EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Festival and Events Working Party

Informal Notes of the virtual meeting held at 1400 on Thursday 23rd October 2025 via zoom

Present

Cllr Nicky Nicholls	NN	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Olly Davey	OD	Exmouth Town Council
Chetna Jones	CJ	Exmouth Town Council
Jess Magill	JM	Exmouth Town Council
Lisa Greenway	LG	Exmouth Town Council

Apologies:

Cllr Steve Gazzard	NH	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Alex Sadiq	AS	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Cherry Nicholas	CN	Exmouth Town Council
Joy Whipps	JW	Festival Volunteer

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

CJ welcomed members to the meeting and noted apologies.

2. To approve the notes from the meeting on the 19th of September 2025 & matters arising

As the meeting was not quorate the meeting proceeded on an informal basis for information only, and the approval of the previous meeting notes from the 19th of September 2025 was postponed.

3. To discuss the winter festival 2025

JM reported that the winter festival will take place on Friday the 29th of November, just five weeks away. All entertainment has been confirmed, and the event schedule is almost finalised, including performances from various groups and walkabout entertainers. The event flyer is currently being designed and is expected to be ready for distribution next week to begin public promotion.

Lantern kits, organised by LG, have been successfully ordered and distributed to schools, with 225 kits handed out. Some schools were unable to participate this year, including the Deaf Academy, due to scheduling clashes. However, two new community groups, the Hive and Plastic Free Exmouth will be taking part. JM noted that the lantern parade is likely to be similar in size to last year's event, meaning a comparable number of marshals will be required. JM will reach out to councillors and staff to help marshal the parade and ensure safety. The lantern parade will once again begin at Holy Trinity Church, following the same route as previous years: down Rolle Street, across the pedestrian crossing, through the Magnolia Centre, back along The Parade, and into The Strand via the rear entrance. JM confirmed that permission has been granted to use Holy Trinity Church as the gathering point.

The Christmas tree will return to its traditional spot near Franklin's, prompting JM to update the site plan accordingly.

Hello Exmouth and Churches Together will both have a stall in the Strand, with the latter offering a small Christmas craft activity and distributing leaflets listing festive church services happening across Exmouth. For refreshments, George from Spoken will run a mulled wine stall, the Wheelie Small Cocktail Bar from Sundowners will serve drinks, and a churros stall will make its debut this year.

The entertainment lineup will include the East Devon All-Stars, a local cheerleading group performing a 15-minute routine, alongside returning favourites such as the La La Choirs, Centre Stage, Exmouth Youth Theatre, and Talent Box. The Little Bighorns band will once again lead the parade.

JM mentioned that final permissions from EDDC have not yet been granted, although the license application period remains open for another week. JM expects approval soon, despite EDDC's concerns about managing potential crowd numbers above 850 people in The Strand. JM reassured that attendance is typically spread out over the four-hour event, so crowding should not be an issue.

The war memorial will be roped off with bunting and stakes to discourage people from sitting on it, as this has caused concerns in the past.

OD suggested inviting different choirs, such as Singing for Fun, for the 2026 festival to vary the programme. JM welcomed this idea.

JM reminded members that the 2025 Winter Festival will run from 3pm, with the Christmas tree light switch-on at 7.05 pm, and the event concluding shortly after, at 7.15 pm.

NN queried whether donations would be collected during the festival. JM explained that this has not been done in the past, as the festival is a Town Council funded community event intended to be free for residents. However, there may be opportunities to encourage donations to the mayor's charity for those wishing to contribute voluntarily.

Both NN and OD volunteered to marshal the lantern parade. CJ confirmed that an email will be sent to councillors and staff soon to request additional volunteer marshals. JM encouraged councillors and staff to help promote the event, including putting up posters in their local areas once printed materials are distributed. Local businesses will be encouraged to display flyers and posters and stay open later on the night of the festival to support the community atmosphere.

4. Any other business

JM confirmed that the Craft Your Christmas event will not be included in this year's Winter Festival but will instead take place on December the 6th, approximately between 10am and 2pm, as holding both events on the same day last year proved too demanding.

JM reminded members that Gate to Plate will take place this Sunday, the 26th of October.

JM mentioned that there are ongoing discussions about moving the art trail out of the 2026 summer festival to create a separate art weekend, in May next year, to allow it more focus and visibility. A Google Forms survey was circulated to gauge interest, and while only 20 responses were received, fewer than hoped, it still provides some insight into potential engagement.

5. Date of next meeting 20th November 2025

The meeting ended at 14:23**.**