EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Party

Notes of the meeting held at 6pm on Tuesday 14th April 2026 in the Town Hall Chamber

Present

Councillor Tim Dumper	TD	Exmouth Town Council (Chair)
Councillor Olly Davey	OD	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Mike Rosser	MR	Exmouth Town Council (left at 6.30)
Councillor Louise Venables	LV	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Andrew Woodward	AW	Exmouth Town Council
Zoey Cooper	ZC	Exmouth Town Council
Adrian Toole	AT	Transition Exmouth
Matthew Waldron	MW	Transition Exmouth
Nicki Schantz	NS	Climate Ambassador Programme

Apologies

Lisa Bowman	LB	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Nicky Nicholls	NN	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Dan Wilson	DW	Exmouth Town Council
Catherine Causley	CC	East Devon District 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 10th March 2026 and any matters arising**

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

3. **To receive a short presentation from Nicki Shantz from the Climate Ambassador Programme**

NS gave an overview of the Climate Ambassador Programme (see attached presentation) and members took part in an open discussion with NS.

Members asked how the programme works, who can volunteer, and how local councils can support it. NS explained that the programme welcomes unlimited volunteers from all backgrounds, as schools need a wide range of skills — from biodiversity and waste management to governance and climate science. Volunteers only need to offer one day a year**,** though many choose to do more.

Questions were raised about how volunteers are organised and how many are needed. NS noted that the Southwest has over 2,500 schools but only 225 ambassadors, so more volunteers are essential. Some ambassadors support just their local school, while others help several schools or even whole academy trusts.

There was also discussion about the role of the Town Council. Although the council has no formal responsibility for education**,** NS emphasised that councils can still play a valuable part by connecting schools with local expertise, community groups, and practical climate initiatives.

ZC described ongoing work to set up a Schools Eco Forum with Lou Doliczny and NS. This forum will give school sustainability leads a space to share ideas, ask questions, and navigate the many organisations already offering support. ZC highlighted that the council can help by promoting the Climate Ambassador Programme to schools and encouraging local people to volunteer.

NS closed by stressing the importance of place-based climate action, helping schools link their climate learning to the local community, which makes the work more meaningful and effective for students.

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

- EDDC is continuing to welcome some great Green Team Fund Applications including projects surrounding solar panel installation, nature education, active transport, and tree nurseries.
- EDDC is exploring the curation of a Solar Installation Strategy across our non-domestic assets in collaboration with SWEEG (South West Energy and Environmental Group).
- They are about to start their 2025/26 Carbon Footprint Analysis.
- They are developing a council-wide project surrounding increasing environmental volunteering across the district.

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

Transition is launching a new community engagement initiative designed to increase volunteering across the town (Exmouth CAN). As part of this work, Sarah Kersey will be attending local events with information stalls, carrying out door-to-door engagement, and gathering data on residents' views about the environment and their willingness to volunteer. The aim of the project is to help direct volunteers to the local organisations that best match their interests and skills.

The next Climate and Nature Network (CANN) meeting will take place on Tuesday 21st April in the afternoon. This monthly meeting, hosted by Exmouth Town Council, Transition, and Sideshore, now uses a shared document for group updates so the meeting itself can focus on project spotlights, questions, and informal networking.

The Wednesday Lunch Club is happening tomorrow at 12:00 at the Sideshore Hut and is open to anyone who would like to join for lunch. On Thursday 23rd April at

15:00, the EcoHub Library Session will take place, where Sarah will be present as part of her weekly recruitment and engagement work. Later that evening, at 19:00, People, Planet and Pint will be held at the Grapevine, an informal social gathering with sponsored drinks.

Transition's Practice Day is scheduled for Friday 24th April and is expected to focus on practising the updated door-knocking survey process. The revised survey now includes visual aids to support accessibility and make data collection more efficient.

Alongside these activities, Sarah is also making use of the Magnolia Centre kiosk and setting up stalls around the town, supported by a gazebo borrowed from the Library of Things to increase visibility and encourage wider participation.

