EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Flooding & Water Quality Working Party

Notes of the Zoom meeting held at 2pm on Tuesday 27th October 2026

Present

Graham Deasy	GD	ETC Councillor, Littleham Ward (Chairperson)
Pauline Stott	PS	ETC Councillor, Halsdon Ward
Ian Kirvan	IK	ETC Councillor, Brixington Ward
Tim Dumper	TD	ETC Councillor, Halsdon Ward
Sarah Sharpe	SS	SWW, Local Government Liaison Officer
Kakha Tatelishvili	KT	SWW, Programme Manager
Stuart Coles	SC	DCC, Neighbourhood Highways Officer
Chetna Jones	CJ	ETC Deputy Town Clerk
Mark Devin	MD	ETC Deputy Town Clerk (observing)
Lisa Greenway	LG	ETC, Note Taker

Apologies

Mark Williamson	MW	ETC Councillor, Littleham Ward
Steve Gazzard	SG	ETC Councillor, Withycombe Raleigh Ward
Andrew Colman	AC	ETC Councillor, Brixington Ward
Jenny Eamer	JE	SWW, Waste Water Service Operations Manager
Tom Buxton-Smith	TBS	EDDC, Engineering Projects Manager

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1. **Welcome, introduction and apologies**

   GD welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted.

2. **To approve the notes from the meeting on the 28th of July and 24th of September 2026**

   PS proposed and IK seconded, and it was agreed the notes were an accurate record of the meetings.

3. **Matters arising**

   No matters arising.

4. **To note the response to the EA consultation on the SWW permit applications on behalf of the Town Council**

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   GD explained that a meeting had been held to discuss the consultation and a formal response was drafted. The response was prepared under delegated authority and subsequently approved at Full Council. Members were informed of the content of the submission, and ETC are now awaiting the next stage in the process.

   CJ advised that the EA has collated all consultation responses and produced a list of FAQs on the Exmouth Community page of the EA website for anyone wishing to review it.

The Environment Agency will publish the permitting outcomes on its website once all consultation responses have been considered and a decision has been reached. The relevant link will be shared with members in due course.

KT confirmed that SWW continues to use the new outfall under LEP arrangements, and had submitted further sampling to the EA, which was pending a response.

5. SWW: General updates

GD noted that Wimbleball Reservoir levels had increased by 1% following recent rainfall, however, the reservoir levels remained a concern.

KT provided an update on the AMP8 improvement programme. Particular reference was made to:

- SWW has been in communication with DCC regarding the Budleigh Salterton, Lime Kiln rising main and had challenged the DCC requirement for a full Environmental Impact Assessment for the Lime Kiln Scheme.
- noise, odour, landscape and visual impact assessments are underway for the Sandy Bay STW project to support the planning application process. SWW is working closely with DCC to provide the required evidence and minimise further delays.
- Hydraulic modelling had been completed across the catchment to develop intervention schemes at: Hartopp Road, Ash Grove, Phear Park and Exeter Road. Construction was planned as soon as possible, but works were likely to involve road closures and associated restrictions.

The Working Party discussed SWW projects and flooding interventions, noting the following:

- GD raised concerns regarding recent spills near Hartopp Road and queried whether these were linked to the new system. KT advised that the overflow is valve-controlled and confirmed that SWW and EDDC are working jointly on surface water separation schemes to address both sewer capacity and local flooding issues.
- In response to a query regarding issues at Phear Park, KT advised that he was unaware of any operational problems, noting that his role related to engineering projects rather than operational network management.
- CJ sought clarification on environmental studies associated with the proposed new treatment facility. KT confirmed that the assessments were part of the development process and advised that, subject to ongoing discussions with DCC, a planning application could be submitted by February 2027. He noted that additional DCC requirements had delayed the programme by approximately three months.
- KT outlined the Hartopp intervention works, explaining that potential measures include surface water separation, stormwater storage tanks and pump station upgrades. The aim is to reduce the volume of surface water entering the combined sewer system and improve network capacity.
- TD reported apparent improvements to tidal flooding in the area known as "the Colony" following recent SWW works, noting that no leakage had been observed during a recent spring tide event.
- Responding to questions on proposed separation schemes, KT advised that a series of interconnected projects are being developed across affected roads, with EDDC involvement reflecting the contribution of highway drainage to local flooding. The objective is to deliver a coordinated solution addressing both sewer and highway drainage issues.
- SS, reporting on behalf of JE, advised that a manhole seal at Hartopp Road had been replaced and that the location would continue to be monitored.

