

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP

Notes of 9th meeting held on Wednesday 18th May 2016 at 10.30 pm in Exmouth Town Hall.

PRESENT

Roy Pryke	RP	NPSG Chairman
Pat Graham	PG	Exmouth Town Ward Councillor
Rob Masding	RM	Transition Town Exmouth, & Exmouth Town Ward Councillor
Bill Nash	BN	Exmouth Littleham Ward Councillor
John Thorogood	JT	Town Team & Chamber of Commerce
Cherry Nicholas	CN	Exmouth Brixington Ward Councillor
Pauline Stott	PS	Exmouth Halsdon Ward Councillor
Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Brixington Ward Councillor (in lieu of Cllr Brian Bailey)
David Radford	DR	(in lieu of VC Ian Cann)
Mark Williamson	MW	Champion of Neighbourhood Planning for East Devon, & Exmouth Littleham Ward Councillor
Tim Clatworthy	TC	Exmouth NP Project Administrator

1. APOLOGIES

Ian Cann	IC	NPSG Vice Chairman
Lisa Bowman	LB	Exmouth Town Clerk
Brian Bailey	BB	Exmouth Town Councillor, Withycombe Ward

Members expressed their shock and deep sadness at the loss of Littleham Ward Councillor Alison Greenhalgh (AG), who died suddenly at the weekend, and would be greatly missed. Thanks and appreciation for her commitment, energy and input at all levels were given. RP noted that despite the large number of bodies Alison contributed to, each of them felt she was giving them priority. BN (who has joined NPSG in lieu of Alison) commented that her work output was extraordinary, and that she had done more in the last five years than most people would achieve in fifty.

2. NOTES OF LAST MEETING

The notes of the 8th meeting held on Wednesday 20th April were received as a correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM/SINCE LAST MEETING

WEBSITE Q&A (Section 8 of previous Notes):

RM is currently without internet services and has been unable to collate questions and answers on the website.

CPRE'S "HOW TO SHAPE WHERE YOU LIVE: A GUIDE TO NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING" (Section 8 of previous Notes):

AG and TS (Tim Spurway) had agreed that this CPRE publication, which AG had originally recommended, had now been superseded by the more recent locality document, [the Neighbourhood Plan Roadmap](#), ten copies of which we now have in Reception. This went through an update last month and can be accessed on line at:

<http://locality.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Neighbourhood-planning-roadmap-2016.pdf> .

CHURCHES TOGETHER (Section 9 of previous Notes):

TC said that each of his repeated attempts (whether by phone or email) to contact various members of CT resulted in the same automatic email response, saying no-one was available to reply. PS reminded us that James Hutchings was on sabbatical leave, and informed us that Beth McDowell was ill. CN offered to talk with Rev. Simon Atkinson and SG suggested Rev. Mike Martin at the Baptist Church. RP suggested that we try one at a time, starting with Simon Atkinson. CN added that Rev. Atkinson had recommended in his address on Sunday that his parishioners add their support to Exmouth's NP.

QUEENS DRIVE HEARING (Section 10 of previous Notes):

With regard to BB's comment at the last meeting, RP added that NP must not exceed its reach, nor be put in the position of protecting ETC.

PS has produced a concise one-page document ("Warning: This is what you cannot change in the Neighbourhood Plan") to clarify the NP vis-à-vis SES (Save Exmouth Seafront) and for anyone puzzled by what any NP can and cannot do. BN pointed out that in the upcoming ETC meeting of 23rd May, items brought up would be noted, rather than discussed. He added that residents had talked with him about SES, thinking it was part of the NP. He had explained to them that the current outline plan covered **only the new alignment of Queens Drive**, and recommended they write expressing their views. RP added that all comments received would be fed into the NP data analysis in any case.

