EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Exmouth Transport Partnership

Notes of the Zoom meeting held at 10am on Tuesday 21st April 2026

Present

Cllr Tim Dumper	TD	Exmouth Town Council (Chair)
Cllr Pauline Stott	PS	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr David Poor	DP	Exmouth Town Council
John Petty	JP	Active Travel Exmouth & Exmouth Community Association
Chris Comer	CC	Stagecoach Commercial Manager
Luke Freathy	LF	DCC Public Transport
Richard Easthope	RE	EDDC Parking Services Manager
Phillippa Norsworthy	PN	EDDC Licensing Manager
Natalie Martin	NM	Walk Wheel Cycle Trust
Lisa Greenway	LG	Exmouth Town Council

Apologies

Cllr Olly Davey	OD	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Graham Deasy	GD	Exmouth Town Council (Ex Officio)
Cllr Fred Caygill	FC	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Ian Kirvan	IK	Exmouth Town Council
Lisa Bowman	LB	Exmouth Town Council
Stuart Coles	SC	DCC Highways
Chris Smith	CS	DCC Public Transport

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1. **Welcome, introduction and apologies**

   TD welcomed members to the meeting and noted apologies.

2. **To approve the previous meeting notes from the 9th of December 2025 and the 3rd of March 2026**

   PS proposed and TD seconded the accuracy of the notes from the meeting on the 9th of December and the 3rd of March. The meeting notes were approved.

3. **Matters arising from the previous meeting**

   TD reported that he had attended an Active Travel meeting as previously promised and found it informative.

   TD addressed previous discussions about potentially subsidising the seafront bus service. After speaking with Paul Morrey, it became clear that although ETC already contributes to the 99E Brixington service on Sundays and evenings, Exmouth Town Council could not afford the much larger subsidy required for the seafront route, especially since DCC was unable to offer additional financial support. For now, the idea is not feasible, though it may be reconsidered in the future.

   TD noted that EDDC's Marie Ainsworth submitted a funding application on behalf of ETC to the GWR Community Fund but unfortunately it was not successful. The bid focused on improving the area between the train station and the car park, including general environmental enhancements, but the response indicated that despite being a strong application, it had not been selected for funding.

4. To note the minutes of the recent meeting of the East Devon Highways and Traffic Orders Committee

A link to the minutes from the 20th of March was included on the agenda.

5. Stakeholder reports:

a) Taxis

PN outlined how EDDC licenses both Hackney Carriages and private hire vehicles, which operate under two distinct regulatory regimes. Hackney Carriages are permitted to use designated taxi ranks, can be hailed on the street, and may also take advance bookings, while private hire vehicles must always be pre-booked through an operator and are not allowed to wait on the street or at taxi ranks. In Exmouth, AJ's Taxis is the largest Hackney Carriage operator and is therefore highly visible around the town. Alongside licensing vehicles, EDDC also licenses drivers, issuing separate licences for Hackney Carriage and private hire work. All drivers undergo a rigorous vetting process that includes an enhanced DBS check, a Group 2 medical assessment, proof of right to work, and where relevant, certificates of good character from countries they have lived in. Drivers must also pass a knowledge test, hold a valid driving licence, complete safeguarding training focused on issues such as modern slavery and child sexual exploitation, and attend an interview with a licensing officer before any licence is granted.

If an applicant does not meet the required criteria, their case can be referred to the Licensing and Enforcement Sub Committee for a decision, particularly where criminal convictions fall outside the council's policy. PN explained that vehicles must be under five years old when first licensed and can continue to be licensed until they reach fourteen years of age. Any vehicle older than this must be referred to the Sub Committee as an exception to policy. All licensed vehicles must hold a valid MOT, undergo an additional compliance check, and in the case of Hackney Carriages, have their meters calibrated to the correct fare tariff. Appropriate insurance for hire and reward is mandatory for all vehicles.

The meeting focused on ongoing problems with taxi ranks in Exmouth and the wider East Devon district. Phillippa Norsworthy explained that the ranks are protected both by traffic regulation orders and by EDDC bylaws, but enforcement is limited. Drivers have complained that members of the public frequently use the Capel's fish and chip shop rank as a parking space. Civil Enforcement Officers can only act after observing a vehicle for several minutes because the restriction is "no waiting" rather than "no stopping", and enforcement is particularly difficult in the evenings and at weekends. Licensing officers have no authority to issue penalties to unlicensed vehicles, which adds to the challenge. Tim Dumper noted that misuse of the rank often escalates into double parking and wider disruption.

PN outlined the legal framework requiring all fare changes to be approved by the Licensing Committee and then advertised for a statutory 14-day consultation period. Notices must be displayed at Blackdown House and published in local newspapers such as the Midweek Herald and Exmouth Journal. Any objections from the public or the trade must be considered at a further committee hearing before fares can be finalised.

PN described the significant workload involved in reviewing fares, particularly when using the Guildford Method, which requires detailed cost data from drivers on insurance, maintenance, running costs and dead mileage. Last year's consultation produced too few responses to make the method viable, so councillors opted to revert to the previous approach of considering inflation, cost-of-living pressures and fuel prices. This produced a modest

increase slightly above inflation. The Guildford Method may be reconsidered in future, but it remains resource-intensive and complex.

PN noted that the trade is divided, with some drivers requesting an inflationary rise and others fearing that higher fares will drive customers away. It was emphasised that the tariff sets a maximum fare; drivers may charge less but never more than the meter shows. For out-of-district journeys, a price can be agreed in advance, but it must not exceed what the meter would have calculated.

