EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Flooding & Water Quality Working Party

Notes of the Zoom meeting held at 2pm on Tuesday 21st October 2025

Present

Graham Deasy	GD	ETC Councillor, Littleham Ward (Chairperson)
Pauline Stott	PS	ETC Councillor, Halsdon Ward (joined at 2.30pm)
Mark Williamson	MW	ETC Councillor, Littleham Ward
Tom Buxton-Smith	TBS	EDDC, Engineering Projects Manager
Samantha Binarelli	SB	SWW, Project Manager
Sarah Sharpe	SS	SWW, Local Government Liaison Officer
Philip Morgan	PM	DCC, Neighbourhood Highway Engineer, Exeter Highway Team
Stuart Coles	SC	DCC, Neighbourhood Highways Officer
Chetna Jones	CJ	ETC Deputy Town Clerk
Lisa Greenway	LG	ETC, Note Taker

Apologies

Cherry Nicholas	CN	ETC Councillor, Brixington Ward
Steve Gazzard	SG	ETC Councillor, Withycombe Raleigh Ward
Tim Dumper	TD	ETC Councillor, Halsdon Ward
Ian Kirvan	IK	ETC Councillor, Brixington Ward
Thomas Aldridge	TA	DCC, Flood & Coastal Risk Management Officer
Jay Harris	JH	SWW, SWW, Regional Operations Manager
Leonora Hansen	LH	EA, Flood Risk Engagement Advisor

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1. **Welcome, introduction and apologies**

   GD welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted. The meeting started on an informal basis as only two voting members were present. Once PS joined it was agreed to revisit item 2 to approve the notes and proceed on a formal basis.

2. **To approve the notes from the meeting on the 5th of August 2025**

   PS proposed and MW seconded, and it was agreed the notes were an accurate record of the meeting.

3. **Matters arising**

   No matters arising.

4. **SWW: Update on the Maer Valley upgrade work for phase 2, Hartopp Pumping station and flooding concerns, recent activities relating to leak repairs and other general updates**

   SB introduced herself to members.

   SB shared that repair work on the rising main in Phear Park is scheduled to begin the following morning, with a shutdown starting at 9:30am and a pressure test to be conducted before reopening at the end of the day. Some tankers will be on-site, and it is hoped the work will be completed within a day. GD sought clarification on which pipeline would be shut down, and SB confirmed it was a separate pipe and not the rising main from Phear Park to

Maer Lane. SS explained that the flows were being held, and tankers would be used to enable the repair to take place. CJ questioned the original location of the leak, SS confirmed a small leak was found on the cycle path by Chichester Close, and added a broader investigation is ongoing and details were not yet available but would be forwarded to the Town Council when completed. The Environment Agency were being kept informed.

On the Maer Valley upgrade, SB mentioned that the new rising main from Maer Road to Maer Lane will be connected on Saturday and has already passed a pressure test under a temporary connection. MW queried whether water egress at the corner of Maer Road and Maer Lane was linked to the rising main, SB didn't believe so but would verify.

Flooding concerns near to the Hartopp pumping station were raised due to high tides, CJ reported she had shared video evidence of water pouring from manholes on Exeter Road and was awaiting a response from Hazel Tranchant. SB agreed to follow this up.

Further discussion covered concerns about regional low reservoir levels, with SS agreeing to investigate and provide an update.

MW raised a case about water billing for residents in shared block sheltered council accommodation, specifically how charges are applied to individuals without water meters. SS advised the matter depended on whether bills were paid directly to SWW or through EDDC and recommended residents contact the SWW Customer Service Team.

Finally, the discussion turned to permit variations and the Environment Agency's permit application process. CJ reported the Environment Agency had confirmed the timelines for public consultation following SWW's submission. SB confirmed the application had been submitted but the Environment Agency had requested further information last week, which SWW are currently addressing. Once the submission is formally accepted, SB reiterated that a 30-working-day consultation period will be triggered.

