EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Party

Notes of the meeting held at 6pm on Tuesday 28th July 2026 via Microsoft Teams

Present

Councillor Nicky Nicholls	NN	Exmouth Town Council (Chair)
Councillor Olly Davey	OD	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Mike Rosser	MR	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Dan Wilson	DW	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Louise Venables	LV	Exmouth Town Council
Zoey Cooper	ZC	Exmouth Town Council
Adrian Toole	AT	Transition Exmouth

Apologies

Councillor Tim Dumper	TD	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council
Councillor Andrew Woodward	AW	Exmouth Town Council
Catherine Causley	CC	East Devon District Council
Lewis Connor	LC	East Devon District Council
Lisa Bowman	LB	Exmouth Town Council

1. **Welcome and apologies**

NN welcomed members to the meeting and noted that several members had experienced difficulties joining Microsoft Teams due to technical issues. ZC agreed to investigate the issue before the next meeting.

Apologies were noted.

2. **To approve the notes of the meeting on 19th May 2026 and any matters arising**

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

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

No representative from East Devon District Council was present and therefore no update was received.

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

AT provided an update on behalf of Transition Exmouth, including progress on the community door-knocking project. To date, the project has generated contact with 264 residents, providing valuable insight into local attitudes towards climate action. Early findings indicated that many residents were keen to make positive

environmental changes but often lacked clear guidance on the practical steps available to them. A full report of this project will be presented at the Transition Exmouth AGM on 1 October 2026.

Members discussed the significance of this finding, recognising that raising awareness is only one part of effective engagement. Consideration was given to the challenge of providing practical support, information and resources to help residents translate good intentions into meaningful action. Members recognised that this evidence would help inform future community engagement activities undertaken by both Transition Exmouth and the Town Council.

The Working Party noted that the project was beginning to identify opportunities for future community engagement and behaviour-change initiatives, with the emerging evidence suggesting that there is considerable public willingness to participate if appropriate support can be provided.

Mushroom Food Network

AT reported that Transition Exmouth had secured a £3,000 grant to support the development of the Mushroom Food Network. The funding will enable research into how the project can be developed into a more sustainable community food hub, building on the work already undertaken by Craig Jolly and supporting its alignment with a wider national initiative.

Members heard that the grant would fund a programme of community engagement events over the coming year, alongside additional funding already held for the project. The research will help identify the needs of both providers and users of community food initiatives, ensuring that future development is informed by local evidence and experience.

The Working Party welcomed the award of funding and recognised the significant contribution made by Craig Jolly in establishing the project to date.

Community Growing Initiative

AT reported on early discussions to explore the development of a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project in Exmouth.

He explained that he, Craig Jolly and Deputy Clerk Mark Devin had recently met with representatives from the National Trust to discuss the potential use of land at Lower Halsdon Farm. The proposal is at a very early stage, but the availability of land through the National Trust could provide an opportunity to establish a community growing project without the need to purchase land. Members noted that the discussions were exploratory but represented an exciting opportunity to develop a long-term community food growing project in Exmouth.

Members heard that Community Supported Agriculture is an established model used successfully across the UK, with individual projects adapting the approach to meet local circumstances rather than following a single prescribed blueprint. AT noted that he and Craig had begun investigating existing examples and had identified a number of successful schemes from which lessons could be drawn.

The Working Party welcomed the potential of a community growing initiative, recognising that it could contribute to several of the Council's climate and nature objectives, including local food production, community resilience, education, biodiversity and wider community engagement. Members agreed that the proposal had considerable potential and looked forward to receiving further updates as discussions with the National Trust and other partners progressed.

ZC asked if more visits to CSA farms were planned, and if the farm near Totnes (Apricot Centre) was part of the scheme. AT explained that it wasn't and a lot of their focus (in terms of revenue generation) was on education.

Members noted that notes from the meeting with the National Trust had been circulated.

5. **To receive an update from ZC**

Community Bike Rides

ZC reported on recent discussions with RideOn, a community cycling organisation based in Exeter, regarding the extension of their popular Exeter programme of "Joy Rides" to Exmouth. The proposal would build on the success of previous community cycle rides by providing professionally led rides, promotional support and volunteer expertise.

Members heard that RideOn had provisionally offered three rides for a total cost of approximately £570, comprising two rides to A La Ronde National Trust and one to Budleigh Salterton. It was noted that commissioning RideOn to deliver the programme would represent good value when compared with the staff time required for the Town Council to organise equivalent events independently. Provisional dates of 9 August, 30 August and 13 September were proposed. Members agreed that the first date allowed insufficient time for promotion and requested that an alternative September date be explored.

