EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Exmouth Transport Partnership

Notes of the Zoom meeting held at 10am on Tuesday 1st April 2025

Present

Cllr Tim Dumper	TD	Exmouth Town Council (Chair)
Cllr Pauline Stott	PS	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Olly Davey	OD	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Ian Kirvan	IK	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Mark Williamson	MW	Exmouth Town Council
John Petty	JP	Active Travel Exmouth, & Exmouth Community Association
Jan Gannaway	JG	Active Travel Exmouth, & Sustrans
Stuart Coles	SC	DCC Highways
Phillip Morgan	PM	DCC Highways
Richard Easthope	RE	EDDC Parking Services Manager
David Whiteway	DW	GWR Regional Growth Manager
Tony Jackson	TJ	ALRUG (Avocet Line Rail Users Group)
Neil Herraghty	NH	Stagecoach Assistant Operations Manager
Lisa Bowman	LB	Exmouth Town Council
Lisa Greenway	LG	Exmouth Town Council (Notetaker)

Apologies

Cllr Fred Caygill	FC	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Andrew Colman	AC	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr David Poor	DP	Exmouth Town Council
Joe Beckley	JB	Stagecoach Operations Manager
Mike Tucker	MT	DCC Public Transport
Hannah Clark	HC	DCC Transportation Strategy Manager
Sam Jeffcoat	SJ	DCC PROW Warden for Exmouth

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1. **Welcome, introduction and apologies**

TD welcomed members to the meeting and noted apologies. TD was pleased to announce that ETC has gained its Star Council Award in relation to Climate Response.

2. **To approve the previous meeting notes from the 3rd of December 2024**

PS proposed and IK seconded the accuracy of the notes from the meeting on the 3rd of December. The meeting notes were approved.

3. **Matters arising from the previous meeting**

No matters arising.

6c. Query raised by Cllr Mark Williamson regarding access through Foxholes car park

MW raised a query on pedestrian and vehicle safety at Foxholes car park, particularly the pedestrian entrance/exit onto Queens Drive, MW highlighted concerns raised by two separate incidents. On a rainy day during a busy holiday period, many people rushed to their cars through the vehicle entrance/exit, which created safety issues due to wet surfaces and blowing sand. One elderly woman had difficulty navigating this area and needed assistance. On a clearer day, people again used the vehicle entrance/exit to access the beach, despite the presence of a designated pedestrian access. MW pointed out that the pedestrian access

is not easily visible or well-marked, it is squeezed between the vehicle entrance and a shelter, making it less obvious.

MW recommended improvements in signage for both pedestrian paths on the ground and above the ground. Clear signs indicating "Pedestrians Only" and better marking of the walkway would help resolve these safety concerns.

RE agreed that the current layout is problematic, with the shelter obstructing the pedestrian entrance and causing confusion. There is an opportunity to improve the design during upcoming resurfacing work scheduled to begin in June. It was agreed that signage improvements to guide pedestrians and ensure clearer separation of vehicle and pedestrian paths would be beneficial.

PS suggested moving the car park exit to Maer Road, but this option was deemed expensive and potentially problematic due to its proximity to the highway. However, the idea of improving signage and redesigning the car park layout to prevent congestion was generally supported. The resurfacing project would not interfere with peak summer traffic, as work would be timed to avoid the busiest months, though some signage improvements might be implemented beforehand.

Concerns about the safety and flow of traffic, particularly with the car park being close to multiple junctions, were raised. Despite some differing opinions about the current layout, the overall sentiment was that better signage, and design could significantly improve the situation. RE will keep members informed of any changes to the car park layout.

MW left the meeting.

4. To note the minutes of the recent meetings of the East Devon Highways and Traffic Orders Committee, including the outcome of the residents parking review

A link to the minutes was included on the agenda.

Members noted the minutes and outcome of the residents parking review, it was noted that Zone B residents were not unanimous in accepting the residents parking and therefore it did not go through.

5. To note the endorsement of the Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan 2025-2040

A link to the plan was included on the agenda.

After reviewing the plan TD was disappointed that it did not provide much for Exmouth.

6. Stakeholder reports:

a) Stagecoach

NH updated members with several changes and adjustments to bus services, the 57 service is being modified due to ongoing roadworks, with extra buses being added to manage disruptions and some early and late journeys will be withdrawn because of low passenger numbers. The 95 service will be resuming soon, with buses being prepared, and it will operate seasonally. The 96 service will also be adjusted to accommodate roadworks. Additionally, the 99 service is set to change for improved efficiency, and the 157 and 357 routes will be adjusted to enhance reliability.