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5. EA: Water Quality results and general updates

No EA representatives were present at the meeting, although EA provided a link to their Exmouth Engage page which provides an update on EA activity in the area including information on the SWW permit application. See above for broader information.

Weekly water results were being provided, and results were within the expected range.

6. EDDC: Update on Sea Wall by Imperial Recreation ground and general updates

TBS reported that the seawall has been completed for some time and has had no issues to date, though it has not yet been tested by any significant storms.

Progress has been slow in Manor Gardens due to resource challenges. The resurfacing work cannot proceed until the drainage issue is resolved, as all the existing pipes are blocked with roots. A new drainage system is required, likely discharging into a soak-a-way. A survey has been conducted to locate the current gullies, allowing for a drainage map to be produced, but overall progress is slow because of limited resources.

On the Imperial Recreation Ground project, TBS explained that the required revetment work is much larger in scope than the funding currently available. A funding bid has been submitted to the Environment Agency, but the timeline for receiving funds is uncertain. In the

interim, temporary repairs, although unsightly, are functioning effectively and have proven to be a practical short-term solution.

TBS also noted that there has been very little rainfall since last winter, and no flooding or related issues have been reported.
GD raised a broader concern regarding the erosion of old landfill sites, referencing national discussions within the Coastal Communities Network. He highlighted the increasing risk posed by weather events and noted that many developments across the UK are built on these vulnerable sites. In response, TBS acknowledged the issue and mentioned Westward Ho! in North Devon as a nearby example where landfill material is being exposed due to erosion, compounded by the absence of coastal protection. He reassured that, in contrast, Exmouth have concrete revetments in place, which allow for manageable repairs when failures occur.

GD reported, on behalf of SG, that the seawall between Mamhead Slipway and the first beach steps, have drainage holes which have become blocked by seaweed and rubbish due to grills being placed over them. TBS acknowledged that this is EDDC's responsibility and confirmed that a clean-out will be scheduled.

CJ enquired about the maintenance schedule and operational testing of the floodgates. TBS responded that there is currently no plan in place. He informed the group that Simon Kennedy, former Deputy Ops Manager at EDDC, who previously managed this, has left the organisation. TBS committed to raising the matter with the Ops Manager, to determine the next steps.

7. DCC: Flood risk general update

No DCC representative was present at the meeting, and no report was received.

8. DCC: Highways general updates

SC reported no major updates from his side, noting things are continuing as usual.

GD raised a concern on behalf of IK regarding severe drainage problems on Gorse Lane, where three out of four drains are blocked and the drainage ditch is filled to road level. This is causing water to spill into the lane and damage the road surface. Although historically DCC maintained the ditch and surrounding hedge line, that work has not been done for years. SC confirmed the drainage pipe has collapsed, preventing both jetting and camera surveys. The issue has been on record for at least a year but remains unresolved due to funding constraints and prioritisation of higher-risk areas like the salting network. He clarified that the ditch and hedges are not under DCC's responsibility but that of adjacent landowners. DCC used to maintain them as part of broader countywide efforts but due to lack of funding and resources this work no longer takes place.

Cleaning of the ditches has been requested, but the work is not high priority since it's not yet causing serious flooding to major roads like Dinan Way.

CJ mentioned that Exmouth Town Council's Maintenance Team has made multiple visits to Gorse Lane to clear leaves and cut back hedges, noting that the sheer volume of leaf fall from the oak trees in the area is substantial.

GD noted that there had been discussion in a recent Full Council meeting about drainage related to Dinan Way and future development in the Upper Hulham Road area, particularly concerns about winter surface water runoff worsening due to new developments.
SC acknowledged the issue and said that the Dinan Way Engineering Design Group is involved in improving drainage further up Hulham Road. However, challenges remain due to the road being tree-lined and part of a pebbled heath, both of which contribute to continual debris clogging the drainage system.

9. ETC Councillors: Reports and questions to representatives of external organisations

No further reports were received, and no further question were asked.

10. AOB

No other business

The meeting ended at 14:43

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