6. **To receive an update from ZC:**

The screening of The People's Emergency Briefing on 14th May is almost fully booked and continues to attract strong interest. The event will feature the shortened version of the film followed by a facilitated discussion to help attendees process their reactions and feel motivated to take action. A key aim is to showcase the wide range of climate and nature initiatives already underway in Exmouth and to encourage people to get involved.

A follow-up session is planned for around three weeks later at the Town Hall, where local groups will be invited to bring stalls and meet potential volunteers. The idea of growing the "Exmouth Green Team" was discussed, with themed T-shirts currently being designed in the new eco branding (blue and orange like the cup and the tuk-tuk). Existing volunteers will be encouraged to wear these shirts at the screening to demonstrate the scale of ongoing activity. There was also a suggestion to reference the town's national climate award on the shirts, which will be explored further.

Schools have shown interest in the project, and Exmouth Community College may host its own screening for sixth-form students and parents. There was also discussion about establishing dedicated Exmouth Eco Action social media channels to allow more frequent climate-related posts, while still sharing key messages through the main council accounts. Some Members were not keen on a separate eco channel, as the goal is to normalise this content and messages. Members were therefore encouraged to contribute more non-climate updates to help maintain a balanced overall feed.

It was confirmed that the PEB film will *not* be shown before the council meeting next Monday.

- **Food**

AW gave a brief update on completing the month-long vegan challenge, which he did alongside his wife Wendy and Deputy Mayor Dianne Conduit. They all attended LV's plant-based Bring and Share event, which they found supportive and enjoyable. AW said the challenge was harder than expected because it required rethinking every meal, but it was also educational and helped them realise how much dairy they

normally eat. Although he doesn't plan to stay vegan, both he and Wendy intend to eat more vegetarian meals, and he emphasised that the aim of the plant-based treaty is simply to encourage people to reduce meat and dairy, not to force anyone into veganism. Overall, he felt the experience was worthwhile and thanked LV for encouraging them to take part.

Members discussed plans for a No Meat May challenge, with ZC exploring support from either the Plant-Based Treaty team or the No Meat May organisation. There is interest in running ongoing 30-day challenges and in mapping plant-based options across local cafés, which will feed into the Sustainable Shores project. The recent plant-based Bring and Share event was praised for its friendly atmosphere and growing attendance, and a larger venue may soon be needed.

Questions were raised about the Mushroom Network and zero-waste shopping. ZC explained that the former Zero-Waste shop will not return, though Mother Earth still offers some refills. Craig Jolly (Mushroom) continues to run the lunch club and Saturday bakes and will be providing food for the upcoming mega swap event. He is also involved in planning for the Exeter Food Action Festival. Members of the advisory board noted that Craig is reviewing priorities and that community activities remain central, but more volunteers are needed to support his work.

- **Waste**

The Exmouth Cup scheme has expanded, and the cups are now available in four locations: the three original cafés - Postcards, Deli on the Strand and Harbour View - as well as the newly added Cookies 'n Dream in the indoor market. The announcement on Facebook generated a very enthusiastic response. Cups are also available at Kid's Cove, the soft play centre on Tower Street. A new coffee shop on Exeter Road, Loco Joe, has expressed interest in joining the scheme. ZC has emailed them with details and emphasised the need for them to actively promote the scheme so that cups don't simply disappear. If there's no reply, ZC plans to visit in person within the next couple of days. While adding this location would be convenient for shoppers on Exeter Road, ZC is conscious that cup numbers are limited and some need to be reserved for events and loaning.

There are now four return points: outside the Deli on the Strand, at Postcards, at Kid's Cove and at Harbour View. ZC is considering placing an additional return point outside the Town Hall, where she could collect the cups, wash them and redistribute them to cafés. Looking ahead, ZC is planning a refreshed social media campaign to relaunch the scheme, remind people how it works and highlight where cups can be collected and returned. The aim is to do this before the tourist season begins so that the existing stock of cups is better protected.