Members had previously requested that the 95 service be reinstated back along the seafront, especially to accommodate tourists and elderly passengers and alleviate the issue of the

congested bus stop outside the Pavilion. The new timetable frequency for the 99 service has reduced which has led to concerns about inadequate connections between the 99 and 57 service for commuters to Exeter which leaves commuters with long wait times. Another issue raised was the double fares charged for passengers using the 99 and 57 service who now must walk from the Parade to the Strand to get the bus to Exeter, NH stated that the commercial team are aware of this issue and are currently investigating.

The reduction in services from Brixington to Exeter was a significant concern. Once a frequent service, the route has been drastically reduced, leaving many commuters with no choice but to drive or use the train.

Accessibility for elderly passengers was discussed, particularly regarding the lack of direct routes to important locations like hospitals. Additionally, the quality of the buses was brought up, with many of the buses in use being quite old, some dating back to 2008. There is a push for more modern and eco-friendly buses, such as electric buses, particularly for key routes like the 57.

The impact of new development at Goodmores, the upcoming Aldi store and the Dinan Way road extension, on local bus services was discussed. Councillors are requesting early engagement with the County Council to assess how these developments will affect public transport and to explore the possibility of new bus routes serving these areas, especially for the new road and when the supermarket is completed in late 2026.

There was dissatisfaction with the commercial decisions affecting bus services, particularly regarding the reduction in frequency and lack of connections between routes. These changes appear to be based on ridership data, but the impact on commuters and the local community was a key point of concern.

NH will pass on all issues raised by members to the head of the commercial team.

NH left the meeting.

b) DCC Public Transport

There was no representative at the meeting and no report was received.

c) EDDC Car/Cycle, Coach & Lorry Parks & Electric Vehicle Charging

RE made members aware that the Camperdown Terrace slipway which leads down to the flood barrier will be added to the East Devon Parking Order. This would allow enforcement of vehicles parking on the wet side of the flood defence barrier. Another topic was the introduction of residents-only parking at Albion Court, near the London Hotel car park (behind the Magnolia Centre). A public consultation will take place soon. The parking will be controlled by the sheltered housing team to ensure spaces are available for carers and necessary personnel, preventing unauthorised use. The spaces will be on a first-come, first-served basis and will be permitted only for those authorised by the housing team.

In terms of parking charges, all charges increased by 10% today, and signage has been updated to reflect the change, which will remain in effect until the 31st of October 2025. There are plans to review winter charges, based on feedback and the success of a 4-hour restriction at key locations in Exmouth (Imperial Road, London Hotel, and Exmouth Town Hall), which made parking easier due to a higher turnover of vehicles.

The consultation on overnight motorhome parking in Exmouth concluded with 800 responses received, although the majority were in favour there were concerns about whether the feedback reflected local opinions, particularly from residents in Foxholes. The results will be further analysed to better understand the balance of local vs.tourist feedback. There was still some opposition, and feedback indicated a need for better waste disposal facilities and improved signage. Further consideration of recommendations made earlier for improving motorhome parking will include better regulation and additional facilities.

The Scottish Power EV chargers at the Imperial Road car park are ranked the second most utilised in Devon and there are plans to install more EV chargers in the future.

d) Active Travel

The Active Travel website will shortly be passed over to Transition Exmouth to manage with funding support from the Town Council due to the volume of useful information it holds. JG has finalised the mapping and is fixing the links and phone view functionality, aiming to complete this by the end of April. Bus timetables will be removed, but a link to Stagecoach's website will remain, as Transition Exmouth is unlikely to maintain updates.

Sustrans presence and support in the area has notably declined, with staff reductions and the departure of the local volunteer coordinator, leaving the volunteer network largely inactive. Speeding continues to be a major concern in Exmouth, especially on hilly roads, creating dangerous conditions for cyclists and pedestrians. However, there are signs of improvement in driver behaviour, particularly regarding close passing, possibly influenced by the updated Highway Code. Nonetheless, awareness around pedestrian rights at junctions remains low.

There was also discussion around public attitudes and individual experiences, with some members asserting that drivers do increasingly yield to pedestrians when prompted assertively. JG announced she will be stepping back from transport matters after the website handover to focus on wildlife advocacy, though she will continue supporting initiatives like 20 mph speed limits and School Streets, emphasising safety for children, especially on Withycombe Village Road.

Concerns were raised about illegal high-speed e-bikes undermining cycling's reputation, and the lack of enforcement against them. Some members advocated for national and local action, possibly involving police. The importance of safe road crossings near schools, such as those on Withycombe and Hulham Road, was highlighted due to children often risking unsafe crossings.

The group hopes Active Travel becomes a more prominent issue in the upcoming local elections. There's also a broader reflection on the sheer volume of traffic, with some suggesting many car journeys like dog walking may not be essential.

