

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

NOTES OF A MEETING OF EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL RIGHTS OF WAY WORKING PARTY HELD IN EXMOUTH TOWN HALL ON WEDNESDAY 27TH MARCH 2019 AT 4.00 P.M.

Present:

Cllr. B De Saram (Chairman)
Cllrs. Brenda Taylor, Mark Williamson & Jeff Trail
Emma De Saram
Jan Gannaway
Terry Knights (P3 Coordinator)
Helen Bennett & Ross Hussey (Volunteers)
Sue Cody (Office Manager)

For the benefit of the new volunteer present members introduced themselves.

Apologies: Lisa Bowman (Town Clerk), Tim Clatworthy (Volunteer to P3 Coordinator)

Introduction of Volunteer footpath walker

Ross Hussey was welcomed as a new volunteer who gave a background to his career.

Notes of the Last Meeting 18th September 2018

These were accepted and signed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising from the last notes and not included in the current agenda

- **Wild Exmouth Project** - The project had been approved. Councillor Bruce De Saram had met Debs Ryland of the Wild Exmouth Project that morning and felt it would be beneficial if the group could invite her to a future Rights of Way Working Party meeting.
- **Plumb Park Development** – There would be no SANGS or CIL money provided by the development to support the infrastructure or maintenance of footpaths around Exmouth.
- **Cyclepath around the new Watersports Centre** – Councillor Mark Williamson confirmed that the cyclepath would be re-routed around the new watersports centre.
- **Littleham – Budleigh cyclepath** – the damage created by badgers last year which had resulted in undermining of the tarmac had been resurfaced and was an excellent job.
- **Exe Estuary Trail – solar lights** – The trail had been very poorly repaired, and some solar lights had been tarmacked over in the process. Councillors Richard Scott and Jeff Trail would investigate and report back to Lisa Bowman, Town Clerk, on the condition of the solar lights.

- **Footpath between Buckingham Close and Green Farm**

There was a problem with the unofficial re-routed footpath by the side of the brook. After recent bad weather the path was falling into the brook and Richard Spurway, DCC Rights of Way Warden, had been notified of the problem but had stated that riverbank repairs were expensive. Terry Knights reminded members that it was illegal to reroute public footpaths.

It should be noted that Green Farm had currently submitted a planning application to change their agricultural buildings into 4 units. Councillor Mark Williamson had requested a condition be applied should the application be approved that surrounding footpaths be improved to encourage walking or cycling to work. An ideal route for the footpath would be to run alongside Littleham Brook.

Councillor Williamson had also requested a cattle proof fence to be installed on Maer Lane to prevent cattle straying onto the new football pitches once they had been constructed. Clare James, Estate Officer, for Clinton Devon had said she would speak to the manager of Green Farm about the request, but no response had been received to date.

Devon County Council grant application and work identified for use of allocation

Sue, Tim and Helen had met as a smaller group to match the photographs taken by both Tim and Helen and pinpoint their locations on the office copy of the Public Rights of Way map. Following that task footpath work had been identified and apart from some ongoing issues all footpaths had since been put into good order. A survey sheet had been completed by Sue which documented work carried out and work identified for the future – a copy of which was circulated to members. Paperwork had also been completed to request a grant for the next financial year.

Proposal for an Exmouth Circular Walk

Helen Bennett had produced a report on a proposal to create a circular walk around Exmouth. The report was distributed to members of the group for discussion and a summary is provided below.

The section of the walk that was missing was from the Withycombe Brook below the Liverton Industrial Estate to Summer Lane. There were various possible routes but the most likely would be across farmland to St Johns Church and then continuing up before crossing St Johns Road into the woods on the other side (Big wood and Bystock woods). Then to cross Higher Marley Road and into the back of the proposed Goodmores Farm Housing Development and out to Summer Lane. Obviously, Summer Lane was extremely busy at present, but it is understood that when the Dinan Way extension was completed, it was proposed that Summer Lane would be made into a multi way with car access only for those who lived there so completing the walk.

