EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Party

Notes of the meeting held at 6pm on Tuesday 10th March 2026 in the Town Hall Chamber

Present

Councillor Tim Dumper	TD	Exmouth Town Council (Chair)
Councillor Olly Davey	OD	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Nicky Nicholls	NN	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Louise Venables	LV	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Andrew Woodward	AW	Exmouth Town Council
Lisa Bowman	LB	Exmouth Town Council
Zoey Cooper	ZC	Exmouth Town Council
Catherine Causley	CC	East Devon District Council
Lou Doliczny	LD	Transition Exmouth
Florence Lock	FL	Transition Exmouth

Apologies

Councillor Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Mike Rosser	MR	Exmouth Town Council
Lewis Connor	LC	East Devon District Council

1. **Welcome and apologies**

TD welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies were noted.

2. **To approve the notes of the meeting on 3rd February 2026 and any matters arising**

The notes of the previous meeting were proposed for approval by OD, seconded by NN and agreed by all.

3. **To receive an update from EDDC**

CC reported that the council's carbon footprint has fallen by 4.9%, and the Climate Strategy and Action Plan is about to go to Cabinet. Support for local climate initiatives remains strong. Further funding proposals will be considered at the April Green Team meeting. Carbon literacy training continues, with more staff now certified.

The climate team has now moved under Governance, where a new Project Management Office is being developed to ensure environmental considerations are built into all projects. Recruitment for a Climate Change Manager is currently on hold while restructuring takes place. The Carbon Action Fund has approved 15 projects expected to save around 80 tonnes of carbon, and the wider programme has

supported 69 businesses. Work is ongoing on climate-aligned planning guidance for the Local Plan, the Green Homes Plan and neighbourhood plans, and more public events and training opportunities are planned in the months ahead.

4. **To receive an update from Transition Exmouth**

LD and FL reported that their recent funding bid to ETC was unsuccessful due to high demand, though they were encouraged to reapply for a capital grant to support website improvements. The main focus is currently the Exmouth CAN project, led by Sarah Kersey, with volunteer recruitment underway and early training already taking place. Materials for door-knocking and public events are being prepared, and engagement will soon begin through town-centre activities, library sessions and kiosk outreach. Trial door-knocking has already helped refine the survey.

Work is also happening to update the website so residents can easily find sustainability information and volunteering opportunities, with a larger upgrade planned for the summer. Alongside this, a small youth-focused project is starting, led by Katie, likely involving a creative competition to encourage young people to produce environmental content and strengthen long-term engagement.

5. **To decide when to show the People's Emergency Briefing film.**

The People's Emergency Briefing film is now complete and will begin public screenings from 7 April, with the team aiming for as many showings as possible nationwide. ZC confirmed interest in hosting a screening in Exmouth, likely at Scott Cinemas, with May suggested as the best time to allow for proper publicity and to avoid the local election period. The film runs for 45 minutes and includes guidance for running a Q&A session, which councillors or group members will need to facilitate.

A school's package is also being developed, and the group is open to showing the film at Exmouth Community College and other schools once they have reviewed the education-specific materials.

CC is exploring whether East Devon District Council might also host screenings or contribute funding. Although there was some discussion about whether Scott Cinemas is the best venue for a supportive post-film discussion, its size and facilities make it the preferred option. A small ticket fee of around £5 could help to cover venue costs.

6. **To discuss and agree on the next steps regarding how to increase biodiversity in Exmouth.**

The group discussed using The Great Collaboration's resources, which offer clear pathways for climate and biodiversity action, as a way to bring more structure and

emphasis to the environment in Exmouth. Although the town already has an environmental policy and has run a wide variety of biodiversity-related activities, these efforts would benefit from an overarching strategy.

Members agreed that creating a formal biodiversity strategy and action plan would help consolidate existing work, align with wider nature recovery plans, and strengthen community engagement through tools like Pollenize.

Wild Exmouth was highlighted as a particularly strong project with high volunteer involvement, but much of its momentum faded after funding ended. Members felt that rebuilding a volunteer network should be part of the new strategy, especially as the local wildlife group has dwindled. ZC agreed to find out if the name Wild Exmouth can be used again for future initiatives.

Members also discussed the need for a baseline biodiversity audit to measure progress, though concerns were raised about capacity for large-scale tasks.

The Great Collaboration was praised again for offering a coherent biodiversity framework. ZC will begin drafting an outline of a biodiversity strategy. This strategy will build on the environmental policy, incorporate behaviour-change approaches, and bring together the council's smaller campaigns into a more coordinated plan. There was support for making biodiversity a standing agenda item, given its importance and the sense that it has been overlooked. The group also discussed using the Tuk-Tuk to share biodiversity advice with residents, noting that small private gardens collectively represent a significant opportunity for nature recovery.

7. **To receive an update from ZC regarding:**

- **Community Clothes Swaps**

The group discussed the upcoming swapping event on 18 April, which will take place at the Salvation Army and will be larger than previous sessions. Alongside clothes, people will be able to swap kitchen utensils and cookery books, and Craig will run a retro pastry-baking activity. The event will run, with drop-offs in the late morning and the swap itself from 12:30 to 2 pm. Posters have been designed and will be printed. Members offered to help distribute them around shops and cafés. The group agreed that moving to quarterly swaps is worth trying and that supporting the promotion of these events would be helpful.