The Working Party welcomed the proposal and discussed the wider benefits of establishing a regular programme of community rides. Members considered that the initiative could encourage more residents to cycle for everyday journeys, improve confidence and help remove barriers that discourage people from cycling.

Discussion also explored opportunities to expand future rides beyond traffic-free routes. Members recognised that many people lacked confidence when cycling on roads and suggested that future sessions could include supported on-road cycling to

help participants develop practical skills in a safe and encouraging environment. Alternative circular routes using quieter roads were also considered.

Members supported continuing discussions with RideOn and recognised the value of working with established partners to maximise participation while making efficient use of Council resources. Members recognised that working with an established provider would allow the Council to deliver more rides than would be possible using Officer time alone.

Action: ZC to update RideOn with the decision and request another date in September instead of 9 August.

Climate Film Screenings

ZC reported that film producer Pip Piper had invited the Town Council to host a screening of “Our Land” during the Exmouth Film Festival in autumn 2026, accompanied by a question-and-answer session with Guy Shrubsole. Members supported the suggestion that the screening should instead take place at Scott Cinemas, recognising that it would provide a more suitable venue.

Members agreed that the cinema offered significant advantages over the Town Hall, providing a more suitable viewing environment together with facilities for post-film discussions and question-and-answer sessions.

LV reported that the Green Scene film and discussion initiative at Sideshore was extremely popular and needed a bigger venue. ZC agreed to approach Scott Cinemas to explore the regular hire of one of the smaller screens, as there was an increasing appetite in Exmouth for climate and nature-related film and discussion nights (as demonstrated by growing attendance at Green Scene screenings). Previous screenings had demonstrated the value of combining film with expert speakers and community discussion to encourage greater public engagement with climate issues.

It was noted that the choice of film would remain flexible, allowing future screenings to reflect the Working Party's priorities and current climate topics.

Mobile Eco Hub (Tuk-tuk) and the Exmouth Cup

ZC provided an update on preparations for a programme of activities for the tuk-tuk and outlined proposals for using the vehicle to increase public engagement across the town. ZC had contacted East Devon District Council to seek guidance on organising events in locations such as The Strand.

Members discussed the potential for the tuk-tuk to become a regular presence at prominent locations, including The Strand and Sideshore, enabling the Council to engage directly with residents and visitors while promoting a range of climate initiatives.

The discussion then focused on the Exmouth Cup reusable cup scheme.

Following visits to participating cafés, ZC reported that businesses continued to receive returned cups and remained broadly supportive of the scheme. However, feedback suggested that many customers were still unaware of how the scheme operated, meaning staff frequently needed to explain the process, which is tricky during busy periods.

Members heard that approximately 1,000 reusable cups remained in circulation or in café stock from the original order of 4,000 cups, purchased in October 2024. Rather than making immediate decisions about future investment, the Working Party agreed that further evidence should be gathered to understand the scheme's current performance and future requirements.

Discussion considered a number of options, including:

- whether additional Exmouth Cups would be required in future;
- the potential introduction of transparent reusable cups suitable for cold drinks and alcoholic beverages;
- whether both cup types should operate alongside one another; and
- how the scheme could be promoted more effectively to improve public awareness.

Members recognised that the scheme had successfully established the infrastructure for reusable cups within the town, but that increasing public awareness and encouraging consistent use would now be the key challenge. The Working Party considered that any future investment should be informed by evidence of demand and feedback from participating businesses before further cups were purchased.

Members agreed that greater visibility would be key to the scheme's long-term success. The tuk-tuk was identified as an excellent opportunity to showcase the Exmouth Cup, explain how the scheme works and encourage greater participation at community events and in the town centre.

ZC will continue discussions with participating cafés, review current stock levels, investigate alternative cup options and bring recommendations back to a future meeting.

6. To receive a brief festival update

NN provided an update on the eco area at the Exmouth Festival and reflected on the Council's climate engagement activities throughout the event.

Members heard that the Council's sustainability presence had once again provided valuable opportunities to engage directly with residents and visitors on a wide range of climate and nature initiatives. The Working Party recognised that informal, face-to-face conversations remained one of the most effective ways of encouraging positive behaviour change and raising awareness of local projects.

NN reported that the festival had generated interest across a number of the Council's initiatives, including plant-based diets, active travel and biodiversity. Members discussed the importance of maintaining an approachable and interactive presence at community events, enabling residents to ask questions and learn about practical actions they could take in their own lives.