- KT confirmed that recently completed utility surveys form part of the ongoing design and hydraulic modelling work, helping SWW to assess catchment-wide impacts and develop effective spill reduction measures.
- TD reflected on previous collaborative work between SWW and DCC to address flooding issues and suggested that a further review of the area may be beneficial.
- PS asked whether surface water separation works would be extended beyond Featherbed Lane into Exeter Road and surrounding residential areas. KT confirmed that this remains the intention and advised that design work is ongoing, including consideration of further separation measures and additional stormwater storage capacity.
- KT confirmed that works currently taking place in Rivermead are not being undertaken by SWW.
- SD advised that the Temporary Use Ban remains in place and will continue until reservoir levels recover.
- GD provided an update on Squabmoor Reservoir, advising that water abstraction ceased in 2019 and there are currently no plans to recommission the site. While reinstatement remains technically possible, significant infrastructure investment would be required and its viability remains uncertain.

6. EA: General updates

No EA representatives were present at the meeting.

CJ advised that the hearing concerning the rising main has been deferred and is now due to take place on 31 March 2027.

7. EDDC: General updates

No EDDC representative was present at the meeting.

CJ provided an update on the flood gates on behalf of TBS, advising that EDDC had recently undertaken training with Flood Control International (FCI) for new members of staff. Pete Blythe was now the lead on flood gate management and had indicated that he would offer further gate-closing training for residents if required.

It was also confirmed that all previously reported flood gate issues had been addressed by FCI and the gates were now considered to be ready for the winter season. CJ explained that under Local Government Reorganisation, the responsibility for flood gates was expected to transfer to the future Unitary Authority.

TD raised concerns that the Working Party currently had no Town Ward councillor representation and suggested that a representative councillor from that ward should be appointed given the wards connection to the seafront and estuary areas.

8. DCC: Flood risk general update

No DCC representative was present at the meeting and no report was received.

9. DCC: Highways – flooding and drainage general update

SC reported that recent storm events had resulted in significant disruption, including the temporary closure of Queen's Drive due to sand build-up. Fallen trees had been the primary issue, with relatively few flooding incidents recorded.

GD, SC and TD discussed the possible link between prolonged dry weather and the increased number of fallen trees, noting that drought conditions may have weakened root systems and increased vulnerability during high winds.

CJ raised concerns regarding blocked seafront drains and gullies reported by the Waterfront Working Party. SC advised that the issue would have been referred to the relevant DCC officer and noted that resource priorities are focused on the primary road network, although additional funding is becoming available for drainage maintenance.

SC advised that storm events are placing increasing pressure on the highway network but noted that operational capacity is improving, including the introduction of a new jetting vehicle for drainage works.

10. ETC Councillors: Reports and questions to representatives of external organisations

- GD provided an update on water quality issues across the River Exe catchment and highlighted an upcoming webinar on 9 November 2026, which will feature speakers from across the catchment area discussing local water quality challenges and developments.

- GD advised that a Water Summit, organised by DCC and hosted at Sandy Park, is due to take place shortly after the webinar and will bring together partner organisations to discuss regional water quality issues.

- GD noted that MP David Reed will be hosting a water briefing with SWW, with participation from a range of local organisations and stakeholder groups.

- SS reminded members that the BeachWise Forum is scheduled for 26 November 2026 and encouraged interested parties to register.

11. AOB

There was no other business to discuss.

The meeting ended at 14:49

Next meeting: 26th January 2027