- **School forum / Church forum**

An update was given on plans to establish a schools eco forum. A recent meeting with head teachers was very positive, and all schools present expressed interest in taking part. A follow-up meeting is scheduled next week to finalise the format and frequency of the forum. Progress on creating a similar forum for churches has been slower, partly due to the assumption that one church needed to lead it. It has been

clarified that this isn't required and that participation alone is enough. With Sue Mosely (Coastal Churches) currently away, further progress will be made once she returns, but the group remains confident the forum will come together.

- **Community Bike Rides**

An update was given on plans for the next community bike ride. The Tri-Hards are keen to collaborate again, and arrangements are being made with Neill, one of the ride leaders, to confirm a suitable date. The intention is to repeat the previous simple route, starting at Sideshore and riding up to A La Ronde and back. The group hopes to run these rides every couple of months to keep momentum going.

- **Tuk–tuk**

The Tuk-Tuk is expected to be ready by mid-April. Although the cab initially was the wrong blue, it is now being resprayed to match the Exmouth Cup blue, with the van in orange. The interior design has been agreed, using recycled marine ply and flexible pegboard panels so the layout can be adapted for different uses. A storage container for the Tuk-Tuk will be delivered to Gorfin Hall next week. Members discussed the need to plan a programme of activities, so the Tuk-Tuk is used regularly rather than sitting idle. Insurance arrangements need to be confirmed, and this will be addressed once a delivery date is finalised. It was also noted that the next set of Hospice post-box toppers will feature the Tuk-Tuk, replacing the previous Exmouth Cup design.

- **Exmouth Cup**

The Exmouth Cup scheme continues to run well. There is still a large stock of cups because participating businesses haven't needed top-ups for some time. Kids Cove will soon have a return point, bringing the total number of return points in Exmouth to four, alongside Harbour View, Postcards and Deli on the Strand. Dough Works has also asked to join the scheme. They are located directly opposite Postcards, and can therefore share the existing return point. A follow-up conversation will take place to arrange supplying them with cups.

- **Visit Exmouth and "Sustainable Shores"**

Visit Exmouth's "Sustainable Shores" sub-brand, which promotes Exmouth as Britain's greenest town, was highlighted at the recent networking event, where the poster received very positive feedback. A meeting will be arranged with local businesses to show them how they can use this content and to develop a toolkit for their comms. Before accessing the materials, businesses may be asked to sign a green pledge.

- **Vegan for a month**

Members discussed progress with the “Vegan for a Month” challenge. AW described the experience as a mix of positives and difficulties. He has enjoyed many of the meals, especially those from Plant Hood, which introduced him to new ingredients like tempeh and improved his confidence with tofu. Eating out has been more challenging, with limited vegan options in some places and poor labelling in shops. He also experienced a dip in energy during the first week, which he later learned is common when switching suddenly to a vegan diet and not eating enough calories. Increasing carbohydrates resolved the issue.

The blogs documenting the challenge have been well received, though engagement has dropped slightly. Members discussed ways to boost interest, including sharing the blogs through the climate newsletter and using more eye-catching social media posts. Members shared tips on vegan products and recipes, and several expressed appreciation for the honesty and humour in the blog posts. AW noted that while he and Wendy will incorporate more vegan meals in future, they are unlikely to remain fully vegan after the challenge ends.

- **“We are all people of power” energy exhibition and event**

The recent retrofit and energy exhibition at the library drew mixed feelings. The exhibition itself was successful, with thousands of people likely seeing the portraits in the windows, and the film introducing the featured energy heroes was well-received. However, the event mainly attracted the usual climate-engaged audience, whereas the talks and presentations were designed to target households who were ready to make substantial retrofit changes. Despite leafleting nearly a thousand homes, none of the targeted households came along. And ECOE Advice, with whom ETC had partnered on this project, declined to speak at the event.

The evening however, did spark useful ideas, particularly around exploring a community-led solar project. Discussions on this will continue. It was noted that a larger library space would be required for gatherings of more than 20 people.

CC mentioned work that is underway with Devon Climate Emergency on a six-month project exploring how to promote air-source heat pumps and solar PV alongside the new Warm Homes Plan. This involves around 30 partners and aims to identify realistic, deliverable actions rather than theoretical ambitions. There was also reflection on the potential of rooftop solar arrays, which may face fewer grid-connection barriers than large solar farms, making them a promising avenue for community energy projects.

- **Rotary tree planting**

Rotary has received approval to plant 100 trees at St John’s, with Street Scene supportive providing the trees are bought, planted and maintained by a community group. Nearby residents will be consulted about water access and use of the space. Additional potential planting sites are being mapped, and surplus trees from a previous project may need relocating. Members emphasised the importance of early engagement with residents, considering existing uses of open spaces, and checking for underground utilities. A tree nursery is being established at Pound Lane

allotments to grow local trees for future planting. These topics may be raised at the next online Tree Forum on 1st Apil 2026 at 2pm.

8. **To receive an update on other relevant matters from Town Council working parties and outside body representatives.**

No updates.

9. **Any other business**

Members briefly discussed the *Jo in the Water* film, with ZC confirming it is excellent and beautifully showcases Exmouth. Several members plan to attend the upcoming screening, and others noted they still hope to see it. The meeting closed with thanks to ZC for her work.

Date of next meeting: 14th April 2026, 6pm – 8pm, in the Town Hall Chamber.