THANKS TO EXTERNAL BODIES WHO HELPED WITH NP SURVEY (Section 10 of previous Notes):

In the light of the number of reports of non-delivery of the NP Survey, members were considerably less enthusiastic about publishing our appreciation of Dor-2-Dor, whose delivery failures, particularly in Halsdon ward, had angered many Exmouth residents. (See Section 6 of current Notes.)

RP handed out copies of the article “The Good, the Bad & the Ugly: The Pros and Cons of Community-Generated Plans” by James Derounian (published in The Planner, April 2016), drawing our attention to one community (Winchcombe) that is now in the fifth year of its NP process. “It is to ward off this kind of scenario that we need to keep to a tight timetable,” RP pointed out. He also remarked on James Derounian’s comment that most communities could undertake neighbourhood planning if effectively supported, particularly if supported by their relevant local authority.

4. ORAL FINANCIAL REPORT

RP reported that DCT had processed 500 surveys already, and that this work had taken the equivalent of seven working days for one individual; he hoped that by our next meeting we would have more details of the actual cost to us. He added that LB was of the opinion that our finances were currently looking sound.

5. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING SEMINAR of 26 April 2016

Slide show (PowerPoint) already emailed to members. RP’s Notes and Hot Points from the seminar were shared and are **also attached**. 60 were present. EDDC will tell us if we need to change elements in our Plan.

Re. point 3 in RP’s notes, he emphasised the importance of monthly meetings with TS, and suggested inviting him to a NP meeting. MW said he already met TS on a monthly basis and agreed it was very important to keep in close touch so that he could keep an eye on our progress – ‘like having your homework marked as you go along’. He suggested inviting TS when we had reached the issues stage. RP said that we should have the full survey analysis from DCT by late June so perhaps should invite TS to our July meeting, but have an interim meeting nevertheless. CN and PS offered to join RP and MW for this meeting.

Re. point 5, it was emphasised that NPs should focus on land usage, in particular on how could unused/underused land be better used?

Re. point 6, it was emphasised that the Examiner doesn’t want lots of emails – everything written should be presented on paper. RP asked MW re point 7: MW thought it a good idea to pay for an Examiner’s assessments during the course of creating the NP. It could be the same person who will be our final Examiner.

Re. point 9, we were warned that if we were not sufficiently clear-thinking and failed to word the policy proposals carefully, developers would pick holes in our NP until it fell to pieces.

6. UPDATE

ADVERTISING, SURVEY DISTRIBUTION & COLLECTION

RP shared his update of 11th May on our NP progress (**also attached**). He said that up till 11th May we had received approximately 1,800 surveys completed. Whilst he had not read all the surveys, he had noticed one respondent’s comment: “Thank you so much for listening to us. Please continue ☺” RP thought that if we received a total of 2,000 responses (10% of Exmouth’s population, including children) that this might be acceptable but we would need to check with TS.

In conversation with TC since this meeting, TS mentioned that the numbers of surveys (of various types) completed and returned varied according to the ratio of working:retired population, fewer being returned the higher the proportion of working-age residents – and Exmouth came into a higher proportion category than most of East Devon.

In response to BN, RP added that we had already delivered to Martin Parkes (MP) of DCT two batches of approximately 500 surveys for processing, as requested by MP, and he would ask MP if his interim report would be based on both batches.

BN asked if the information from the surveys would be broken down by ward. This would be checked with MP.

TC reported on the degree of effectiveness of the survey delivery by Dor-2-Dor (D2D) and said that whilst there had been few complaints relative to the total size of the delivery, nevertheless we had received many complaints of non-delivery, in particular from (a) warden-controlled blocks, (b) streets around lower Hulham Road – PS added that many residents had complained to her of not receiving surveys in Halsdon ward – and (c) random addresses throughout the rest of the town. These last have now received surveys either by post or by collecting from the Town Hall. TC appreciated that residents often threw away unaddressed letterbox items without scrutinising them carefully first, and that also one resident in a house might throw away an item without another resident knowing it had been received; but added that, if residents felt (rightly or wrongly) that they had not received a survey, they might consider themselves disenfranchised and complain that “the council” had not included them. Some residents claiming not to have received surveys had already accused us of deliberately not including them, ETC’s assumed motive apparently being that we did not want to hear their views on the proposed seafront development.

