EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Festival and Events Working Party

Notes of the virtual meeting held at 1000 on Wednesday 19th March 2025 via zoom

Present

Cllr Joy Whipps (Chair)	JW	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Nick Hookway	NH	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Olly Davey	OD	Exmouth Town Council
Chetna Jones	CJ	Exmouth Town Council
Jess Magill	JM	Exmouth Town Council
Lisa Greenway	LG	Exmouth Town Council

Apologies:

Lisa Bowman	LB	Exmouth Town Council

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

JW welcomed attendees to the meeting.

2. To approve the notes from the meeting on the 27th of February & matters arising

SG proposed and JW seconded the accuracy of the notes from the meeting on the 27th of February 2025, all members agreed that the notes were a true record and there were no matters arising.

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

Members were asked to agree a budget for the event. Some funds are available in the 2025/2026 budget (Civic), however, additional funds may be needed from earmarked reserves (Town Management). JM and CJ itemised the cost so far and members discussed a reasonable budget for the event.

SG proposed, NH seconded and It was unanimously agreed that a budget of up to £4,000 should be allocated to the VE day celebrations to cover the cost of the event.

Entertainment includes the Liberty Sisters who will perform 2 sets of 45 minutes in the Manor Gardens in the afternoon and The Exmouth Town Band will perform a few numbers and assist with the chosen hymn at the Beacon Lighting in the evening. RBL will hold a short service in the Strand at 6pm followed by Holy Trinity, Littleham and Lympstone churches ringing the bells at 6.30pm.

JM investigated furniture for the Manor Gardens and ruled out the trestle table option and opted for plastic chairs and round tables as this is a more suitable option for the venue and viewing the stage. The same provider was also able to supply the PA and lighting in Manor Gardens.

The Scrap Store can provide various craft activities, JM suggested booking 2 workshops to make flags and lanterns as these can be used at the RBL service and beacon lighting later in the evening.

Posters have now been designed for display around the town and the event will be advertised on social media and on the ETC website.

4. To discuss an additional item for VE Day as proposed by Graham Kirby

In previous years Rotary has arranged Night of Proms, organised by Mr Kirby in conjunction with RBL. Unfortunately, Rotary were not proceeding with the event this year and Mr Kirby has reached out to ETC to discuss holding the event in Manor Gardens with the town council's support and finance. He suggested the Night of the Proms be held in the evening between 7pm and 9pm in Manor Gardens.

Members discussed this and did not feel that ETC had the capacity to host another large event, especially as the community would already be attending the event in Manor Gardens between 3pm and 6pm followed by the RBL service and beacon lighting later. There was also uncertainty about whether Manor Gardens being the right venue for such an event.

Mr Kirby would require ETC to fund the event which would include Lympstone Concert Band, hiring of Manor Gardens and cleaning up afterwards. Members were concerned about the scope and logistics of organising this additional event. While Mr Kirby initially wanted a ticketed event, he later suggested using charity collections, but this raised concerns about the clarity of the cause.

Members confirmed they have already aligned with the Pageant Master's recommended events for the day. Furthermore, the Exmouth Town Concert Band is already part of the evening program at the beacon lighting, addressing the music aspect that Mr Kirby had proposed.

It was agreed that we continue with just the current plans as it would not be feasible to add another event at this late stage. It was agreed that a polite response explaining the decision to Mr Kirby will be sent by JW, emphasising adherence to the established program.

5. To discuss Dinosaur Day for the 19th of April 2025

Dinosaur Day plans are moving forward smoothly, with a wide range of activities confirmed which include quizzes, scavenger hunts, and walkabout dinosaurs. While the activities are designed to be low-tech, they aim to engage attendees in a fun and interactive way. The Bath House, located at one end of the Canyon, has been very supportive, offering their indoor room to set up activities as a wet weather provision, and there will also be a dinosaur ride at that end of the Canyon, adding another element of excitement for visitors.

In terms of stalls, although JM hoped to secure a number of fossil-related vendors, many of these stalls were already booked elsewhere for the weekend, leaving fewer stalls than initially anticipated. However, there will still be a number of non-sales activities to fill the space, such as dinosaur-related displays, egg painting, and craft workshops.

The goal is to keep the atmosphere relatively low key, so it won't feel too crowded or hectic. One of the key attractions will be the Easter egg hunt, which will lead people to move around the whole area looking for clues.

Road closure on Bath Road is in place allowing only a pedestrian thoroughfare. Marshals will be stationed at each end to ensure cyclists either go around the event or dismount when passing through.

Advertising efforts are underway, with posters, leaflets, and social media posts already being distributed. JM had passed the task of reaching out to Stagecoach for advertising to Liz Oram (the dinosaur trail coordinator). JM will follow up with LO to get an update on the situation.

6. To discuss the Summer Festival 2025

JM is waiting for the outcome of the Arts Council funding which will not be known for another 2-3 weeks, this is causing delays in finalising bookings. Two budgets have been prepared, one for if the funding is approved and one for if it's not, with adjustments to reduce any deficit.

The closing date for the bar tender is the 21st of March 2025 however there is a possibility that 2 bars could be accommodated if permission is given for a third site at Queens Drive space.

JM is working on securing sponsorships as the budget remains tight so is looking for local businesses to contribute, even with small amounts.

On the creative side, JM updated that Four of Swords is working with Sideshore to engage schoolchildren in activities, including a craft session that will be part of a theatre production at the festival. The Sea Shanties Project will involve local stories being turned into sea shanty songs by the Exmouth Shanty Men who will run workshops with local primary schools in June and perform together on stage at the festival on the Sunday in July.

7. Any other business

JW queried if EDDC permission had been requested for the Christmas tree in The Strand. Members agreed that the original site would be preferable, although the inner circle site would also be suitable if marquees were not taking up the space like last year. This led to concerns about whether the Christmas Market had already booked the space. JW suggested we check the availability with the EDDC Events Team.

8. Date of next meeting 24th of April 2025

The meeting ended at 10:39