

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL REGENERATION & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, EXMOUTH ON MONDAY 20TH JANUARY 2014 AT 7.00pm

Present:

Councillors: P Stott (Chairman)
M Chapman (Vice-Chairman)
I Brownbill D Chapman
B Cole T Dumper
V Duval-Steer S Gazzard
P Graham J Humphreys
W Nash C Nicholas
B Toye R Turner
M Williamson E Wragg
S Wragg

Speakers: Inspector Antonia Weeks of Devon and Cornwall Police; and Geoff Morris, as representative of Exmouth Community Organisations for item 9, COLP Report.

G14/001 Apologies

S MacQueen

The meeting was adjourned for the Public Forum. Please see Appendix for details.

The meeting was then reconvened.

G14/002 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Regeneration and General Purposes Committee held on 18th November 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising from those minutes.

G14/003 Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and Dispensations

No declarations were made and no requests for dispensation had been received.

G14/004 Exclusion of the Public and Press

There were no items to be dealt with which necessitated exclusion of the Public and the Press under Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960.

G14/005 Urgent Business

Councillor S Gazzard advised the meeting that Councillor M Mitchell's daughter Sue had passed away. The Mayor was aware and had signed a card of condolences on behalf of the Council.

G14/006 Policing in Exmouth

Inspector Antonia Weeks presented a report to Councillors. Total overall crime for Exmouth area is 1% up on the previous 12 months, but should be seen in perspective of a 10% reduction last time. We record more incidents as a crime than

before. For example, people contact the Police to say they have had their mobile phone stolen when in fact it may be lost.

Of most note, a rise in dwelling burglaries to 94 compared to 74. This is due in part to an isolated series of incidents in Lymington. Within Exmouth the majority appear opportunistic, so Police reiterate advice around home security, neighbourhood watch and reasonable precautions.

Shoplifting is another increase. Shopwatch is busier. The majority of offences are by a small number of known offenders. Majority of reports are theft of foodstuffs, linking to issues around homelessness, which is being looked at through the Local Action Group. Police are grateful to the Town Council for responding swiftly to reports of graffiti, so as not to exacerbate the problem.

Vehicle offences are down – Stolen vehicles are rare, damage to vehicles less so, probably down to the amount of on-road parking.

Street violence in the town is reduced, particularly for Friday and Saturday nights. The Council can support the police by bearing in mind CCTV when considering licence and planning applications.

The Police actively support Exmouth being a vibrant town centre day and night for eating and drinking but we have to have safety in mind. The success of New Year's Eve and other events in the town illustrates this.

Domestic abuse is an ongoing demand, but increased confidence to report these crimes is encouraging.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) has decreased – particularly youth ASB. This might be related to young people staying in on computers – PCSOs did internet safety awareness in schools.

Low-level ASB being recorded include arguments between neighbours. Planning considerations is a role for councils regarding proximity of people, conflict over limited parking and bins on pavements.

Everyone can contribute by parking responsibly, picking up after their dogs, looking after their property.

Mental health issues increase demand, including recent tragedy at Orcombe. Police welcome support by councils for mental health services.

Current police offer numbers are stable with no plans to reduce staffing at Exmouth, nor plans to increase.

Questions:

Any prosecutions for graffiti?

No, but offering a reward influences behaviours of the perpetrator and associates

Any cyclist prosecution for no lights at night?

Prosecution would be a last resort. They would be stopped and given advice.

Any concerns over the extension of licensing hours?

3am for alcohol and 3:30am for food seems late enough and should be consistent

Concern is expressed over delivery vehicles parking

The Council can better influence this through parking restrictions.

Are any initiatives in place to address poor driving on mobility scooters?

Police have a leaflet advising on do's and don'ts.

Campervans and unaccompanied trailer caravans parked on Jubilee Drive highway.

Complete obstruction is a police issue, as long as vehicles are taxed etc..

The Chairman thanked Inspector Weeks for a most illuminating talk.

