EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Town Maintenance Overview Working Party

Notes of the meeting held on Thursday 13th February 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 David Poor	DP	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Joy Whipps	JW	Exmouth Town Council
Chetna Jones	CJ	Exmouth Town Council
Sam Dorman (note taker)	SD	Exmouth Town Council

Apologies

Councillor Steve Gazzard	SG	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 16th January 2025 and any matters arising therein**

The notes of the previous meeting held on 16th January 2025 were proposed for approval by OD, seconded by DC, and agreed by all.

Matter arising –

Item 4 – Grass cutting

Members discussed the state of the grass verges, which had not improved since the last meeting. CJ emailed Stuart Coles at Devon County Council about the issue but received no response. CJ will chase up to report that there is a planned grass cutting in March and this will affect our grass cutting. IK also mentioned that he would bring up the issue with Councillor Scott during their upcoming meeting.

ACTION(s): CJ to email Stuart Coles again regarding the state of damaged grass verges.

Item 5 – Road sweeper

The Hako sweeper and its attachments were discussed. CJ confirmed that these attachments are part of the contract and there are no additional fees for them. The paperwork for the sweeper has been progressing, but there were delays due to

signatory issues. The vehicle's road tax will be included in the first year, and ongoing payments are expected at an additional annual cost of around £340 plus an administration fee.

The Town Maintenance team are eager for the road sweeper's arrival, as manual weed clearing has been challenging.

Item 6 – Recruitment of a new Town Maintenance member

The recruitment process for a new Town Maintenance member is underway. The position has been advertised on ETC's website and on Indeed.

CJ outlined the scoring mechanism for the applications, which includes assessing skills, experience, and ambassador qualities. She requested the help of Town Maintenance Overview members to score the applications, with the ultimate decision being made by HR councillors. CJ also mentioned that MC and JW would be involved in the interview process. IK expressed his appreciation for the update and the involvement of MC and JW in the interviews.

The application deadline is 27th February, interviews set for 4th and 5th March with a goal to have someone start in April. The process is moving quickly to ensure training can begin before the busy season.

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

There has been an increase in new graffiti, especially in the Maer Road area. DC observed purple and pink tags on parking meters along Maer Road and towards the sea front (Queens Walk area). She expressed concern about a new toilet block, which could become a target for more graffiti. IK has noted the same pink tags are on BT green boxes on Rolle Road and various seafront traffic islands and asked if these could be removed.

Members discussed graffiti on traffic islands, bus shelters, and other public spaces.

Graffiti has been noticed in the alcoves on the walls along Maderia Walk.

DC will send photos of the graffiti to reception for reporting to Streetscene. CJ will ask the Town Maintenance team to clean the graffiti from the parking meters.

It was noted that there is a Waterfront working party walkabout scheduled for 18th March where any issues are highlighted and reported to the relevant authority.

ACTION(s): DC to send photos of graffiti to reception for reporting to Streetscene.

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

CJ updated members that she had no recent communication from Idverde regarding outstanding tasks, although they have completed some work.

Payments to Idverde have been processed after improvements were made to previously raised issues.

Members planned to review the grass cutting process with Idverde, with a site visit to discuss any issues that might be affecting the cutting.

The possibility of taking over visibility grass cutting from Devon County Council was discussed. Members were reminded of the concerns they raised previously about the liability involved and agreed not to progress this further.

Various areas along Dinan Way from the Millennium Woods onwards need overgrown bushes cutting back to ease access for the grass cutting

5. To receive an update on general Town Maintenance work

CJ provided an update on general town maintenance work. The team have been road weed clearing in Prince of Wales Drive and several surrounding roads. They are currently in Moorfield Road, Green Close, Colleton way, and Marpool Crescent. CJ also discussed the need for more ground maintenance work to take place and planning for summer planting.

The MOT for the transit van passed and the MOT for the Peugeot van has been booked in. The Ranger will get booked in due course.

The lawnmower went in for a service and there is an issue with the gearbox, which needs rebuilding. Parts and labour to repair it will cost around £260.00. The cost of replacing the lawnmower is estimated at around £1,000 and may need to be factored in the next financial year as the existing lawn mower was almost 5 years old.

Members discussed the state of some raised beds in the Magnolia Centre near the Co-op. It was noted that the plants, including sedum and grasses, have deteriorated and the area needs improvement. Members consider low-growing, hardy plants like aubretia and hebe plants as potential replacements, while avoiding tall bushes that could provide hiding spots. Members agreed to inspect the area and consult with Exmouth in Bloom for advice and report back to CJ.

Members discussed a mysterious cannabis-like smell in the area, which may be from another plant with a similar scent.

CJ has carried out appraisals with the Town Maintenance team and the team will be focusing on improving scheduling and health and safety practices.

Members sent their congratulations to Tony who is now a qualified special constable.

6. Any other business

IK shared his visit to Plumb Park with members from the Town Premises and Asset WP. ETC have agreed to take over the management of the Plumb Park allotments which comes with an area of grass with some fruit trees (orchard).

Members agreed that the grass area could be maintained by the Town Maintenance team, but managing the orchard might require additional resources or volunteer involvement. CJ expressed her concern in managing the orchard and that this is outside the Town Maintenance team's remit.

7. To note the date of the next meeting

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