

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD AT THE TELFER CENTRE, EXMOUTH COMMUNITY COLLEGE, GYPSY LANE, EXMOUTH ON MONDAY 20TH MARCH 2017 AT 7.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillors: B Cole (Mayor)	J Trail (Deputy Mayor)
B Bailey	F Caygill
T Darville	B De Saram
T Dumper	L Elson
P Garbutt	S Gazzard
P Graham	J Humphreys
R Masding	C Nicholas
D Nicholas	P Stott

R Bourgein, Town Crier, and approximately 50 electors of the Town of Exmouth

APOLOGIES: Councillors M Chapman, C Gough, T Hill, B Nash, K Norton, R Scott, B Taylor, B Toye & M Williamson. Roma and Vernon Patten and Roy Pryke.

Exmouth's Town Crier, Roger Bourgein, introduced Councillor Brian Cole, Mayor of Exmouth and Chairman of the Town Council.

1. Opening and Welcome by the Mayor

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and as a departure from the agenda invited members of the local Centre Stage group to perform a couple of numbers from their forthcoming show, Barnum, which would be staged at Exmouth Pavilion from Tues 25th April until Saturday 29th April. Tickets were currently on sale.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Monday 14th March 2016 were proposed by Councillor L Elson, seconded by Councillor P Stott, and approved.

3. Annual Report of the Town Council

The Mayor who took office on 23rd May 2016 gave an overview of what being Mayor and the Chairman of Exmouth Town Council entailed. As an ambassador of the Town he had attended many events and functions in the town during the past year. These commenced with the wreath laying at the Remembrance of the Battle of Jutland, judging at Exmouth Art Group, Mayor's Civic Service, Royal Marines Beat Retreat and Kings Squad, Town Criers competition, Local Police Awards, Exmouth Community College awards, Battle of the Somme wreath laying, underpass refurbishment, opening of care home garden parties, Christmas Day visits, HMS Ledbury in Dartmouth, Dinosaur Trail, opening of new units at Liverton 2 Business Park, Memory Café, Christmas Cracker, opening of shops, businesses and various clubs, visiting schools, nurseries and welcoming foreign students and Twinning

Groups. He thanked his wife Beryl who had been his consort and support over the last year and stated that he was proud and honoured to be Mayor for the Town.

He reminded electors that Exmouth Town Council had formed in May 1996 with its mission statement 'To improve the quality of life for Exmouth residents, the experience of visitors and build on characteristics which make Exmouth special.' Currently there were challenging economic times and national and regional pressures were having a direct impact on the work of Exmouth Town Council. For 10 years the Town Council had faced increasing cuts from Devon County Council and East Devon District Council. Town Council now provides funding for some grass cutting, repair of historic assets, bus shelters and seafront lighting and provides supplementary street cleaning and maintenance with a budget put aside for the provision of further additional street cleaning and a dog warden. Financial support had been given to local community groups, running and funding major events such as the Exmouth Festival and Christmas Cracker.

In July 2009, the Town Council were tasked with bringing together community groups with a wide interest to work together towards a shared future plan which resulted in the Community Organisational Liaison Panel being formed.

Future plans for the Town Council were focussed on the development of tourism and the economy, with the opportunities provided by the redevelopment of Queens Drive at the forefront. It was important to work together to create a bright future for visitors, families, friends and residents of all ages.

4. Town Crier's Report

Roger Bourgein, Exmouth's Town Crier, reported that he had attended approximately 200 events and enjoyed having the freedom to welcome visitors to the Town. The winter had been hard but summer would see Exmouth's population double by visitor numbers who frequent the shops and smile. He continued to take part in Town Crier competitions of which he had won many awards, one of which had resulted in a personal invite to attend a prestigious 3 day Town Crier event in Bermuda for which he had currently raised most of the funds needed to support the trip. He thanked Exmouth for the opportunity to represent the Town and marvelled at the wonder of the Exe Estuary.

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

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

Exmouth In Bloom, Gerry Bassett, New Chairperson

The group had been established for 50 years and now consisted of a team of 40 enthusiastic volunteers who planted and weeded flower beds. Last year they had achieved a Gold Award for South West in Bloom and were winners of the St Bridget's Cup. The blue display boats had been repainted and were refilled with plants on a regular basis. Negotiations were currently taking place to install a standpipe near the Sports Centre to help with watering costs. The 'fish' bed would be planted again this year. The team worked closely with Exmouth Town Council,

East Devon District Council and Streetscene and local charities. There were around 150 'Friends of Exmouth in Bloom' and younger people were encouraged to participate in projects. The yearly calendar had proved popular and had sold out. Exmouth in Bloom thanked Exmouth Town Council for its continued financial support to help them maintain Exmouth's status as 'the Town of flowers'.

