

Working Towards a Butt-Free Exmouth!

Exmouth Installs Fourth Cigarette Ballot Bin to Tackle Litter and Plastic Pollution

Exmouth, 25 June 2025 *Exmouth Town Council, in collaboration with Plastic Free Exmouth and Harbour View Café, has unveiled the town's fourth Cigarette Butt Ballot Bin - part of an ongoing campaign to reduce cigarette litter and protect Exmouth's beach.*

The new bin, officially launched on June 24 at Harbour View Café, was introduced by representatives from Exmouth Town Council, Arron from Harbour View Café, and Jill Gathercole from Plastic Free Exmouth. The initiative supports Plastic Free Exmouth's campaign, "Get Your Butts Off the Beach!" - which encourages smokers to dispose of their cigarette butts responsibly instead of littering.

This marks the fourth installation of a Ballot Bin in the town, with existing bins already in place at Exmouth Railway Club (GWRSA), Exmouth Pavilion, and The Bath House.

"We'd like to thank Harbour View Café for supporting our war on waste," said Zoey Cooper, Climate Officer from Exmouth Town Council. "Their involvement goes beyond this project - they're also one of three local cafés participating in the Exmouth Cup scheme, which enables customers to borrow and return reusable cups."

A Community-Driven Effort

Jill Gathercole of Plastic Free Exmouth shared the motivation behind the campaign:
"Since forming in 2019, our group has led hundreds of beach cleans and litter picks across Exmouth. Cigarette butts and smoking-related litter are the most commonly found items - especially on our beautiful beach. With cigarette butts making up 66% of all littered items in the

UK, according to Keep Britain Tidy, this is a major environmental concern. They're made of plastic, don't biodegrade, and break down into microplastics that pollute land and water. An estimated 3 million cigarette butts are littered in the UK every single day."

The Ballot Bin, created as a fun and effective solution, encourages smokers to vote on quirky questions by placing their cigarette butts in one of two compartments. The bin at Harbour View asks the age-old Devon vs. Cornwall debate: Jam or cream first?

A Small Innovation Making a Big Impact

Deputy Mayor Dianne Conduit commented:
"Whether it's cats vs. dogs or jam vs. cream, a light-hearted question gets people thinking and nudges them to engage positively. The Ballot Bin offers a creative solution that both entertains and educates. Globally, over 5,000 Ballot Bins have been installed across 43 countries, diverting an estimated 15 million cigarette butts from the environment each year. We're proud to be playing our part here in Exmouth."

Tackling Plastic Waste
The installation of cigarette butt ballot bins is just one part of Exmouth Town Council's broader commitment to tackling single-use plastic waste across the community. In partnership with local groups and residents, the Council supports a range of initiatives - including a Real Nappy Scheme delivered with Exmouth Bosom Buddies, awareness campaigns in schools and colleges promoting reusable period products, and the launch of the Exmouth Cup reusable cup scheme in 2022. In a creative twist on community education, "Samudra - a striking, plastic-eating sea serpent sculpture - will soon return to Sideshore, joined by a storytelling throne crafted from reclaimed ocean waste.

Photo Caption:
From left to right: Arron from Harbour View, Councillor Steve Gazzard, Deputy Mayor Dianne Conduit, Councillor Dan Wilson, and Jill Gathercole from Plastic Free Exmouth.