ZC reported that the ballot bins continue to be very popular, but the one at the Pavilion is missing its ballot question. A meeting has been arranged with the Pavilion's new business manager to sort this out. There's also interest in placing a bin outside the Pilot, since the area is consistently covered in cigarette butts and is one of the busiest smoking spots. The bar staff there have agreed to speak with Tammy Dyer and will follow up. Separately, Hubbub, the supplier of the bins, would

like a promotional reel showing people using them, but there's uncertainty about whether there will be enough time to organise and deliver that campaign.

Members discussed upcoming workshops about reusable period products. An email was sent to all schools to arrange the usual July sessions, but no replies came through because it coincided with the Easter holidays. However, the home education team did respond, and a visit is planned for tomorrow to run a few sessions with them. There was also an update on the research project: official approval has been given, and the full-time research role will begin on 1 July. One school in Budleigh has expressed interest in the reusable period products talk, but because Budleigh falls outside the usual remit, there's uncertainty about how to handle the request. To find a solution, contact has been made with a Budleigh councillor and the local plastic-free group in the hope that they might deliver the presentation themselves using shared resources.

- **Natural Environment**

The Tree Forum held on 1 April was well attended. Plans are progressing for tree planting at St John's, where a nearby household has agreed to help with watering. To support this, the existing water butt will be enlarged and a second one installed so rainwater can be used for the young trees. Additional planting locations have been suggested by Heath Nickels, who provided a list of seven possible sites. Work is underway to identify land ownership for each, though some areas may fall under Highway's maintenance, which will take time to clarify. Beyond these developments, there have been no further updates on natural environment work.

- **Energy**

There has been some encouraging follow-up from the archetype project, with several households requesting access to the reports so they can compare them with their own homes or share them with architects. Upcoming events may help shape next steps, including a major energy event at Regen in Exeter on 30 April and another in Sidmouth on 15th April.

A conversation with an energy expert introduced the idea of subsidising air-source heat pumps by topping up existing grants so that the pumps could be free to homeowners, with the resulting energy savings then reinvested into installing more systems. This approach would likely only work for homes currently using oil, where the savings are significant enough to make the model viable. Ecoe Advice also expressed interest in identifying large buildings suitable for substantial solar installations, where they would handle agreements with building owners and feed the generated energy into a wider network. For now, the plan is to attend the upcoming events, gather more ideas and see which direction becomes most promising.

- **Transport**

The next community bike ride is scheduled for 16th May. This is the ride that was postponed from last year, starting at Sideshore and heading up to A La Ronde, where teas and coffees will be provided before returning along the same route. It's intended to be a gentle, accessible ride, with support from the Tri-Hards, who will provide bike leaders. There is also a potential grant available that could help fund an active travel area at the festival. With a large space available, there's interest in creating lively activities such as wacky races, fun wheeling events and other engaging features alongside information stalls, which may require applying for a budget.

ZC explained that the tuk-tuk project is progressing, but slowly. Photos are available showing the correct colours and basic look, though the full design isn't finished yet. The licence plate application has been submitted and is with the DVLA, but the process is taking much longer than hoped. Despite delays, there's confidence it will be finished by mid-May.

OD reported that the allotment association has taken over a neglected plot and, instead of re-letting it, they plan to turn it into a community garden. Funding has been secured from Young's Brewery, with support from Suez, to transform a neglected area into small gardening plots for local families who wouldn't normally have access to space for growing vegetables. Work is due to begin during the week of the 13th. The aim is to create manageable personal plots that can support people who might otherwise struggle to get involved in gardening.

There was also a reflection on the council's wider environmental responsibilities. Following a previous discussion about encouraging working parties and committees to consider environmental impacts in their decisions, it was noted that the newly acquired Town Hall should become a major focus. Ensuring that the building is run sustainably could be a significant and important project going forward.

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

No updates.

8. **Any other business**

Date of next meeting: 19th May 2026, 6pm – 8pm, in the Town Hall Chamber.