

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD AT THE TELFER CENTRE, EXMOUTH COMMUNITY COLLEGE, GYPSY LANE, EXMOUTH ON MONDAY 14TH MARCH 2016 AT 7.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillors: M Chapman (Mayor) B Cole (Deputy Mayor)
 B Bailey F Caygill D Chapman
 T Dumper L Elson S Gazzard
 P Graham J Humphreys B Nash
 C Nicholas P Stott J Trail
 M Williamson

R Bourgein, Town Crier, and approximately 155 electors of the Town of Exmouth

APOLOGIES: Reverend James Hutchings, Councillors A Greenhalgh & B Taylor

1. Opening and Welcome by the Mayor

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Monday 16th March 2015 were proposed by Councillor B Nash, seconded by Councillor D Chapman, and approved.

3. Annual Report of the Town Council

The Mayor commenced by highlighting the many events and functions she had attended that had taken place in the town during the past year. These commenced with the Victoria Cross dedication in the Strand, followed by the first Exmouth Pride event in Manor Gardens, then the Re-Adoption of the Rifles and the National Life Surf Championships, which were all memorable events - as was the arrival of the Rugby World Cup. Glorious weather accompanied the Exmouth Festival but windy conditions affected the original date of the Christmas Cracker event. The Mayor also announced that Marks and Spencer's new store would hopefully be open by Christmas. Tickets for the Mayor's Ball, which was to take place at Ocean, were on sale at Exmouth Town Hall.

4. Town Crier's Report

Roger Bourgein, Exmouth's Town Crier, reported that he had attended 210 events and had taken part in seven Town Crier competitions of which he had won prizes for the best dressed, best shout and best ambassador. Manor Lodge Care Home had supplied a new 10lb bell made by London's Whitechapel Foundry which could be heard for miles. He expressed his love for his job, Exmouth and its people and stated that Exmouth had been voted as the third safest town within England and Wales. He thanked Exmouth for the opportunity to represent the town.

5 Presentations from local organisations in receipt of grants and support from Exmouth Town Council

The following organisations each gave a 3 - 4 minute presentation explaining how the grants received from Exmouth Town Council had been used to support their organisation.

Exmouth Swimming & Lifesaving	Martin Pashley	
Exmouth Musical Theatre	Michelle Chudley	Chairperson
Exmouth Carnival	Justine Payton	Treasurer & Secretary
Exmouth Community Transport	Jill Elson	Founder & Chairperson
Exmouth Museum	Alan Arthur	Curator
Exmouth In Bloom	Ann Wheeler	Chairperson
Exmouth Beach Rescue	Keith Hoppins	
Citizens Advice East Devon	Chris Griffiths	Chief Executive Officer
Exmouth Sea Cadets	Tony Griffin	Chair of Management
Exmouth & Budleigh Scouts	Owen Smth	Scout Leaders
	Ben Mallett	
Exmouth Players Drama Club	Wendy Bishop	

6. Public Forum – Priority was given to those questions notified in advance to the Town Clerk.

Queens Drive Development

The Mayor gave an overview of situation that currently stood in respect of the Queens Drive Development and events so far.

Mr Malcolm Dodd, an Exmouth registered elector, had previously submitted a motion which would require a vote to be taken by the attendees of the Annual Town meeting that evening. He was invited by the Mayor to join the meeting where he stated that he felt he had no alternative but to put forward the request below.

“There is a strong feeling in the town about the way in which the proposed development is proceeding. A petition signed by more than 1600 registered electors attests to this concern.

We the undersigned 10 electors for the town request a local referendum (parish poll) so that there is a clear indication of the public feeling on this matter”.

The question that we would like to put to voters of the town is –

“Should Exmouth Town Council recommend to East Devon District Council that before any further planning applications are approved with regard to the Queen’s Drive development area, that additional independent consultation should be carried out in addition to that required by the applicant and the Local Planning Authority?”

The Mayor responded by highlighting that 6 Town Councillors, who proportionally represented all parties on the Town Council, had met regularly with regeneration

staff and the developer in order to ensure that the Masterplan aims were met and, following public consultation, the public wishes were to be considered.

Councillor M Williamson made reference to the letter of response (Agendum 14 – distributed to registered electors prior to the Town meeting) that the Town Council had sent to East Devon District Council (EDDC) in August 2015 in respect of outline proposals for Queen's Drive. The letter recommended that in September 2015, a consultation should be held with the community with the exhibition of plans accompanied by questionnaires and opportunities for members of the public to meet EDDC's regeneration staff and the developer. He gave an update on the situation in that no formal negotiations between EDDC and the developer had taken place as legal challenges by a Queen's Drive business tenant had delayed matters.

