EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Public Rights of Way Working Party

Notes of the Zoom meeting held at 4pm on Wednesday 24th September 2025

Present

Tim Dumper	TD	ETC & EDDC Councillor
Olly Davey	OD	ETC & EDDC Councillor
Louise Venables	LV	ETC Councillor
Nicky Nicholls	NN	ETC Councillor
Graham Deasy	GD	ETC Councillor
Elizabeth Deasy	ED	TARA
Heath Nickels	HN	P3 Co-Ordinator
Sam Jeffcoat	SJ	DCC PROW Warden for Exmouth
John Petty	JP	Active Travel Exmouth & Exmouth Community Association
Chetna Jones	CJ	ETC Deputy Town Clerk
Lisa Greenway	LG	ETC notetaker

Apologies

Ross Hussey	RH	Footpath Volunteer
Jan Gannaway	JG	Active Travel Exmouth & Sustrans
David Poor	DP	ETC Councillor

1. To elect a chair

CJ requested nominations for chair of this working party. NN nominated LV and OD seconded that LV be elected as chair. No further nominations were made.

Members were asked to vote, and LV was duly elected as chair.

2. Welcome and apologies

LV welcomed members and apologies were noted.

3. To approve the notes of the meeting on the 12th of February 2025

OD proposed, HN seconded, the accuracy of the notes from the 12th of February 2025 which were approved.

4. Matters arising from the previous meeting

LV began by asking for an update on the resurfacing of Footpath 11, which had been discussed in the previous meeting. In response, CJ confirmed that all the necessary paperwork had been submitted, but she had not received any feedback or confirmation from the Rights of Way Team at DCC. As a result, she was unable to say whether any funding would be available for the project this year, leaving the situation unresolved for now.

The discussion then moved to Footpath 2 at Plumb Park, where LV referenced issues related to water runoff from Donkey Hill and general muddiness. CJ acknowledged the concerns and explained that this path has been heavily affected by ongoing development, particularly by the Plumb Park housing project. Additionally, the area is currently closed due to pipeline installation works by South West Water. CJ had raised the issue with Clinton Devon Estates, emphasising that development work was having a lasting impact on the condition and accessibility of public rights of way, and that proper reinstatement wasn't always happening. Clinton Devon were previously unaware of the extent of the disruption but agreed to investigate the matter. However, this conversation took place a couple of months ago during an extended dry period, meaning that current conditions may have made it difficult to fully assess the issues at the time. CJ confirmed she intends to follow up with Clinton Devon to keep the matter active.

HN provided a more recent update on Footpath 2, stating that it is currently fully open and in good condition, largely due to the prolonged dry weather. He pointed out, however, that this is likely temporary and the path will become muddy and potentially impassable again during the winter. He noted that the problematic stretch is the part that cuts through the middle of two fields and connects with Footpath 6. This section has been the subject of ongoing issues for many years and remains unresolved. It is currently closed, and walkers are forced to use a makeshift route along the southern field boundary, a diversion informally created by the farmer years ago, but never legally formalised.

CJ added that during a site visit several months ago, she had observed piles of rubble in the middle of the affected field. SJ confirmed that the reinstatement of this field is planned and will be carried out by the tenant farmer, with funding provided by South West Water. However, no date has been confirmed for this work. SJ is continuing to follow up on the matter and intends to raise it again with both the tenant and Clinton Devon Estates. He also mentioned that there is an official application process for creating a legal diversion of a public right of way. If the tenant farmer wishes to formalise the temporary route along the southern edge of the field, an application will need to be submitted, and once approved, it would become part of Devon County Council's official Public Rights of Way network.

CJ reported that Footpath 11 had recently been cut back and widened to improve accessibility, particularly for wheelchair users and others who may require additional space or seating along the route. This work was made possible through grant funding awarded by the National Landscapes programme. She noted that the EDDC Countryside would be in touch once an official opening date has been set for the improved path.

5. Update on Bapton Valley project

CJ reported that she had contacted the EDDC Engineering Team about a month ago regarding permission for signage, including dimensions and the availability of remaining project funding. The proposal was for one sign at each of the three entrances, along with a few blue cycling signs in the middle of the path to alert cyclists to the presence of pedestrians. CJ will follow up to get a decision.

CJ had a meeting with Tom Buxton-Smith and Scott Cumming who has taken over from Louis Hoyle concerning a resident's complaint about antisocial behaviour and fast cyclists at the Pound Lane entrance. The Town Council office had received no formal reports on this matter. CJ noted that the complainant had previously expressed similar concerns before any improvement works were carried out, suggesting the behaviour isn't a direct result of recent

changes. TBS requested a joint response from both EDDC and the Town Council to the complainant, highlighting the extensive consultation process and reaffirming that there is no evidence the works have caused an increase in antisocial behaviour. Residents if concerned about anti-social behaviour, will be advised to report such issues to the police. Members agreed that a joint response should be made.

CJ mentioned a concern raised by TBS regarding water pooling on the path near the meadow during wet weather. HN confirmed that the issue had been raised at time of construction with the contractor. They confirmed their intention to address it as part of the ongoing work. The situation will be monitored through the winter, with a follow-up planned for February.

6. Update from the P3 Co-ordinator on current state of footpaths

HN completed a full survey of the footpaths and shared the findings with SJ, who confirmed that the issues raised have been addressed. Some of the identified work had already been completed by the contractors shortly before receiving the update from HN, while a few additional problems noted by HN were new to SJ and have now been passed to a contractor.

Issues on the coast path have been forwarded to Dave Palmer at EDDC, who is responsible for maintaining that area. SJ appreciated the information and encouraged members to report any future concerns, noting his own limited availability. HN confirmed that, from his perspective, all the paths remain passable.

7. Update from DCC Public Rights of Way warden

Updates were provided in item 6.

8. Any other business

HN raised a concern that Footpath 5 runs directly through the proposed Bloor Homes development site in Littleham Valley and questioned whether it would be diverted. SJ confirmed he hadn't heard anything about it yet and noted that such situations rarely proceed smoothly. He expressed hope that the necessary closures would be arranged before any work begins and asked to be informed if anyone notices activity on-site, as the Rights of Way Team is often the last to be notified. He emphasised that public rights must be formally addressed under the 1980s Highways Act before any construction can start, even if planning permission has been granted.

LV queried whether the footpaths need to remain open during construction, to which SJ clarified that they don't, but legal closure procedures must be followed. TD mentioned that informal meetings with Bloor Homes had taken place and there had been discussion about liaising with highways, especially regarding roundabouts. He expressed surprise that contact hadn't yet been made with the Rights of Way Team, though he didn't believe Bloor Homes was ignoring the issue.

ED brought up the long-standing issue of inadequate lighting along the Madeira Walk near Maer Road, which she has reported to EDDC over the past two years without resolution. CJ confirmed that EDDC is responsible and will seek an update on the repairs from StreetScene.

Finally, LV thanked Mark Williamson for his previous contributions as Chair and welcomed the new members to the working party.

9. Next meeting – 11th February 2026

The meeting closed at 16:53