Exmouth Community College Cadets, Students – Finn, Chloe, Tom & Darcy accompanied by David Turner, Deputy Head of Exmouth Community College, introduced the 4 students who each gave an overview of their involvement as cadets with the Fire Service and Devon and Cornwall Police. Activities carried out were designed to boost confidence and encouraged team work by communication. Their role as Fire cadets was half practical and half theory and involved trips, including a visit to Fire HQ, and undertaking fire related tasks. A range of activities was also undertaken in their Police cadet roles and consequences of bad behaviour were explored. The cadets had also experienced attendance at a Police Memorial Service which had proved very moving. Thanks were expressed to Exmouth Town Council for the grant.

Exmouth Swimming & Lifesaving, Martin Pashley, volunteer, thanked Exmouth Town Council for the grant which was used to support the educational element of the club. Next year would see 125 years of the formation of the club where lessons had originally taken place in the docks area of the sea. The club's motto 'To inspire and enable our members to promote excellence in swimming' and swimming was deemed as the No1 activity for a fit and healthy mind. Competitive and development sessions, open water sessions in the sea, master sessions for adults were all on offer. LED had recently invested in new swimming facilities through fund raising and Lottery funding.

Exmouth Ceramic Group, Joy Davis gave a presentation and thanked Exmouth Town Council for the grant towards their replacement clay storage shed. The group were based at 'Rethink' premises in Meeting Street and had 50 members and it had been active for 40yrs. It was a not for profit organisation with volunteer management who supported students from Exmouth Community College, recovery learning, Scouts and Girl Guide groups, support groups for Learning Difficulties and Dementia, and helped to integrate vulnerable people back into the community. There were currently 100 people a week that attended the Ceramic Group. They had created the Garth Gibson Memorial in Manor Gardens and made the tiles located near the Imperial Hotel. There was currently concern for the future of the group due to 'Rethink' undergoing changes but the group were hopeful to keep going.

Citizens Advice Bureau, East Devon, Chris Griffiths, Chief Executive Officer, advised all present that the CAB office had recently relocated to a shop front in the Town. The East Devon branch was established 57 yrs ago and was part of a national charity but funded locally from grants, one of which was from the Town Council. Approximately 4,000 new clients were seen during 2016 requiring assistance with welfare benefits, tax credits, the changes in Employment Support Allowance, mental health issues and some medical support.

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

The Chairman reminded members of the public that questions should directly relate to Exmouth Town Council business and questions that related to East Devon District Council, Devon County Council, Devon and Cornwall Police and the NHS would be redirected or answered in writing. He invited members present who had previously submitted questions to the Town Clerk to speak.

Mr Gordon Hodgson asked if there were plans to have a café at Orcombe Point and another restaurant in that area, both developer built. Would there be full involvement of the people of Exmouth plus the criteria for any building and the selection of a tenant.

The chairman's response was that EDDC had set aside a budget for the next financial year to help bring back a café to Orcombe Point. At a later date, there might be a grander design for a café, bar and restaurant in the area. Councillor M Williamson was currently inviting people to come up with their ideas for what they would like to see café wise at Orcombe Point. Responses to date had been positive and enthusiastic at the return of a café facility there.

The next question asked for an update on the Neighbourhood Plan to which the chairman gave an update from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

A further question asked what the Town Council's reaction was to the fact that the Visitor Survey results had not been published as it was an important feature for consideration as part of the seafront proposals.

The Chairman responded that the Coastal Community Team had met in the week prior and it was understood that the results would be available in the near future. The survey had been conducted by the independent South West Research Company between June 2016 and October 2016 and would provide key information about Exmouth's visitor economy.

Mr Malcolm Dodd wished to know to what extent Exmouth Town Councillors who sat on the various Regeneration Committees represented the views of Exmouth residents particularly those who voted for the Town Poll.

The Chairman could not speak on behalf of those councillors but did state that the Town Council had made it very clear to EDDC that any development on Queens Drive needed to be high in quality and that full consultation would take place throughout.

Mr Alec Huett gave an over view of the 2011 Masterplan for Exmouth and asked why Queens Drive had become a Priority Development Objective for Exmouth in preference to the establishment of better jobs and affordable homes within the centre of the Town.