Lessons learned from this year's Festival will be used to inform future engagement activities, with particular emphasis on increasing visibility, encouraging participation and making effective use of the tuk-tuk at future public events. More social engagement and training of the Exmouth Green Team will be provided prior to future events. It was agreed that fewer stalls with plastic throw-away items and more local makers/crafts would support the sustainable message.

AT asked about the role of the Green Team. ZC explained they are a group of volunteers in Exmouth, mostly contacted through a WhatsApp group, who are interested in offering their services across a range of skillsets and interests. They are not exclusively interested in supporting the Town Council.

7. A look ahead regarding climate and nature strategy revision

The Working Party considered a forthcoming review of the Council's Climate & Nature Strategy and discussed how it should evolve to reflect the significant progress made since its original adoption.

Members recognised that the current Strategy had provided a strong framework for the Council's climate work over recent years, supporting projects across active travel, waste reduction, biodiversity, food, energy and community engagement. It was acknowledged that the Council had established a strong reputation for climate leadership, demonstrated through successful partnership working, national recognition and an expanding programme of community initiatives.

Discussion focused on updating the existing Strategy. Members agreed that the revised document should build on the Council's achievements to date while remaining realistic, practical and capable of responding to future opportunities and changing priorities. It was agreed that the strategy should reflect changes such as the acquisition of the Town Hall, and to an extent the impact of Local Government Reorganisation.

The Working Party considered how the Council could increasingly act as an enabler, supporting community organisations, volunteers and partner agencies to deliver projects that contribute towards shared climate and nature objectives. Members noted that this collaborative approach would become increasingly important as local government responsibilities continue to evolve.

The evidence emerging from Transition Exmouth's community engagement work was recognised as an important resource for informing the revised Strategy.

Members agreed that understanding residents' priorities, concerns and barriers to action would help ensure that future projects responded to local needs while encouraging wider community participation.

It was also agreed that the revised Strategy should continue to integrate climate and nature considerations across all aspects of the Council's work, reinforcing the principle that climate action is a shared responsibility rather than the sole remit of the Working Party.

Members discussed the value of reviewing examples of good practice from other local authorities and agreed that this would help identify innovative approaches that could be adapted for Exmouth. NN proposed that the next Working Party meeting should include a workshop session dedicated to developing the revised Strategy, enabling members to explore priorities in greater depth and begin shaping the next phase of the Council's climate programme.

The Working Party also agreed that a concise summary of achievements delivered under the current Strategy would provide a valuable starting point for the review process, highlighting progress made to date and helping to identify future priorities.

Agreed outcomes

- The Climate & Nature Strategy will be reviewed and refreshed.
- A workshop session will be held at the next Working Party meeting to begin developing the revised Strategy.
- Members will review examples of climate and nature strategies from other local authorities to help inform the review.

Action(s): ZC to prepare a summary of achievements delivered under the current Climate & Nature Strategy for consideration at the strategy workshop.

All Members to identify examples of effective climate and nature strategies from other councils ahead of the next meeting.

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

Active Travel

MR provided an update on work to improve infrastructure for walking and cycling, advising that a further meeting of the Cycling Campaign was planned towards the end of August to progress the initiative. He also highlighted the importance of ensuring future infrastructure improvements considered the needs of people using mobility aids and mobility scooters, as well as pedestrians and cyclists.

Reusable Period Products

LV updated Members on the reusable period products project, including recent educational sessions delivered in local schools during the ZC's absence. The sessions had generated strong engagement from pupils and valuable feedback for the project, which would help inform the next phase of work. The research project with Exeter University is starting at the beginning of August, more updates to follow in the next CEE WP meeting.

Planning and Biodiversity

MR highlighted the cumulative impact of development on biodiversity and the wider climate emergency. Members discussed the importance of understanding the Town Council's role within the planning process and continuing to advocate for biodiversity and nature recovery when commenting on planning applications and working with planning authorities.

ZC mentioned the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Devon has launched and the team are looking for Ambassadors (individuals and groups) to support and promote the strategy. She has volunteered Exmouth Town Council become an Ambassador. The website details the strategy and has an excellent map for discovering local biodiversity and adding local projects/actions/planting etc: Devon's Local Nature Recovery Strategy - Environment

9. Any other business

No additional items of business were raised.

Date of next meeting:

It was noted that the next meeting of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Party would take place on Tuesday 8 September 2026, from 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm, in the Town Hall Chamber.