The next Active Travel Group meeting will be on Thursday the 3rd of April in the Town Hall.

e) Taxis

There was no representative at the meeting and no report was received.

f) GWR

DW provided members with a presentation outlining local developments around Exmouth, particularly the major upgrade to Exeter Central Gateline. Funding has been secured to double the number of ticket barriers from four to eight, and the concourse will be reopened to its original size with the removal of the former Daily Bowl retail unit which was purchased by GWR. A new ticket office will also be created in a more accessible location. Work is expected to begin in the summer, with completion anticipated by autumn, although delays in approvals may push this back slightly to Christmas.

Timetable changes for May were discussed. While most changes are on the main line rather than the Exmouth line, a temporary revised Sunday timetable will be introduced to cope with ongoing driver shortages. These shortages stem from a recent government initiative to end train strikes by increasing driver pay, which unintentionally reduced their incentive to work overtime, particularly on Sundays. Newer drivers on updated contracts are still required to work Sundays, which is helping maintain service on branch lines like Exmouth.

DW provided members with a detailed report on services that will be scaled back and changed. Service consolidation will also impact areas west of Exeter on Saturdays removing duplication between Exeter and Plymouth, and Newquay services have been temporarily reduced due to driver training. However, some faster services will now call at more intermediate stations to fill the gaps left by withdrawn services.

Passenger numbers are up across all Devon and Cornwall routes, with Exmouth performing strongly, Marsh Barton station has had over 150,000 journeys since it opened. Exmouth is the second most popular destination from Marsh Barton with over 2000 passengers per week on average. Punctuality remains relatively good on the Exmouth branch, though more erratic on the Paignton side due to mainline conflicts. Cancellations have risen slightly over winter, largely due to weather and unit shortages, though this has mostly led to shorter trains rather than outright cancellations.

A major rolling stock update is on the horizon with the introduction of 26 Class 175 trains, formerly used by Transport for Wales. These will be allocated exclusively to Devon and Cornwall routes, Laira Depot will maintain the trains, helping to refresh an aging fleet. They'll replace older units, many of which are nearing 40 or 50 years old. The 175s will primarily operate between Penzance and Exeter, Okehampton and Exeter and eventually Barnstaple to Exeter. The hope is to route-clear them for Exmouth, though this won't be immediate. The 175 units are quieter and will provide more luggage space but won't offer significant improvements in bike storage as this would require extra carriages.

OD provided feedback on ticket machine malfunctions and praise for the helpfulness of the ticket office staff. JG highlighted issues with bike storage, especially for larger or electric bikes and the lack of space on long-distance trains makes transporting e-bikes especially difficult.

Long-term solutions are being considered as the 175's will be the last diesel rolling stock being built for the UK network in line with the governments decarbonation strategy. The Project Churchward initiative will look at a shift to push the government for a battery-electric fleet as by 2035 the current turbo fleets life would have expired.

DW stressed the ongoing efforts to improve cycling provision at stations and partner with cycle hire at the end of destination stations. All cycle parking at stations has CCTV coverage for bike security and a new CCTV control room will be installed at GWR which will eventually allow real-time monitoring of station cameras, enhancing safety and customer support.

g) ALRUG

TJ had nothing more to add then what was discussed in 6f.

h) DCC Highways

SC updated members that the resurfacing works on the A376 between Clyst St Mary and Clyst St George has been completed, which is a welcome improvement ahead of the tourist season. Although there is hope for more sections of the road to be resurfaced, future work depends on available funding. Additionally, there are plans to replace the traffic signals at the Gypsy Lane junction with Exeter Road, as the current setup causes difficulties for the Stagecoach 98 bus and larger vehicles trying to make the sharp left turn. The engineering design team will look into adjusting the signal placement to improve manoeuvrability.

A new initiative is also being piloted to support on-street EV charging for residents without driveways. A soft launch is underway, offering a discreet cable channel solution that runs between properties to the roadside, aiming to avoid trip hazards and encourage more EV ownership. Details will be shared with the community so residents can understand the process and avoid unsafe charging methods.

In terms of road maintenance, the team is focusing more on patching and applying cost effective surface treatments like micro asphalt, which can extend the life of roads by 7 to 10 years. Seafield Avenue is one example of where this method has been used successfully, and more roads are expected to receive similar treatment in the next 12 months. However, planning remains complex due to budget constraints and coordination between teams, with some proposed works like Albion Hill and Albion Street not yet being carried out. PS had concern about fair allocation of funds, as Exmouth is the largest town in Devon and hasn't seen significant resurfacing work.

7. Any other business

No other business.

8. Dates of 2025 meetings: 24th June

23rd September

9th December

The meeting closed at 11:58