EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Festival and Events Working Party

Notes of the virtual meeting held at 1430 on Thursday 20th November 2025 via zoom

Present

Cllr Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Nicky Nicholls	NN	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Nick Hookway	NH	Exmouth Town Council
Joy Whipps	JW	Festival Volunteer
Lisa Bowman	LB	Exmouth Town Council
Chetna Jones	CJ	Exmouth Town Council
Jess Magill	JM	Exmouth Town Council
Lisa Greenway	LG	Exmouth Town Council

Apologies:

Cllr Alex Sadiq	AS	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Olly Davey	OD	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Cherry Nicholas	CN	Exmouth Town Council

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

SG welcomed members to the meeting and noted apologies.

2. To approve the notes from the meetings on the 19th of September, 23rd of October 2025 & matters arising

NH proposed and SG seconded the accuracy of the notes from the meeting on the 19th of September 2025 and the 23rd of October 2025. All members agreed that the notes were a true record and there were no matters arising.

3. To discuss the Art Weekend 2026

JM confirmed that the Arts Weekend will take place between the 16th and 18th of May 2026, noting that it works better as a standalone event than as part of the summer festival.

JM reported that she recently discovered a funding opportunity with an imminent deadline and, due to the time constraints, submitted an application herself rather than bringing it to the working party first. The fund run by Airbnb supports tourist destinations in need of investment and is extremely competitive, with only ten awards expected. The proposal focuses on creating a sculpture project that would be integrated into the Arts Weekend. The plan is to invite people to submit concepts, shortlist five or six designs, and exhibit them during the event so that either the public or councillors can vote for the final piece.

If the bid is successful Airbnb would cover the full cost of the project, providing a lasting cultural asset for Exmouth.

Members agreed that the proposal was worthwhile and expressed their full support.

4. To discuss the Winter Festival 2025

JM confirmed that festival preparations are progressing well, with the only significant task remaining being the recruitment of additional marshals for the parade. NN offered her help. JM will wait for a reminder email to be sent before seeking extra help from friends and family. SG offered his assistance at the information tent if required.

JM outlined the schedule, with the festival beginning at 3pm, the lantern parade departing from the Holy Trinity Church at 5.20pm and arriving in the Strand at 5.50pm, the light switch-on taking place at 7.05pm, followed by the event closing at 7.15pm.

CJ confirmed that the Christmas tree donated by King's Garden Centre will be delivered and installed on the 25th of November and that all festive lighting will be set up next week in time for the event.

The Rotary Club has been donated a tree from King's Garden Centre for the Magnolia Centre and is planning a small light switch-on event on the 28th of November, with further details to be shared by CJ once confirmed.

5. Any other business

NH advised that there is an upcoming East Devon Arts and Culture Forum meeting scheduled online for Wednesday the 26th of November at 10am with a representative from the Arts Council attending. SG confirmed he would be attending as the Town Council representative.

LB outlined issues concerning the Temporary Planning Commission, which had allowed cafes and bars to place tables and chairs on EDDC owned land in the Strand under a three-year sitting-out consent. When initially implemented, EDDC had to apply for planning permission as the local planning authority because this constituted a change of use. With the three-year period now expired, EDDC is discussing whether to reapply to extend the consent. LB noted that this matter would go through the PETS group for a decision and that the Town Council had been asked to share its thoughts. LB suggested councillors could feed in comments via Councillors Graham Deasy and Dianne Conduit, the Town Council representatives on PETS. Members supported this approach.

LB further explained that there are two separate arrangements operating in the Strand: sitting-out consents (which are subject to leases) on EDDC owned land and pavement licences for Devon County Council Highways land around the perimeter. The sitting out consents had originally been a COVID-era response to encourage social distancing. Businesses can still apply for pavement licenses for public areas, but the Strand Gardens area, owned by EDDC remains subject to the existing regime.

CJ highlighted enforcement concerns, noting complaints that furniture placement on the Strand sometimes obstructed access for wheelchairs and pushchairs, and raised the issue of A-board signage. She stressed the need for strict adherence to agreements to ensure accessibility and safe use of the space.

6. Date of next meeting 11th of December 2025

The meeting ended at 14:57**.**