

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, EXMOUTH ON MONDAY 21ST MARCH 2011 AT 7.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Approximately 70 electors excluding:

Councillors: D Nicholas (Mayor)
S Sutton (Deputy Mayor)
D Chapman M Chapman
T Cope V Duval-Steer
L Elson S Gazzard
P Graham M Hardy
K Harper J Mitchell
M Mitchell I Stewart
P Stott J Taylor
R Turner M Williamson
E Wragg S Wragg

APOLOGIES: Councillors J Humphreys, B Taylor & J Whipps

SPEAKERS: Representatives of Community Groups within Colp - Gill Wyatt, Transition Towns Exmouth, Geoff Morris, Exmouth Residents Association, Megan Armstrong, Exmouth Citizens Forum, Mike Gittins, Exmouth Society, Roy Pryke, Exmouth Community Association, Councillors Pauline Stott & Mark Williamson

4. Opening and Welcome by the Mayor

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting. He made reference to the fact that there were many things happening for Exmouth and in particular two main events that would soon take place. On the 19th April there would be a display for the public by Bright 3D Consultants on the proposed scheme for the Orcombe Point Interpretation Centre and the Exmouth Festival would commence on the 26th May for 9 days and would finish with an event by Joey and Lips and supporting acts 3rd June at Imperial Recreation Ground.

5. Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Monday 15th March 2010 and the Town meeting to discuss the LDF held on the 22nd November 2010 were received and signed as a correct record.

6. Annual Report of the Town Council

The Mayor presented the Annual Report of the Town Council to the meeting (a copy of the Annual Report distributed to all who attended and available on the website) which included an update on The Strand and that the Exmouth Masterplan would be available for public consultation in the summer. The Mayor welcomed members of Community Organisations Liaison Panel who were invited to give their impressions of Colp to date.

7. Community Organisations Panel and Community Planning – Moving things forward

Gill Wyatt, Transition Towns Exmouth, who works with other organisations such as Createx, Cycleways, LETS with climate change and its effects on Exmouth. Current schemes were the Littleham Community Garden Schemes and food recognition on similar lines to Fairtrade Exmouth. Colp had brought together community organisations to give members a greater understanding of local events and the importance of listening to local people. Colp had achieved community involvement with input into the LDF response and success in the inclusion of the seafront within the Masterplan consultation but as a group they were frustrated at the delay in publication of the LDA Masterplan document. The next focus would be concentration on the creation of the Town's Community Plan and it would be important to have knowledge on the Town Council's constraints in respect of EDDC and DCC.

Geoff Morris, Chairman of Exmouth Residents Association, congratulated Exmouth Town Council in the engagement of Community Organisations to facilitate exchange of ideas. Papers for discussion at Colp meetings were often prepared prior to meetings and did not always contain views from all represented groups and could result in majority voting being predetermined. The Terms of Reference for Colp may need to be revised in light of the change in Government's focus on the Big Society.

Megan Armstrong, Chairman of Exmouth Citizens Forum which was formed in November 2004 initially to campaign against development of a Supermarket on the Estuary 'Save our Shoreline'. The group was made up of local residents who had a special interest in conserving open ground, seascapes, beaches and wildlife along the Town's estuary. The forum fully supported Colp and wished to be part of the Steering Group that would contribute to the Community Plan and welcomed other groups within the community to join. A recent questionnaire 'Vision for Exmouth' had been completed.

Mike Gittins, Chairman of the Exmouth Society which was established 30 years ago to support preservation of architectural features within the Town. The society felt Colp members had common ground between them and could share objectives whilst involving a broader breadth of bodies.

Roy Pryke, Chairman of Exmouth Community Association established 5 years ago which worked with residents, businesses, politicians and local councils. Reports had been produced by the working party on the Estuary, Seafront, transport, Strand, library, visitors centre and more recently Rolle College, all of which were available. He focused on the need to change the culture and mentality of the Town and focus on the need to be proactive not reactive and constructive with criticism. Localism would need clarity on how it would work in principle and Colp would need to build on strong leadership.

Should Colp have a website to enable access to a forum and would a regular pattern of scheduled open meetings benefit the community in facilitating a place to bring ideas to. It would be important to progress after a hard beginning once the elections were over.

Councillor P Stott, Chairman of Colp, thanked all members of Colp for their contribution and invited all attendees to involve themselves in the Community Plan and any future surveys.

Councillor M Williamson gave background information on the time prior to Colp and how that now other East Devon Towns were requesting information on how to form their own Community Organisation. Should the community plan be known as a neighbourhood plan? The new Community Infrastructure Levy would work hand in hand with a neighbourhood plan which would identify the direction in which this funding could be used.

8. BID – Business Improvement District

John Wokersien, Town Clerk, gave an overview on how the proposal for Exmouth to enter into a Business Improvement Area would take shape. Exmouth Town Management Partnership, Exmouth Chamber of Trade and Commerce and Exmouth Town Council had together identified that it could be the way forward. Exmouth Town council had set aside some resources and were in the process of recruitment of a BID Co-ordinator. Businesses would be fully engaged through the BIDs process.

9. Matters raised by members and the public

- Speed of traffic within Exmouth and in particular Exmouth seafront
- Anti social behaviour and vandalism
- Securing of the Withycombe Valley Cycleway with EDDC
- Future of Town Management & the BID process
- Lack of pedestrian crossings within the Town and in particular lack of audible sound on the new crossing at Magnolia Centre/Exeter Road
- Poor visibility on exiting dropped curbs for wheelchair users
- Decision making by the Town Council was irrelevant when DCC and EDDC were the ultimate decision makers
- Who were the members of the G8 group
- Lack of control over development within the Magnolia Centre
- Future promotion of Town schemes could be more accessible in the Town Centre
- LDA Masterplan would identify specific areas of usage along the seafront
- Strand building, consultation and the Competition - future use and the tendering process to follow
- Youth drinking on the Maer, Gunfield Gardens, Foxholes path and the Strand
- Lack of Policing of anti-social behaviour within the New Strand in particular youths on skateboards, scooters and bikes
- Condition and safety of the new bowling alley building and the estimated completion date – reopening of the footpath at the rear
- Strand funding could have provided a new hospital or transport hub
- Concern at the poor condition of the seafront sand dunes
- Toilets closed out of season, debris on the beach and end of the day refuse collection on the seafront
- Car parking on the seafront – split authorities
- Town Council representation at EDDC Development Committee when local projects were discussed
- LDF response

- Community led planning would have an influence on future developments
- Condition of bus shelters
- Safety of pedestrians, in particular those with visual impairment, using the seafront walkway/cyclepath which was in the process of being widened
- EDDC should not make decisions on behalf of Exmouth residents
- Exmouth Shop Front Guide

Mr Ron Roberts, seconded in many places, proposed:-

“That this Town meeting hereby requires East Devon District Council to hold a referendum under Schedule 12 Part 3, Paragraph 18 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The questions to be asked will be

- 1) Should the EDDC rescind the planning permission for a building with a cafe use on the Strand, Exmouth?
- 2) Should that building in the Strand be used for retail use?
- 3) Should the Council confer with the residents and local taxpayers as to the purpose for which that building may be used?
- 4) Should the use of this building be limited to that of a Council run information centre and bus shelter?”

The request for a Town Poll was then supported in writing by 17 electors and would be passes to the Returning Officer to act on if it was determined to be a valid request.

The Mayor thanked all for attending and closed the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 10.02 pm

Signed
(Chairman)

Date