The Mayor added that whilst EDDC had approved the planning application for the road re-alignment, no formal planning application had been submitted as yet by Grenadier for the Watersports Centre. Electors at the meeting had two options - either ask that Exmouth Town Council write again to EDDC to request a public consultation or to request a Town Poll via EDDC which would incur costs of approximately £16,000 for the Town Council.

A number of points were raised in respect of the two options:-

- Cost of the Town Poll
- Everything was on hold pending the outcome of the legal appeal
- Outline planning permission had already been granted for the original Masterplan
- The Masterplan had been costly
- The infill of the ponds planning application had been refused
- The seafront would be a wasteland for the next few years and seafront businesses would lose out

The process that accompanied a planning application proposal was explained and particular reference was given to the Masterplan which had initially been seen as an overall plan for Exmouth seafront. At its current stage, electors expressed a wish to become involved in respect of future ideas and design options and it was noted that there had been no provision for residential accommodation on the outline proposal. Previous developments on the seafront had been delayed and concern was shown for the possible run down look of the seafront and the boarded up businesses before further development projects were agreed.

The topic of the involvement of young people's views and needs plus youth unemployment in the town was seen as an important part of further consultation. It was also debatable as to whether Exmouth Community College students had grasped the importance of the Masterplan consultation in 2011 when questionnaires were completed by them.

A representative of Save Exmouth Seafront had recently presented a petition of 1,600 signatures to East Devon District Council to request a referendum or a special meeting but this had been unsuccessful. The petition had represented the

strength of feeling amongst electors and asked that if a Town Poll was not supported then would the Town Council be prepared to publish an open letter in the local newspaper. The Town Council confirmed that they would be do that. A further request was made for the Town Council to carry out an independent consultation on the seafront development, which was declined as resources were not available to carry out the task.

Electors were reminded of the regeneration that had taken place over previous years, including the rebuilding of The Strand (which had encouraged new businesses to that area), Ocean and Premier Inn on the seafront - all of which had followed a long period of no investment in the town.

The motion to request a Town Poll was put forward against the offer of the Town Council to write a letter to EDDC. On a show of hands from the electors in attendance, the motion was carried.

RESOLVED that Exmouth Town Council recommend to East Devon District Council that before any further planning applications are approved with regard to the Queen's Drive development area, that additional independent consultation should be carried out in addition to that required by the applicant and the Local Planning Authority.

Sand on Queens Drive

Mr Alec Huett asked why part of Queens Drive had been left covered in sand for 69 days. Should the situation remain then seasonal businesses would be unable to function.

Mr Huett was advised that Devon County Council (DCC) were responsible for the removal of sand blown onto the seafront road in winter and to date had done what they could with the resources available. EDDC were responsible for the road in summer. Clearance had been due to commence that day with EDDC's Streetscene team taking the lead and DCC had stated that the road would be re-opened in time for Easter.

Public Transport Interchange for Exmouth

Roma Patten asked why had DCC, EDDC and the Town Council been allowed to ignore the requirement for a full public transport interchange for Exmouth which would connect bus, rail, taxis, cyclists and pedestrians in the same location. The bus stops were to be moved away from the train station to make way for the new Marks and Spencer development.

Councillor M Williamson responded as Chairman of the Exmouth Public Transport Partnership to state that Exmouth Town Council had asked for connectivity for all users of public transport particularly as 44% of Exmouth residents worked outside of Exmouth. Stagecoach Bus Company which was subsidised by DCC would not divert the service via the railway station as it was not a commercially viable proposition. Network Rail were committed to improvements at Exmouth Railway Station and all other transport services, other than buses, would be integrated. He thanked Roma Patten and her colleagues in the Exmouth Residents Association for their commitment to the interchange.

Neighbourhood Plan

Mr Roy Pryke, Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Vice Chairman of Rolle, explained that a neighbourhood plan for Exmouth would look at the whole of Exmouth in detail. Many villages were currently in the process of producing a neighbourhood plan and Paignton, another coastal town, had just started theirs. Exmouth’s neighbourhood plan would base itself on the newly adopted EDDC Local Plan and would identify possible other areas where houses could be built and identify other needs within the town. Once adopted the plan would generate a greater income for Exmouth in respect of CIL payments and be a legal document. The aim was to finish the plan by Autumn 2017. The timetable for public engagement would commence with an open day at the Town Hall on 28th April where ideas would be collected. A questionnaire would be distributed to all householders to gather information and there would be 2 or 3 meetings in each ward in May and June. A draft neighbourhood plan would be produced in early 2017 when a referendum would be requested. If supported and once adopted the plan would be valid for 15yrs. An overview was given on the funding streams available to support the production of the plan.

There being no more questions, the Mayor thanked all for attending and closed the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 9.48pm.

Signed
(Chairman)

Date