EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Festival and Events Working Party

Notes of the virtual meeting held at 1400 on Thursday 12th March 2026 via zoom

Present

Cllr Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Olly Davey	OD	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Nicky Nicholls	NN	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Graham Deasy	GD	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Alex Sadiq	AS	Exmouth Town Council
Chetna Jones	CJ	Exmouth Town Council
Jess Magill	JM	Exmouth Town Council
Lisa Greenway	LG	Exmouth Town Council

Apologies:

Joy Whipps	JW	Festival Volunteer
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 meeting on the 12th of February 2026 and matters arising

NN proposed and OD seconded the accuracy of the notes from the meeting on the 12th of February 2026, all members agreed that the notes were a true record.

SG expressed strong appreciation for the Town of Culture paper prepared by JM, noting that the submission was particularly impressive. JM, in turn, thanked members for the feedback they had provided throughout the process, explaining that their input had strengthened the application.

3. Update on the art weekend

JM confirmed that everything is progressing well as she works to finalise the programme. The weekend will feature a wide range of artistic activity spread across multiple venues in the town. Group exhibitions involving artists from across Devon will be hosted in several locations, including the upstairs space at the former Woodland and Sea building on the Strand, the function room at the Imperial Hotel, Artisan, Sea Dog, and a number of shop windows.

An art market will take place on the Strand on the Saturday, accompanied by live music and various creative activities designed to draw people in and create a lively atmosphere. JM highlighted a major feature planned for the Sunday: an outdoor painting event organised by John from Artisan. Around seventy-five artists have already signed up to paint along the seafront, turning the promenade into an open-air studio where visitors can watch the artists at work. Additional community-focused contributions include a mosaic project led by Open Door and an exhibition by the Exmouth Ceramics group. Sideshore Hub will also host exhibitions and workshops, adding to the breadth of the weekend's programme.

JM noted that although initial engagement from participants was slow, interest has now grown significantly, and she hopes this first year will establish the event as an annual fixture.

SG mentioned that the event has already gained visibility on Facebook and suggested promoting it further through Devonair Radio's "What's On" listings. JM agreed to follow up and confirmed that Devonair is already on her press list, though she will also contact them directly.

OD asked for the event dates, and JM confirmed it will run from the 1st to the 4th of May, with most activities concentrated on the Saturday and Sunday of the bank holiday weekend, though some events will also take place on the Friday and Monday. JM added that the event poster is nearly ready and will be circulated widely once finalised, with hard copies available for distribution around the town.

4. Update on the summer festival

JM explained that she has little new progress to report because attention remains on preparations for the art weekend. JM recently met with a small group of trusted collaborators to explore ideas and push some concepts forward, but she hasn't yet had the time to fully develop or finalise them. JM noted that nothing is causing concern at this stage and has no particular issues or questions to raise.

5. To discuss the street art project

JM reported that the street art project is moving steadily toward delivery, with two artists—Slam and a second collaborator set to run informal workshops in Phear Park. These sessions are designed not just to teach practical skills but to introduce children to the ethos of responsible street art and the wider framework of creating public art thoughtfully. All promotional materials, including flyers and confirmed workshop dates, are already prepared. The project is currently awaiting final approval from EDDC, which is out for consultation.

Once the workshops begin, the participating children will go on to contribute to a collaborative mural during the Art Weekend, although the exact location for this installation is still being finalised. Alongside these creative plans, the necessary administrative tasks such as DBS checks are being completed to ensure the project runs smoothly.

Outreach efforts are expanding well. The head of art at the local college has offered support and is sharing information with students. Flyers have also been passed to a youth worker connected with the coastal churches, thanks to a contact provided by GD. Although the youth worker cannot assist directly with the project, he is distributing flyers to children he works with through both the churches and Open Door, helping to widen engagement. Overall, the focus is now on ensuring that young people across the community hear about the opportunity and feel encouraged to take part.

In addition to the workshop planning, the art wall at the skate park is being replaced and relocated to make space for a new bike track. Mollie is coordinating this work efficiently, and the new wall is expected to be installed just before the street art project begins, ensuring it is ready in time for the children's involvement and any related activities.

6. Any other business

JM shared a new opportunity that had arisen during the week, Tate is touring the country with a large mobile museum truck, and although they are not scheduled for Exmouth's art weekend, they will be in Exeter in August and may be able to visit Exmouth for a couple of days. JM has expressed strong interest and is now exploring whether a suitable location can be found for the 20-metre, 18-tonne vehicle. JM has already contacted EDDC, noting that the Strand may not be able to accommodate it, making Imperial Rec a more likely option. JM plans to speak further

with the organiser of the tour. Any cost to the council is expected to be minimal, as the Tate and Arts Council fund most of the activity, and any small expenses could be covered by her non-festival budget.

Members thanked JM for the significant time and effort she has invested in organising events for Exmouth. GD expressed appreciation for JM's work, noting that these events help bring the whole town together.

GD updated members on the upcoming mayors garden party at the Imperial Hotel grounds on Sunday the 10th of May. The event will run from 2pm to 5pm as a fundraiser for the mayor's charity, featuring around six musical choirs and performers. Admission will be £10, with £5 going toward the raffle. Invitations have already begun to go out, and preparations are progressing well.

CJ raised the topic of t-shirts and sponsorship, suggesting that once the new deputy is in place, they should consider what sponsorship options the working party would like to pursue. JM explained that she has been undertaking sponsorship training and plans to approach various businesses in the coming weeks. JM noted that several t-shirt printers operate in Exmouth, and one might be willing to offer a discount in exchange for promotional visibility. JM is already in conversation with a new business on Rolle Street that handles both printing and social media and is exploring whether they might support festival social media work as well as potentially offering discounted t-shirts.

7. Date of next meeting 23rd of April 2026

The meeting ended at 14:23