EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Festival and Events Working Party

Notes of the virtual meeting held at 1330 on Thursday 16th January 2025 via zoom

Present

Cllr Joy Whipps (Chair)	JW	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Cherry Nicholas	CN	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Nick Hookway	NH	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Graham Deasy	GD	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Olly Davey	OD	Exmouth Town Council
Jess Magill	JM	Exmouth Town Council
Lisa Bowman	LB	Exmouth Town Council
Chetna Jones	CJ	Exmouth Town Council
Lisa Greenway	LG	Exmouth Town Council

Apologies: None

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

JW welcomed attendees to the meeting.

2. To approve the notes from the meeting on the 12th of December & matters arising

Members approved the notes of the meeting held on the 12th of December and there were no matters arising.

3. Wash up for the Jingle and Mingle community event

The event was well-attended by community organisations, with around 40-45 organisations present. However, there was a low public footfall, with many attendees expecting a Christmas market. Feedback received from the community organisations was positive, the event provided the chance for the organisations to network between themselves. LB suggested that the event's timing and location should be reconsidered to attract more public interest so that the organisations can promote what they do. The uncertainty of the Christmas villages future was mentioned due to the event organisers announcement about the temporary closure of his bar in the Strand. LB mentioned that a local production company had an interest in organising a Christmas market in a more traditional format.

NH expressed concerns about the previous Christmas markets, citing issues with lease compliance. He supported the idea of a Christmas market for Exmouth but emphasised the need for careful consideration of its form and location. SG shared his positive experience as a stallholder at the Jingle and Mingle event and hopes that it will become an annual event.

JM suggested that permissions needed for the winter festival should be submitted as soon as a date can be set and proposed considering the first weekend of advent.

Information has been gathered via an online registration form which has now been transferred to a Excell spreadsheet which can be used to compile a booklet/directory of community

organisations. A wash up survey will also be circulated to attendees to see how improvements can be made going forward.

JM suggested using the Pavilion as a possible location for the Jingle and Mingle event, as it offers flexibility in case of bad weather.

4. To discuss the VE Day celebrations for the 8th of May 2025

CJ suggested using the Imperial Recreation Ground as the location for the beacon lighting ceremony and acknowledged that while the location might not have the same visibility as a cliff-side spot, it still provides a good view along the coastline, particularly westward, and would be visible from a significant distance. The idea was raised as a way to address concerns about accessibility and safety, especially since the cliffs pose potential risks. The Imperial Recreation Ground would make the event more accessible for people, including those with mobility issues, and it is also much easier for the public to reach.

OD pointed out that the Imperial Recreation Ground, while generally accessible, might still pose some challenges for people with disabilities who might need to gain access via the jetty, while the cliffs have a wheelchair-accessible path that reaches the geo needle.

Members agreed that the Imperial Rec location is closer to town, which could benefit local businesses and encourage foot traffic into town after the event. Furthermore, parking is easier to manage compared to other locations, making it more convenient for attendees.

Several members expressed that it was important to offer more than just a service, as they felt the people of Exmouth would expect some form of celebration on the day. Suggestions included organising a smaller-scale event with military parades, music, or other activities in between the service and beacon lighting. LB acknowledged that a larger event would come with budgetary and staffing challenges, so a balance would need to be found.

JW suggested that the event could take place on Saturday the 10th of May, which might allow for a larger turnout. However, this idea was met with concern that holding the celebration on a different day might diminish the significance of the actual VE Day itself. It was largely agreed that the event should be held on the 8th of May, but with an emphasis on a simpler, more manageable celebration.

Members discussed the possibility of organising an event in Manor Gardens, with a focus on simplicity and capacity. They considered using the stage and potentially hiring a stage or sound manager. The idea of a "bring your own food" party was proposed, with the possibility of partnering with others for take-away options. Members also discussed the idea of having live music, such as the Liberty Sisters, and possibly involving the town band. However, they acknowledged that it was a working day and needed to be mindful of the event's scale and impact on resources.

OD questioned if there was any national guidance for the event and proposed a vintage dance event to fill the gap between the afternoon service and the beacon lighting, suggesting community choirs could perform 1940s music. Anniversary guidance suggests a fish and chip theme for a street party-style event. JM was keen to use Manor Gardens for the event, with the option for people to book tables or bring their own rugs and chairs with the possibility of bringing in food trucks or stalls.

It was decided to explore options around holding a service in the Strand in the afternoon followed by a community event in Manor Gardens and ending with the beacon lighting at 9:30pm. Proposals will be presented at the next meeting.

5. To discuss the Summer Festival 2025

JM provided members with a brief update on the upcoming summer festival. The Arts Council application is in, and JM will proceed on the basis that they will receive the funds but will wait 12 weeks for confirmation. Enquiries are also being made about entertainment and venues, with Sideshore and the Queens Drive Space being potential locations. The festival will be held between the 11th and 13th of July 2025.

6. Any other business

JM discussed a potential Dinosaur Day event, which members agreed to support by funding £2000 from the non-festival arts budget but noted that the organiser would need assistance with permissions and insurance.

7. Date of next meeting 27th February 2025

The meeting ended at 14.32