G14/007 First World War Victoria Cross Memorials

The Town Clerk advised the meeting that as part of the centenary commemoration of world war one, communities were being given memorial stones for each person from their community who had received the Victoria Cross. In Exmouth's case there were two recipients with whom we had an interest. Reginald Warneford VC and Richard Sandford VC. They had received their crosses for action in June 1915 and April 1918 respectively and it was believed that it was intended that communities be presented with the memorials for the 100th anniversary of those dates.

The Clerk had met with the Chief Executive of EDDC, the Chairman and the Town Mayor and consulted with the Chairman of the War Memorial Committee and the head of EDDC Parks and Gardens regarding the location of memorials. It was generally agreed that the best place for these was to be in the Strand, specifically set in the large flower beds on the War Memorial.

The Committee noted that Armed Forces Day was 5th July 2014 and that the Exmouth Players were planning a tribute show for the centenary.

G14/008 Supporting Exmouth Events

Councillor W Nash, on behalf of the Committee congratulated Mr David Tidball, who was in the public gallery, on winning Exmouth the role of venue for the National Lifeguard Championship, which was not only a prestigious event but would also bring many people into the town. A meeting was to be held on Monday 27th January at 4pm, at which any person with an interest in helping was very welcome to attend.

Mayor Humphreys echo'd Councillor Nash, adding that if the town got behind this event and supported it, the event could be held in Exmouth for several years.

G14/009 Exmouth Event Volunteering

The meeting considered how a corps of volunteers might be recruited for events such as the Festival, Carnival, Cracker, Sporting events and New Year. The lack of volunteers made for a very heavy burden falling on a few people and some events in town had been lost for lack of volunteers.

Members suggested writing to community groups, but also forming a group from new volunteers. This might include young people, probation service, church groups. Media such as Bay FM may be useful in publicising this need. Councillor S Wragg suggested that an Events Volunteer Officer might be needed to facilitate this work, for which a budget might be needed – unless a volunteer co-ordinator came forward too.

G14/010 Devon Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

Councillor E Wragg explained the genesis of this document and commended it to the Committee, asking for their endorsement of it. She described it as very sensible in the light of recent events. The Town Council has played a significant role in prompting work to be done in town, which has resulted in SW Water carrying out works, such as that ongoing within The Colony at the moment.

Councillor T Dumper observed that most recent flooding was surface run off rather than tidal inundation and strategy on these needs to be brought together. Councillor E Wragg, Seconded by Councillor T Dumper proposed that the strategy be endorsed.

RESOLVED: that the Town Council endorses the Devon Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

G14/011 Christmas Cracker Feedback

The Cracker wash-up meeting is on Wednesday 22nd January & the Town Clerk invited Members to give feedback on this event. Councillor D Chapman extended congratulations to Suzanne on organising an excellent event.

G14/012 COLP Report

Mr Geoff Morris reported on the proceedings of the COLP meeting held 16th January 2014. Tourist Information – COLP Members offered to come up with proposals for providing tourist information.

Sustainable Communities Act – COLP members were disappointed that a proposal put by Transition Town Exmouth and endorsed by COLP was rejected at East Devon by a Residents Forum – without any opportunity for TTE to present their case beforehand. It was not clear how this Residents Forum was qualified to judge proposals. Cllr M Williamson endorsed these comments.

Exmouth Library – it was suggested that the Chief Librarian attend COLP to explain plans for the Exmouth Library.

Christopher Irwin – COLP discussed key points from his presentation to the Transport Partnership. Of greatest concern was the scant mention of Exmouth in the draft LEP Strategic Plan – mentioned just once, not even in the list of largest towns in Devon, despite being the largest.

Seafront Toilets – More good quality toilets are needed between the docks and Pavilion Precept – COLP asked that proposals which impacted on the budget might be put on the COLP agenda beforehand.

Strand – Concern had been expressed that the surface becomes very slippery in bad weather. COLP were awaiting the chance to see plans for a shelter on the Strand.