DP raised the idea of asking LB whether fare notices could be displayed at the Town Hall and questioned how rising fuel prices, driven by international tensions, could be managed. PN explained that a previous provision allowing an extra 10p per journey when fuel exceeded a certain price had been removed after two fare increases in 2024 and 2025. Any reinstatement or adjustment would require going through the full legal fare-setting process again, so it cannot be added informally.

PN confirmed that potential fare increases will be discussed at the next Licensing and Enforcement Sub Committee meeting in June when a dedicated report will be presented to the committee to decide whether to begin the formal process of reviewing and potentially raising fares.

DP noted an interest as a regular user of AJ's taxis.

TD expressed thanks to PN and her colleague Emily for their work on the Guildford Method. PN explained that herself and Emily attend the East Devon Taxi Trade Association meetings when invited, usually once or twice a year, and that there are plans to establish a taxi forum at EDCC to maintain regular engagement with the trade. TD added that if Exmouth Transport Partnership met in person, George Shorters from the Taxi Association would likely attend.

PN highlighted that anyone with queries about taxi or other licensing matters, including alcohol licensing and street trading, can contact the team via licensing@eastdevon.gov.uk, and reminded members that the EDDC website includes dedicated pages for concerns or complaints about East Devon licensed vehicles or drivers.

PN left the meeting.

b) Stagecoach

CC reported that the 5th of April service changes were implemented smoothly with no issues and that planning has already begun for the next set of changes scheduled for the 30th of August, with nothing specific to report yet for Exmouth.

CC explained that new funding for electric vehicles in the southwest should allow the entire network, including Exmouth, to be electrified within the next year, with vehicles already on order and charging infrastructure nearing completion in Exeter.

DP raised strong concerns about the reduced frequency and reliability of the 98 service, noting that Littleham has lost two of its three buses over recent years, that services are now less regular and less well used, and that drivers are receiving unfair criticism from passengers. TD added that the diversion away from Moorfield Road caused by a weak bridge has significantly reduced passenger numbers and argued that once the bridge is repaired, the route and frequency should be restored. CC responded that Stagecoach would review

reinstating the route once the bridge is fixed, though the increased size and weight of electric buses may impose new constraints and could require changes such as parking restrictions.

TD requested that CC ensures DCC Highways is made aware of the weight requirements of the new vehicles so this can be factored into future infrastructure planning.

CC left the meeting.

c) DCC Public Transport

LF explained that he had no major updates to share but confirmed that the team will be attending the County Show on the 21st, 22nd and 23rd of May. He noted that they expect to have an electric bus on display and will be available throughout the event to answer questions and distribute promotional materials.

LF left the meeting.

d) EDDC Car/Cycle, Coach & Lorry Parks & Electric Vehicle Charging

RE advised that Foxhole's car park has recently been resurfaced, giving it a much-improved surface. Plans are underway to enhance motorhome arrangements along Queen's Drive Echelon and Maer Road, including new signage and clearly marked overnight bays featuring a moon symbol. Around thirty designated spaces will be created, spaced to maintain safe distances between vehicles.

Additional improvements include a thin white line to keep the footpath accessible and new high-level signs to help visitors identify the correct payment code without needing to walk to the machine or confuse the area with parking on the opposite side of the road.

RE reported that there has been vandalism to EV chargers at Imperial Road caused by copper thefts, leaving some units out of action while the provider works on repairs. Recent antisocial driving incidents have been reported to the police, who are now involved, and this behaviour tends to appear periodically before fading again.

Work is also being considered for the old lifeboat station car park, where the surface is in poor condition, though details on wider plans remain under discussion and will be shared once confirmed.

e) Active Travel

Members introduced themselves to NM, who explained that her organisation has recently rebranded as the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust, retaining its core mission while adopting a new strategy, name and soon a new CEO. NM described the charity's focus on enabling people-powered movement through both behaviour-change work and infrastructure development.

JP outlined the history of Active Travel Exmouth, which evolved from a cycle-path working group into a broader organisation concerned with both cycling promotion and infrastructure. JP highlighted long-standing involvement with the Estuary Trail and the mapping of local walking and cycling routes. Active Travel is now split between those promoting cycling and those working on infrastructure and development-related opportunities.

Concerns were raised about dangerous roads, steep hills and missed opportunities in previous town-centre improvement schemes, although progress on the Dinan Way Extension was noted. PS proposed a future cycle and pedestrian route from Goodmore's Farm to Woodbury Common, citing safety issues on Hulham Road. NM suggested this could be explored further with one of their engineers.

NM described the charity's wider work, including shaping new developments to prioritise walking, wheeling and cycling from the outset, and supporting schools to help children travel safely and confidently. The long-running schools engagement programme was mentioned, formerly known as Bike It, which helps build confidence among children, parents and teachers.

Members thanked NM for her presentation and an intention to stay in contact. NM offered further discussions on specific projects or funding opportunities and noted that a network development manager for the area would also be available to meet in future.

NM left the meeting.

f) GWR

There was no representative at the meeting, and no report was received.

g) ALRUG

There was no representative at the meeting, and no report was received.

h) DCC Highways

There was no representative at the meeting, and no report was received.

6. Any other business

PS expressed uncertainty about the overnight road closures on the A376, as the information available wasn't clear. LG proposed checking the One Network on the DCC website for details and will also confirm the exact closures with JT. Once clarified, LG will update all councillors by email.

7. Dates of 2026 meetings

23rd June

15th September

1st December

The meeting closed at 11:31am