TC was also concerned that, as D2D had “guaranteed a 98% hit rate”, NPSG had used this as its major form of media to inform the Exmouth populace of the NP. In this case residents at addresses not delivered to might not be aware of our NP, and therefore would not know to alert us of non-delivery; consequently there may be other cases of non-delivery that we may not hear about until other forms of media reach these residents – or not hear about at all. Complaints of non-delivery coming weeks after the original ‘hand-in date’ (9th May) would indicate that this is happening, and indeed this is proving to be the case, with some residents’ first knowledge of our NP Survey being their noticing our collection boxes around the town, or seeing our third or fourth Exmouth Journal/Herald adverts but not the first and second, and therefore only belatedly contacting us for a form.

RP repeated his earlier warning that the examiner could fail us if we had delivered too few surveys. He offered to write to the Exmouth Journal with an update on NP progress, and mention that there had been delivery problems. TC offered to write to Alan Marriott (AM) of Dor-2-Dor (D2D) with all the information he had gathered regarding non-deliveries, and ask for address details of any properties that AM’s GPS tracking system showed as not having been delivered to. RP said that in the meantime NPSG members would themselves have to deliver to addresses claiming non-delivery, and asked for volunteers. RP offered to cover Douglas Avenue and Salterton Road; MW to cover Roswell Court and all the First Port Housing blocks; BN the addresses opposite the Cranford Club; PG to do Victoria Road; TC, Hometor House; SG Lyndhurst Road, Nursery Close, and School Lane; PS, CN and DR offered to cover the Halsdon area between them. CN offered to contact the Higher Marley Road Group to check the situation there. DR added that it was important for the deliverers to record where they had delivered to, and for this information to be added to the audit trail. Members then calculated how many surveys each would need for their deliveries, consultations, and collection points.

Since this meeting TC has written to AM, who has not responded to TC’s request, but has replied to MW (who had supplied the initial contact with AM), stating (in part), “I do accept that no delivery is ever going to get to 100% of households - and we guarantee a 98% hit rate which has been more than achieved and exceeded. (That would be 340 verified non delivery addresses. We aren’t anywhere near 100 being investigated and the majority of those found to have been delivered)”. TC points out that the number of flats in the warden-controlled blocks alone comes to almost 300, with an average of 1.5 residents in each bringing the total to 450. Furthermore, since this meeting we have been advised that addresses in Rivermead Avenue and Beechway have now complained of non-delivery, as well as other addresses outside Halsdon ward, e.g. Maer Lane, Salterton Road, Cheshire Road. This is on top of all the other addresses previously notified to us.

POST-ITS:

After the Open Day of 28th April, visitors’ 231 post-it comments (108 describing strengths and 123 describing weaknesses) were assessed, indicating Exmouth’s perceived strengths and weaknesses. RP noted that people seemed to be most concerned about the natural environment, and that much credit was given to our parks and flowers. A safe, friendly town with a good quality of life was also highly valued. In summary:

Strengths: Natural Environment, particularly the sea front and estuary (41); Parks, gardens, flower displays and open spaces (26); Town ambience: safe place, friendly people, quality of life and activities (23); Transport, including rail/bus interchange (11); Strand and lively, independent shops (7); Schools (5); Individual Buildings: Hospital, Rolle College, Library, Lifeboat Station, Harbour View, Cinema.

Weaknesses: Threat to seafront (18); Need for Redevelopment (4); Parking (15); Pavement maintenance (12); Tourist Information Service (80); Cyclists (7); Employment, particularly for young people (7); Charity and antique shops (7); Affordable Housing (6); Neglect of Heritage Buildings (5).