The Chairman thanked MR Morris for his report.

G14/013 Improving Exmouth

a) Supplementary Street Cleaner

The meeting reviewed the list of work Derek Parsons had done since the last meeting. Cllr S Gazzard reported that the Exmouth Tidy Group were unhappy with the length of time it was taking for work to be done after it was reported.

Note: Councillor Humphreys left the meeting at this point.

The Clerk accepted that there had been some delays in the beginning but felt that the claim was unjustified, looking at the response time achieved at the moment. However, he also highlighted that some of the work given, in particular weeding, was very time-consuming and that it was very easy to report four long roads as needing weeding, but quite a task to carry that out – one prone to delays simply because to do each in turn would take a long time to get to the last job, but also that high-priority work such as graffiti and litter picking would take priority. There was only one pair of hands to do the work.

Councillor M Chapman asked that all Councillors report in issues that they find. Cllr P Graham endorsed Cllr Chapman's comments and noted that weeding pavements was the County Council's job. Cllr Graham felt that people needed to understand the time some jobs take and be more patient. Cllr V Duval-Steer

endorsed Cllr Graham's comment and highlighted the excellent job the Derek did in clearing weeds in Manchester Street.

b) Refurbishment – Bus Shelters

At the suggestion of the Exmouth Transport Partnership the Town Clerk outlined proposals for bus shelter refurbishment, to be funded through the Parishes Together Fund. It was noted that commercial sponsors would be welcome to help fund the work on particular shelters, but the key was to have great quality images, not barefaced advertising.

Councillor M Williamson, seconded by Cllr D Chapman, proposed that the Council applies to the Parishes Together Fund for financial support for this project.

RESOLVED that the Council applies to the Parishes Together Fund for financial support for this project.

G14/014 Reports from other Local Bodies and the Town Clerk as appropriate

a) Exmouth Regeneration Board

Met 28th November. Mamhead Slipway has been the subject of test boreholes, through which free-flowing water can be seen – the last 8m has little or no support under the slipway, which vindicates the EDDC decision to close it.

A design for a shelter on the Strand needs to be submitted by March. Cllr W Nash reported that he, the Mayor, Cllr S Gazzard and the Town Clerk were working on a proposal that would come to the Town Council for consideration once a design was deemed acceptable for funding by the Project Executive Team.

b) Town Team Update

The Town Team meet on 27th January with the Tourism Forum.

c) Arts Forum update

Submissions of proposals for the Arts Trail from the station to the seafront are being received and will be considered by a panel of judges drawn from the three Councils, in February. A key factor will be that the design is suitable as a public artwork, both in terms of safety and artistic merit.

d) Tourism Forum update

The Tourism Forum meets on 27th January with the Town Team to discuss ideas about tourist information, facilitated by former Mayor Darryl Nicholas.

e) Reports from Councillors

Cllr S Wragg reported that Tesco are not going ahead with their extension site. He raised concern that the hoarding for that site and the Premier Inn site should get planning permission if construction is not taking place.

Cllr E Wragg reported on the EDDC Budget Scrutiny process. She expressed surprise that the expenditure on public halls would drop, but it has gone up. The Thelma Hulbert Gallery in Honiton was costing £98k annually, which seemed unfair that Exmouth ratepayers should be meeting this cost.

Cllr S Gazzard recorded his thanks to Cllr J Humphreys for opening the Town Hall and accompanying Cllr Gazzard in handing out sandbags.

Cllr T Dumper reported that Fairtrade Fortnight runs from Feb 24th to March 8th.

G14/015 Date of next meeting

The next meeting was to be held on 3rd March 2014 at 7pm.

The Meeting ended at 21:07 pm.

Signed Dated
Chairman

Appendix

Mr Geoff Morris asked that the COLP Representative's report was brought up the agenda in future, so that the representative could choose to leave if there were no other items of interest to them.