The Chairman stated that the Queens Drive development was not in any way related to the provision of affordable homes. Whilst there were no current proposals for affordable housing within the Town, Exmouth Town Council acknowledged there

was a great need for younger families. The arrival of Marks and Spencer, Premier Inn and the renovation of Thomas Tucker would also provide new employment opportunities. It was a disappointment to lose the Rolle College facility for small businesses but the arrival of the Deaf Academy should create some local jobs.

Mr Ian Hunt asked whether the Town Council had a view on the parking and overnight staying of motor caravans on Queens Drive.

The Chairman responded to state that the Town Council had raised the matter with Devon County Highways who had responded that unless the motor caravan was outside the constraints of a single parking bay or had no ticket or an invalid ticket there was no reason for them not to park there. EDDC had been asked to consider offering legitimate parking for campervans in one of its car parks but to date there had been no progress.

A further question asked the Town Council why the relevant authorities had failed to enforce the restrictions on access and parking to the upgraded pedestrianised areas of Tower St and Bath Rd.

The Chairman explained that the Town Council had been consulted on the introduction of various Traffic Orders to be applied by DCC under the impending traffic management review for the Town. Once adopted, both Tower St and Bath Rd would be subject to no waiting at any time.

Mr Peter Dobbs asked if details were available for the type of restaurant that would occupy the ground floor of the Thomas Tucker building now that planning permission had been granted, with no specific food outlet confirmed.

The Chairman responded that Exmouth Town Council, as Statutory Consultees on the planning application, had sought clarification of the type of restaurant from the developer and were assured it would be of a quality similar to Prezzo's. There would be a restriction on opening hours and the planning permission precluded hot food take-away.

Mr Dobbs also asked that with Rolle College being sold to the Exeter Deaf Academy, would Councillors who had supported Rolle Exmouth business start-ups and other community use on the site, continue to press for some form of all these three elements to be included in any development plans that the Deaf Society put forward for the site.

The Chairman explained that Exmouth Town Council had debated the situation in October 2016 and whilst Exeter Deaf Academy would be welcomed to the Town, the Town Council had also stated its intention to continue to support the objectives of Rolle Exmouth Ltd. To that end, the Town Council wished to engage in any stakeholder discussions with all parties to achieve the best outcomes for the residents of Exmouth.

A further question was put forward to ask whether a mobile catering facility be provided in summer 2017 at the end of the seafront by the zigzag path as plans

for any permanent building would not be ready in time. Maybe the current leaseholders of Harbour View Café would be able to run it.

The Town Clerk explained that East Devon District Council (EDDC) were currently unable to allow a mobile concession on the highway at Orcombe Point as the existing street trading restrictions did not allow for it. EDDC hoped to progress with the lifting of street trading restrictions to reinstate a temporary facility on the platform that existed there.

Trisha Castle-Gerrard asked Town Councillors for their views on the demolition of Harbour View Café.

The Town Clerk responded that the Town Councillors had mixed views on Harbour View Café. However, the Town Council had asked EDDC to consider granting the incumbent tenant a licence extension over Summer 2017 so that the building did not lay empty and this had been honoured by the District Council.

Megan Armstrong asked that the Town Council support Exeter Road shops in order to secure compensation from the utility company for loss of business and possibly from EDDC in respect of business rates for on-going gas works along there.

It was confirmed by the Town Clerk that no approach had been made by any affected traders to Exmouth Town Council, although they may have approached the Exmouth Chamber of Trade. The Town Council would investigate what support could be given to their situation.

The question of why Harbour View Café had been prematurely closed was also raised in the context of it being part of phase 3 seafront development. Members of the public were signposted to the time-line chart produced by EDDC which identified the timescales and associated opportunities for consultation for the seafront development.

Finally, a resident asked for clarification on Exmouth Town Council's policy towards Cultural, Historic and Heritage buildings within the Town as we had already lost the Model Railway building and would be losing Harbour View Café which had been a base for feeding troops before they had gone to fight in the war. The model railway carriage could have been relocated to Orcombe Point.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the Council had limited jurisdiction in terms of protecting heritage buildings, however it did liaise with Exmouth Civic Society and had recently been involved in pushing for a positive outcome to the Thomas Tucker building as well as planning enforcement against a shop on Exeter Road and for funding the renovation of the seafront clock tower.

Mr Michael Greenland voiced his support for the redevelopment of the seafront and asked that residents look to support new ideas that would appeal to visitors to Exmouth.

The meeting concluded at 9.19 pm.

Signed
(Chairman)

Date