EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Town Maintenance Overview Working Party

Notes of the meeting held on Thursday 11th September 2025 at 10am via Zoom.

Present

Councillor Ian Kirvan	IK	Exmouth Town Council (Chair)
Councillor Dianne Conduit	DC	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Maddy Chapman	MC	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Olly Davey	OD	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council
Chetna Jones	CJ	Exmouth Town Council
Sam Dorman	SD	Exmouth Town Council

Apologies

Councillor David Poor	DP	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Graham Deasy	GD	Exmouth Town Council

1. **Welcome and apologies**

IK welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies were noted as above.

2. **To approve the notes of the meeting held on 14th August 2025 and any matters arising therein**

The notes of the previous meeting held on 14th August 2025 were proposed for approval by MC, seconded by OD, and agreed by all.

Matters arising:

Bunn Road Verge – A "blue heart" symbol placed by a local resident has been removed. The verge, previously brown due to dry weather, is now beginning to green and needs cutting.

Town Centre Pavements – DC had previously reported that the pavements around the town centre were slimy, grubby and untidy and felt it was far worse than Sidmouth and Budleigh in terms of cleanliness. Slippery surfaces and weed growth are ongoing issues. Bushes near benches (e.g., by the market) are overgrown with Dogwood. Members discussed trimming back for safety and visibility. CJ will flag this up with Exmouth in Bloom for them to report to EDDC.

High levels of litter were observed in key areas like Rolle Street and near takeaway outlets. There are overflowing bins, particularly on weekends, due to a lack of late evening bin runs which were previously in place.

Members suggested businesses should contribute to keeping their surroundings clean but acknowledged resistance due to dissatisfaction with business rates and services.

MC presented a proposal from a local business owner who offered to pressure wash and treat pavements with a weed-preventing foam. MC has provided the business plan to Lisa Bowman. DC expressed support for the initiative and offered to assist with business outreach, while IK and others agreed that organised community efforts could make a significant visual impact. Members considered reviving a town team or tidy group to address issues like weeds and litter, with IK volunteering to participate in such efforts.

Pound Lane bank – James Chubb (ecologist) advised cutting in sections to allow wildlife (slow worms) to move away. He recommended tools like loppers, secateurs, or hedge trimmers — not strimmer's (which are more disruptive). CJ added that the team could start trimming gradually, focusing on overhanging and dense bramble. Full clearance isn't feasible, but partial, careful cutting may help long-term.

Members discussed vehicles, especially motorhomes, regularly parking on the pavement, impeding work and pedestrian access (e.g., for pushchairs/wheelchairs). The issue has been reported to Devon County Council (via Jeff Trail and Highways) with no resolution so far. Photos have been taken showing how narrow the path has become. Members suggested asking Devon County Council to block pavement temporarily for maintenance.

Bus Shelter list – Still awaiting an updated bus shelter list from Fernbank. SD followed up and received a response stating Paul (Fernbank) is currently on annual leave.

CJ updated members on multiple bus shelters being vandalised, including the recently repaired glass bus shelter on the Strand. The damage involved smashing glass panels, which are costly to replace. Observations suggest that the vandalism may have been carried out from a moving vehicle, possibly using a BB gun. Damage appeared consistent with small impact holes, and both the Strand and Salterton Road shelters were affected in similar ways.

3. To receive a request for a new bus shelter

CJ received a request from Devon County Council (DCC), citing local need for a bus shelter opposite Harwood Close, to benefit elderly residents. There is currently a bus stop but no shelter at the location.

There was a reluctance for this as the Town Council has only recently secured a maintenance agreement for existing shelters with Fernbank and adding new, unsupported shelters could complicate this.

Members discussed the need and reported that there has been no prior resident requests or evidence of significant use. A covered bus shelter already exists nearby

at Churchill Road, which is well-used and serves the same general area and the Harwood Close stop is lightly used; members observed few, if any, regular users.

Several councillors argued that more deserving locations across Exmouth lack shelters despite higher usage and approving this could set a precedent, leading to multiple future requests that the council may not have resources to support.

Members unanimously rejected the request.

4. **To receive an update on the graffiti within Exmouth**

Graffiti clean-up continues regularly, with the town maintenance team out each Friday addressing reported areas.

Most of the locations flagged last month have been cleaned, though some were re-tagged almost immediately, which remains a recurring frustration.

No major new incidents have been reported recently except one minor issue at a bus shelter on Pines Road.

It was noted that graffiti tends to increase during darker months, so a rise in activity is expected as nights draw in.

5. **To receive an update on grass cutting.**

CJ updated members that no grass cutting has taken place since the last update due to dry weather. Growth has resumed with recent rain, prompting CJ to send an email to Idverde to schedule the next cut.

Members agreed to keep one grass cut in reserve for March, as this strategy worked well previously.

SG received a complaint from a resident regarding parking on grass verges at Moorfield Road. Members discussed who was responsible for the green areas and surrounding verges. East Devon District Council (EDDC) are responsible for the large green areas and the grass verges on the highway are the ownership of Devon County Council (DCC). SG advised the resident to contact County Councillor Jeff Trail.

The existing barriers to prevent parking are ineffective, with drivers simply parking between them. Overcrowded parking in the area is becoming a key issue, made worse by commercial vehicles brought home by workers. Concerns also raised about cars being repaired on the large verge and even council vehicles parking there. The issue has been raised repeatedly with EDDC, but no clear resolution has been made.

6. **To receive an update on general Town Maintenance work**

CJ updated members that after a period of staff leave and the need for watering, the town maintenance operations are returning to normal. Occasional watering of flower towers is still required as they don't retain water well.

Road weed clearance has resumed and is progressing well. The areas recently cleared include:

- Lidl Bank
- Withycombe Park Drive, Parkside Drive
- Brixington Drive, Blackstone Drive, Cherishwood Avenue, Brook Meadow
- The Marles and side roads

The team will be moving on to Meadow View Road, Hawthorn Grove, and side roads.

Some residents have complained immediately after the road weed clearing that roads appear messy after. CJ explained that special brushes used for weed removal are not designed for full road sweeping, so the brushes need to be changed.

The schedule is that weed clearing takes place for three to four days followed by one day with the road sweeper.

CJ encouraged members to help inform residents by explaining the process. SG suggested using social media platforms, such as Facebook, to keep the community updated and help reduce complaints. CJ will also remind the town maintenance team to take more before-and-after photos to support this communication.

CJ provided an update on the waste being taken to Camperdown depot and that it must be checked and photographed, as per the new policy. The purpose of this is to monitor types of waste.

MC reported that the weeds on the road around the Deaf Academy / Maer Road has significant weed issues (some up to 2ft high). The Town Maintenance has this scheduled in.

7. Any other business

SG raised the issue of a sign referencing the Concorde, currently located in the Magnolia Centre, and questioned whether it could be removed, as the Concorde is no longer in place. It was noted that the Concorde is now with the RAF Cadets and is not the responsibility of ETC.

8. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 16th October 2025 at 10:00am via Zoom.