Responses from the group: -

The idea of a circular walk was a good project and thanks to Helen for putting forward her thoughts to the group. A path through Bystock Woods would be ideal but was now constricted by 2 solar farms and further one planned at Veiges Farm. Big Woods had been offered to the Town Council years ago but lack of funds to maintain them had meant that it was unachievable. Cllr. Trail stated that property developer John Fowler had bought the bottom part of Bystock Woods near Dinan Way and felt that should a footpath access be created it could lead to a vehicular access being made and subsequently encourage a housing development although the 5yr land supply for housing was now secure. Other access points to the woods were under private ownership, such as the one that gave access to the Bystock Estate. A 'Beating of the Bounds' event had taken place in the past which had followed a circular route so that route may be worth investigation.

The newly adopted Exmouth Neighbourhood Plan had supported the idea of a circular path for Exmouth under section 'Getting About' (page 86).

The housing development at Goodmores Farm in respect of green infrastructure may look at the possibility of providing a footpath link to the common. Perhaps when Liverton 3 is developed some thought could be given to an access to the common.

Landowners had in the past been resistant to the creation of a public footpath on their land, but a suggestion was put forward that for the future a small action group be formed, to include a Councillor, to investigate possible options to create a circular walk for Exmouth. Once all possibilities were documented then a decision could be made as to who could approach the landowners. Ross had previously worked for Exeter City Council when the 'Green Route' was created and understood the difficulties in negotiating with landowners.

Green Lane/Randalls Lane

Richard Spurway had responded to issues that he had been made aware of around Green Lane/Randalls Lane. He had been down to the Green Farm area and made a general inspection and generally felt that the public paths were ok, but due to the soil in that area it does get very wet in the winter months, although the paths still satisfies the Authorities "condition criteria".

Randalls Lane was a permissive path provided by Clinton Devon Estate and he had raised the concerns with the estate, but DCC had no powers to ensure works took place to improve the gateways. He was sure they would be happy for DCC to undertake any works that would improve matters, but of course DCC do have increasing financial constraints, their statutory commitments must come first.

Definitive Map

A copy of the list of the latest completed Definitive Maps for Devon was handed out to illustrate how the project was progressing as the original completion date was 1st January 2015. Terry Knights confirmed that he held

all the necessary photocopied notarized paperwork to support previously identified proposed paths and the originals were held by DCC. A question was asked as to whether East Devon could become its own National Park to give greater control on development and proposals? East Devon was a district of Devon County so only that authority had the power to create a National Park. As East Devon had 2 areas of ANOB it was unlikely to look favorably on the idea. Councillors De Saram and Williamson had both been on planning application inspections in ANOB and none had been approved.

Retirement of Terry Knights, P3 Co-Ordinator

Terry advised the working party that he had decided to retire from all duties connected to the position of P3 Co-Ordinator. He had been the Town Council's P3 Co-Ordinator for 22 years and reminisced to members his passion for the development of footpaths within Exmouth and beyond. He did again remind members that he did hold the legal documents to support the new definitive map when Exmouth were asked for their contribution. Once the forthcoming elections were conducted the newly formed Rights of Way Working Party would prepare a newspaper article to invite members of the public to put themselves forward for the position of P3 Co-Ordinator for Exmouth. The group thanked Terry for his hard work over the years and it was suggested that members create a newsletter to encompass the work achieved within Exmouth in respect of public footpaths and promote the newly adopted Exmouth Neighbourhood Plan. Emma had offered to assist with that task.

Littleham Estate

Helen and Jan were involved in a wildlife/tree planting project on the Littleham Estate. A survey would be given to residents in a bid to encourage residents to become involved in the project. A BBQ was to be arranged at Clayton House to launch the project which would start with the grass being left longer at the base of trees on The Green to encourage a wildlife habitat similar to the meadow trees at Jubilee Park, Budleigh. An order for 430 trees had been placed for planting in October.

Any other business

None.

Date of the next meeting

23rd October 2019 unless a meeting is required earlier.

Meeting finished at 5pm.