EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Town Maintenance Overview Working Party

Notes of the meeting held on Thursday 16th January 2025 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 Olly Davey	OD	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Joy Whipps	JW	Exmouth Town Council
Chetna Jones	CJ	Exmouth Town Council

Apologies

Councillor David Poor	DP	Exmouth Town Council
Sam Dorman (note taker)	SD	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 14th November 2024 and any matters arising therein**

The notes of the previous meeting held on 14th November 2024 were proposed for approval by MC, seconded by JW, and agreed by all.

There were no matters arising.

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

IK reported that there had been a significant decrease in graffiti since the last meeting, possibly due to the bad weather. It was noted that the pumping station and storage tank in Phear park has graffiti, but this would be the responsibility of South West Water to remove. No other new incidents were reported at the meeting.

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

Members discussed the issues with the grass cutting service. Prior to CJ's annual leave, she had reported to Idverde that they had not completed all tasks as agreed, an example being the cutting of grass around trees and the top of Bradham Lane. At the same time, she also mentioned that they had not cut the bank between Shakespeare Way and Byron Way as agreed. However, it was noted the grass between Shakespeare Way and Byron Way had been cut recently. Members agreed to continue monitoring Idverde's performance and to review the areas being cut. They

also discussed the need for better communication and the possibility of taking on some tasks themselves to ensure better results.

The final cut of the year was agreed by members to be completed in March 2025.

Members discussed the state of the grass verges in their area, which have been damaged by utility companies and residents. They agreed that the verges need to be repaired before the grass is cut again, as the current state is unsuitable for cutting. IK suggested that they need to review what's being cut and have a meeting with the contractor, Idverde to discuss the issue. CJ proposed contacting Devon County Council's Highways officer, Stuart Coles, to report the damage and request the utility companies to repair it. Members also discussed the possibility of turning some areas into hard standings for parking, but SG pointed out that utility pipes are located just under the grass, which could cause problems. Members agreed to continue monitoring the situation and to review the contract with Idverde.

ACTION(s):

CJ to contact Stuart Coles at Devon County Council regarding the state of damaged grass verges and request repairs from utility companies.

5. **To receive an update on the demonstrations of the potential road sweepers**

Members discussed the demonstrations of the potential road sweepers, with members praising the Hako’s equipment's performance. OD noted that the Bucher representative hadn't brought the weed ripping attachment, suggesting it wasn't necessary. CJ detailed the Hako’s attachments, including the weed ripper and edging wheel, and the cost of replacing individual brush heads. Members also discussed the customer support of the Hako and Bucher representatives.

CJ discussed the usage and maintenance of a sweeper, highlighting that the contract hire is based on usage and includes maintenance time. She also mentioned a telemetry system that records the sweeper's location and usage, which can be useful for monitoring areas covered and identifying problem areas. CJ presented a cost analysis for a 3-year and 5-year contract, noting that the 5-year contract would be more cost-effective. IK and SG expressed their positive impressions of the sweeper, noting its efficiency and practicality. They also discussed the potential wear and tear in the initial period due to the high weed growth but anticipated a decrease in maintenance costs over time.

Members discussed the purchase of a Hako machine for weed removal, emphasising that it would be used primarily for Exmouth Town Council's needs and not for sweeping the whole of Exmouth on behalf of East Devon District Council.

They also discussed the machine's ease of use, with Tony demonstrating its operation and finding it straightforward. Members also noted the machine's ability to handle various road types and its comfort for the operator.

CJ informed members that all the available stock had been allocated, with another 20 units expected in March, which would cover the period until July.

Members were in full agreement to lease a unit with the option to adjust the contract later if needed and thanked the Town Council for their full support. The decision was made to lease a unit for 1,500 hours, with the possibility of adjusting it down later if usage was lower than expected. Members also discussed the potential for additional services with the leasing company. JW asked about the possibility of reducing the contract if usage was lower than expected, but CJ clarified that this would need to be discussed with the leasing company.

Members also discussed the need to monitor the County Council's response to their efforts, as they are taking on this responsibility on behalf of the council. Members agreed to use the road sweeper to clear weeds and potentially charge other councils for its services. The acquisition of the road sweeper was seen as a proactive measure to address a common concern and improve the team's efficiency in their work.

ACTION(S):

CJ to proceed with the 5-year contract for the Hako road sweeper with the 1,500-hour usage option.

CJ to contact Devon County Council Highways to inform them about the Town Council acquiring a road sweeper and check for any potential issues.

CJ to inform County Councillors about the road sweeper acquisition and inquire about potential funding.

CJ to prepare a press release about the new road sweeper acquisition, highlighting that it's being done for the benefit of Exmouth residents.

6. To receive an update on general Town Maintenance work

CJ discussed the impact of being one man down since end of November on their operations. She mentioned that they are planning to recruit and would like to get someone in for April. CJ also highlighted the challenges they face when one person is on leave, particularly during the summer when they need to water. JW suggested hiring an apprentice, but CJ pointed out that they need someone who can drive, and an apprentice might not have a license or be too young to be covered by the Council's insurance policy. DC suggested that they might be in a better position now due to the

push to get people back to work. CJ agreed to see how things change once they put out job applications.

CJ discussed the work for the Winter festival, road weed clearing on Hawthorn Grove, and Meadow View Road. She mentioned that Tony was off from mid-December to early January, and Pete and Steve covered during this time. They also carried out bike collections and road clearing, which is now up to Prince of Wales Road. Issues with the 4x4 Ranger vehicle were highlighted, with the engine light coming on frequently. CJ also mentioned that the vehicles are due for their first MOTs in the coming months.

DC raised concerns about the state of the Strand, particularly the grass and rubbish, which CJ clarified was not their responsibility and to raise this with East Devon District Council.

ACTION(s):

CJ to begin the recruitment process for a new maintenance team member to start in April.

7. Any other business

Members discussed the issues about complaints to town councillors and from residents about the Christmas Village marquee and its impact on the flow of the Strand. There were concerns about the state of the grass and the tables left behind after the marquee was taken down.

8. To note the date of the next meeting.

The date of the next meeting is 13th February at 10am.