EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Festival and Events Working Party

Notes of the virtual meeting held at 1400 on Thursday 22nd May 2025 via zoom

Present

Cllr Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Olly Davey	OD	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Cherry Nicholas	CN	Exmouth Town Council
Lisa Bowman	LB	Exmouth Town Council
Jess Magill	JM	Exmouth Town Council
Lisa Greenway	LG	Exmouth Town Council

Apologies:

Cllr Nick Hookway	NH	Exmouth Town Council
Chetna Jones	CJ	Exmouth Town Council

1. To elect a new chair

OD proposed and CN seconded that SG be elected as chair, no further nominations were received.

Members were asked to vote, and SG was duly recommended as chair.

2. Welcome, introductions and apologies

SG welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted.

3. To approve the notes from the meeting on the 24th of April 2025 & matters arising

OD proposed and CN seconded the accuracy of the notes from the meeting on the 24th of April 2025, all members agreed that the notes were a true record and there were no matters arising.

4. VE Day celebrations wash up for the 8th of May 2025

JM noted that the event ran smoothly, was well attended, and had a pleasant atmosphere. The program of events was effective and generally well received, although there were some minor criticisms afterward. LB elaborated on the nature of the criticism, highlighting issues such as a lack of bunting, insufficient business engagement along the Strand, the absence of a raffle or prize draw, and inadequate advertising. It was emphasised that these are recurring complaints and partly stem from comparisons with events in Budleigh Salterton, which benefit from more funding and support from the Information Office and Local Chamber. LB defended the event, stating that unlike Budleigh's semi-commercial model which charged attendees a £6 fee to attend, this event was free and proportionate to Exmouth's resources. Members agreed that the VE Day celebrations were respectful and well balanced, with mostly positive feedback and only a few complaints. JM agreed, noting the inclusion of all key components such as music, a service, and the lighting of the beacon.

5. To discuss the 2026 dates for Gate to Plate festivals

Eat Festivals have proposed two dates for their 2026 events: Sunday the 19th of April and Sunday the 25th of October. JM confirmed that while the event has previously only taken place in

April, the October date aligns with a previously agreed plan to expand to two annual events. OD shared positive feedback from a local trader who benefited from more customers during the event and expressed a desire for more such initiatives.

JM Jess reiterated the existing agreement to host two events from 2026, and all members agreed to the proposed dates.

JM addressed concerns raised about the war memorial being used as seating during the last event. Although it was presented nicely with surrounding tables and chairs, it inadvertently led to some inappropriate use. To prevent this, Jess has offered to lend decorative fencing materials that has previously been used in the Manor Gardens to cordon off the memorial, particularly given the proximity to Remembrance Day.

6. To discuss the Summer Festival 2025

JM shared positive news that Salt Rock has agreed to sponsor the festival, contributing £1,000 and organising a mountain bike show at Queen's Drive. The potential was emphasised for establishing long-term sponsorship relationships with both Salt Rock and the Deaf Academy.

JM provided an update on the integration of Sea Safety Fortnight at Sideshore with the Festival Beach events and parade. As the team continued developing new ideas for workshops, associated costs increased, prompting JM to apply for additional funding through the National Landscapes Fund. The application was successful, enabling them to cover the expanded scope of the workshops. A new collaboration has also emerged involving the performance group 4 of Swords and Drum Devon, who will create musical instruments from recycled plastic collected from the sea. JM highlighted how well this initiative complements the festival's environmental themes and strengthens ties with Sideshore, who were enthusiastic about the concept.

It was noted that one act had to be removed from the festival lineup due to an ongoing police investigation, a replacement act is being arranged to fill the vacant slot.

LB reported on a suggestion raised at the recent Full Council meeting to formally recognise Team Rolex, the crew behind the Transatlantic Row, by sending a letter of thanks and potentially inviting them to a town council event. This initiative aligns well with the "Stories from the Sea" festival theme. LB has drafted a letter but has so far been unable to obtain a contact address for the team, despite attempting to reach out to multiple members. JM added that attempts were made to connect through social media, though messaging options were unavailable. However, JM recently spoke with someone who may have an email contact for the team and plans to follow up in the hopes of arranging a talk or demonstration appearance at the festival.

Marketing is going well with 40 locations secured for estate agent advertising boards, banner installations are expected within the week. Advertisements are already scheduled to run in One Magazine, Primary Times, and Muddy Stilettos, with additional promotional work planned in collaboration with the Journal. Poster distribution will begin once the final event lineup is confirmed.

7. Any other business

LB recalled that the previous year, CJ had brought forward a complaint from a member of the public who objected to the Town Council flying the Pride flag during Pride week. Concerns had been raised again this year, with additional emails received from members of the public strongly urging the council not to fly the Pride flag and requesting that the issue be discussed at a Full

Council meeting. LB clarified that the council is in compliance with Government guidelines regarding the display of flags on government buildings, and the Pride flag is explicitly permitted under those rules. Following this clarification, members engaged in a more detailed discussion about the nature of the objections. After considering the matter, they concluded that since the council is acting within its legal rights and following official guidelines, there was no justification for escalating the issue to Full Council. A formal motion was proposed by OD and seconded by SG, and all members present agreed unanimously with the decision. As a result, it was confirmed that the Pride flag will be flown during Pride Week as planned.

8. Date of next meeting 19th of June 2025

The meeting ended at 14:38