reaching a broader audience, including non-vegans. There was consideration of incentivising attendees to bring a non-vegan friend, though how to do this was unclear. The cost to license the film and host the event at the cinema is £400, which was seen as reasonable. LV suggested inviting Dr. Alan Desmond, a local consultant gastroenterologist, to participate in a Q&A after the screening, which could further engage the audience. Members agreed unanimously that hosting the event at a cinema could expand their reach by attracting more people, beyond their usual network.

Natural environment – tbd

There hasn’t been a concrete plan formulated for the rest of the year regarding the natural environment. The tree forum will take place every six months, with a date already scheduled.

Community engagement – ongoing

Community engagement will be ongoing, especially for events.

Comedy workshop with Maggie Irving

Maggie had originally planned to run 3-4 comedy sessions, but she did not secure funding from Arts and Culture East Devon for the full series.

Instead, the CEE working party has agreed to fund her first pilot workshop, titled "What's So Funny," which will be held at Ocean on February 19th.

If this initial session is successful, she may run additional workshops in the future.

A poster has been created for promotion. The event is open for sign-ups, and attendees are encouraged to participate.

Carbon Literacy training

New dates for the carbon literacy training have been sent out, with a minimum of six participants require – ideally, three councillors and three community group representatives.

The training sessions are scheduled for two mornings (9 AM to 1 PM) on Tuesday and Thursday.

The training is aimed at helping participants understand their carbon footprint and make pledges to reduce it. Participants receive a digital banner to show they are carbon literate.

There is interest from Sidmouth and Exmouth councillors and community representatives to participate.

Attendees are encouraged to respond to a poll to sign up for their preferred dates.

Newsletters

The newsletter has been sent out quarterly for the past year, and the subscriber list has doubled since the start, which is a positive development.

Social Media

We are receiving considerably more engagement and views on our social media platforms.

Star Council Award update

The council has been shortlisted as a finalist in the Star Council Award's Climate Response category, with the winner to be announced on February 25th at an afternoon reception at the House of Lords.

Due to this, the next meeting, scheduled for February 25th, will need to be rescheduled.

Only one representative from the council was initially accepted to attend. If there are more spots available, TD felt that a councillor should attend.

5. **Resources – work experience with Annabelle Stidwell; Exeter University internship with David Parslow; potential additional Exeter Uni research project**

Annabelle Stidwell:

Annabelle, a graduate with a first-class degree in ecology, conservation, and environment from the University of Sussex, has joined the team for work experience. She will be available for 2-3 days a week and will start next week to familiarise herself with ongoing projects.

She volunteers with Turn Lyme Green and Seaton Wetlands, focusing on social media and community engagement.

David Parslow:

David, a mature student pursuing an MSc in Global Sustainability Solutions at Exeter University, will intern with the council for 4-5 hours a week on a Thursday. He will begin by surveying cafes in Exmouth to gauge interest in participating in the Exmouth Cup initiative.

LV has requested an Exeter University student to research barriers to using reusable period products. ETC is awaiting responses and will know by January 31st if any students will take on the project.

ETC plans to cover travel expenses for both Annabelle and David. The HR Group needs to approve this, and a short bio has been sent to the HR group for support.

6. **To receive an update on other relevant matters from Town Council working parties and outside body representatives.**

The Round Table for local environmental actions, in the Sideshore Eco Hub, has been reviewed and will be adjusted to improve effectiveness. The time will be moved to the end of the day, and updates will be shared via email beforehand to allow the session to focus on collaboration or specific topics rather than general updates.

A trial pop-up Climate Hub has opened in Sidmouth (in the Tourist Information Centre and in the Library).

LV explained that she is working with Sideshore on some research into Climate Hubs, focusing on the impact of the Hub at Sideshore and what is required to make them most effective.

7. **Any other business**

Several pledges from the Carbon Literacy training were shared, including:

- switching to renewable energy
- staying informed (and sharing information) on climate issues
- reducing plastic waste at a local market
- understanding new environmental regulations and how they apply to planning decision

8. **Dates of next meeting: 4th March 2025, 6pm – 8pm, in the Town Hall Chamber.**