It was noted that the delivery of the surveys throughout Exmouth has been subject to some problems, but the process is continuing and any residents or businesses which have not received the survey are being encouraged to contact the Town Hall (tel: 01395 276167) or to complete the survey on-line at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ExmouthNP or on Facebook: [exmouthneighbourhoodplan](https://www.facebook.com/exmouthneighbourhoodplan). There is time because the period for returns has been extended to 10 June in order to take on board the responses to the Ward Consultations, and this had been advertised in the Herald on 13 May. There is no problem with the decision to request returns by 9 May, as this has produced the substantial number of responses which are now being analysed for an interim report.

REPORT FROM NP PRESENCE AT LITTLEHAM COMMUNITY FESTIVAL, 14TH MAY

AG held a stall at this event but, due to her death shortly afterwards, there is no report.

LESSONS FROM OPEN MEETING ON 28TH APRIL

A repeating PowerPoint slideshow was set up at this meeting to give visitors the background to the NP. During the course of the day RP realised that oral presentations were needed also. BN complimented RP on his ‘off the cuff’ presentations. CN said events on the day had reminded those present not to ‘rise to the bait’ when confronted by visitors with tangential and/or personal axes to grind. In answer to PS, RP added that a strong presence at the ward consultations was needed for the NP process to be successful in the town as a whole.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

TC commented that on regularly scanning a small percentage of surveys as they came in, that we seemed to be getting a disquietingly small number of younger respondents. Discussion followed on how best to address this issue. PS proposed holding an event at Exmouth Community College.

PG commented that her experience had shown her that it was very difficult to get students to fill in such forms, and that encouragement from teachers may skew the answers, as children are easily led. She added that the students should be at least 16. PS agreed and added that only Exmouth residents should be allowed to complete the surveys.

CN pointed out that they may have already filled out surveys at home. RP answered that this was not a ballot, not a voting process. CN replied that nevertheless the data we receive from this event should not duplicate any we already have: it should be from a separate process, the data from it being added as an addendum.

BN, having put out a questionnaire to a similar age group in the past, said he had had to ignore a lot of answers as so many had been completed inappropriately. He suggested that we treat this sector of the community as we would all others, but perhaps devise something different for them. He added we could ask other educational establishments if a NP body had visited them, and for their experiences.

RP suggested we ask TS, MP (Martin Parkes) and MW to approve the process. In addition, and as agreed at this meeting, we will offer to make a presentation to 6th Formers at ECC in July or September and in our draft plan will refer to their views.

PS offered to ask the College if they would be happy to have this event, either in July towards the end of the summer term, or in September at the beginning of the autumn term.

BN asked if we would, or should include ward design statements. RP answered that they would be included as appendices. TARA (The Avenues Residents' Association) had already accepted that their revised design statement stood its best chance of being accepted through being part of Exmouth's NP.

Since this meeting Councillor Jill Elson, Chair of Governors for Exmouth Community College, has agreed to PS's request on behalf of NPSG to arrange an event in September.

Also since this meeting, TS has confirmed with MW that it is up to each NPSG to decide what lower age they would impose on the consultation process. One parish had specified 14, though most don't appear to specify. As to the referendum later in the process it would of course be only registered electors, so 18 plus.

The meeting finished at 12.25pm.

8. SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

1. CN to contact Rev Simon Atkinson to encourage NP Churches Together participation from. SG to approach Rev Mike Martin if Rev Atkinson unable to help.
2. RP to ask MP if his interim report will be based on both batches of delivered NP Surveys, and if data would be broken down by Ward.
3. RP to write to the Exmouth Journal with an update on NP progress, and mention that there had been delivery problems.
4. CN to contact the Higher Marley Road Group to check the delivery situation there.
5. RP to organise contact with select educational establishments to enquire on their experiences of NP consultation.

9. NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 29th June, 10.30 in the Council Chamber.