

# EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

## Town Team

Notes of the virtual meeting held at 1500 on Wednesday 22 July 2020 via Zoom

### Present

John Thorogood (Chair)	JT	Exmouth Chamber of Commerce
Lisa Bowman	LB	Exmouth Town Council
Rons Boatman	RB	Exmouth Town Council
Natasha Smart	NS	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Maddy Chapman	MC	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Bruce De Saram	BD	Exmouth Town Council
Nick Christo	NC	StreetScene, East Devon District Council
Marion Drew	MD	Exmouth in Bloom (Community Group)
Graham Bell	GB	Exmouth Art Group (Community Group)

### Apologies

Chetna Jones	CJ	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Brian Bailey	BB	Exmouth Town Council
Cllr Steve Gazzard	SG	Exmouth Town Council
Jenny Clark	JC	Eaton-Terry Clark (Rolle Street)
Liz Oram	LO	Albion Street
Peter Riggs	PR	
Dave Whelan	DW	East Devon District Council

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## 1. Welcome and Apologies

- 1.1. JT welcomed attendees to the meeting and noted apologies.

## 2. Notes

- 2.1. The notes from the last meeting on 17 June 2020 were approved, with no matters arising.

## 3. Dinosaur Project

- 3.1. GB explained that Exmouth in Bloom continues to keep an eye on the weeding in the 'Dinosaur Paddock', with the aim of keeping the weeds under control over the summer before planting begins in the autumn. Planting will use redeployed plants from the Powder Monkey roundabout and any other existing stock to keep costs down.
- 3.2. MD highlighted that one of the dinosaurs has lost the tip of its tail to vandalism. GB mentioned that some yuccas in the area had also been pulled up. In response to concerns raised about further vandalism, GB explained that he thought that the new replanting layout should reduce the amount of grass, and hence the accessibility, of the area. He would also

look at the possibility of introducing 'unfriendly' plants to help deter the public, such as prickly ground cover plants.

#### **4. Magnolia Centre Improvements – Clock Project**

- 4.1. LB explained that EDDC has arranged for the electricity supply to the clock to be cut off. The team is now waiting for an asbestos survey to be conducted before removing the clock and pole. The planned transfer of ownership of the clock (from EDDC to ETC) is on hold because it has not been possible to confirm the clock as a legally owned EDDC asset; the conclusion now is that it is DCC-owned. The next step is therefore for LB to confirm this with DCC and explore whether it will be possible to erect any kind of replacement. If so, it will be put to ETC vote to decide exactly what the Town Council would like the replacement to be and whether there is funding available for this. MC explained that she is against funding a replacement on land not belonging to ETC, and in an area which is due for redevelopment itself at some point. As this is an issue for ETC to pursue, LB suggesting removing the Magnolia Centre clock from future agendas.

**ACTION: JT to remove Magnolia Centre Clock Project from future agendas**

- 4.2. There followed some discussion about whether Tempus might like to mount a clock on their premises. LB offered to find out contact details for Tempus and pass them on to JT for him to write to Tempus as Town Team chair to see if they had any appetite for this.

#### **5. Town Clean**

- 5.1. In LO's absence, there was no further update on this so it will be revisited at the next meeting.

#### **6. Tourist Information Service (TIS)**

- 6.1. RB explained that ETC is hoping to reopen the TIS from Monday 3 August, having gone through various safety measures. There was some discussion about Exmouth Hotels, and RB confirmed that she had heard that a Shearings-type company called Leger was going to reopen the Imperial Hotel. She was not aware of plans for the Bay Grand Hotel.

#### **7. Sensory Garden Project**

- 7.1. GB explained that permission is in place for the project and he expects to get started on it in the autumn by installing the support for the mural. JT explained that the Chamber of Commerce has agreed to part-fund the work but is waiting for details of costs. GB stated that he would make it a priority to get details of the costings to the Chamber of Commerce. He further mentioned that the Art Group already has the funds to get the project started.

**ACTION: GB to provide project costings to the Chamber of Commerce asap**

## **8. Annual Shop Festival**

- 8.1. This idea had been raised on behalf of LO at the last meeting, but as she was not present any further discussion would take place at the next meeting once she had been able to get her ideas together.

## **9. Powder Monkey Roundabout Sculpture**

- 9.1. GB explained that the roundabout won't be touched until the autumn, when most of the existing plants will be moved to the Strand before the new roundabout configuration begins. MD mentioned that she is hoping that StreetScene will then be building 3 concrete plinths for the new sculptures to be bolted into. The sculptures are being stored until they are ready.

## **10. Town Team Membership**

- 10.1. JT has been reviewing the current membership of Town Team and realised that the working party has lost quite a few business representatives from its membership. He therefore plans to contact local businesses to see if they still wish to retain a representative on Town Team. He asked that, if anyone knows of a business which might want to be represented, they should let him know, and stated that he will be revisiting the membership over the next 6 months. He plans to highlight this through advertising and social media.
- 10.2. There was some discussion about some of the bigger brand name businesses in Exmouth and whether they might like to get involved, but members concluded that smaller, local shops are likely to be more interested and more able to actively engage with the group. The exception was possibly Marks and Spencer. MD mentioned that, because of their location, Marks and Spencer in Exmouth often ends up being featured in Exmouth in Bloom photographs. They had previously given a donation as a result, so MD thought they might be worth approaching again.

## **11. Town Team Future Meeting Dates for 2020/21**

- 11.1. The next meeting, scheduled for 16 September, is also likely to take place as a virtual Zoom meeting. LB confirmed that there are currently still no plans to open the Town Hall to the public or for meetings. Future meeting dates are scheduled for 28 October and 9 December.
- 11.2. JT also raised the idea of another Town Team Christmas Social event, to take place in January 2021, which the meeting supported. JT stated that he would contact BB re using the Sailing Club again as a venue.

## **12. Other Future Projects and Ideas**

- **LED/M&S Land:** MD explained that the triangle of land in between LED and M&S contains a pumphouse which pumps water out from the underpass when it rains. Exmouth in Bloom would like to remove the ivy from the fence and paint the fence to smarten up the area. They've approached DCC councillor Jeff Trail, who is going to check ownership of the area (presumed DCC). They would also like to raise the canopy of the trees there. NC

offered to help Exmouth in Bloom set up a meeting with EDDC's tree contractor.

**ACTION: NC to arrange a meeting between EiB and EDDC's tree contractor**

- **Use of Thomas Tucker Building:** GB wondered if the Exmouth Art Group could use the empty Thomas Tucker premises to hold its art show in October (as he does not think the Ocean will allow it to take place there). However, MD explained that there is a major issue in trying to get hold of the owner of the building. Members were unable to suggest any resolution for this.
- **Strand Flags/High Street Reinvigoration:** MD explained that Jeff Trail has provided brackets for the new Strand flags, but she wondered whether money would need to be found to pay for them to be installed, and could Town Team help with this? LB explained that Town Team funding could be made available. She also suggested looking at the High Streets Task Force website, since this is specifically looking at reinvigorating local high streets. JT stated that he would look at this, and suggested that Town Team and businesses, possibly alongside the Chamber of Commerce, could look at some kind of project over the next 6 months aimed at giving Exmouth town businesses an uplift.

**13. Any Other Business**

- **Premier Inn:** With the final phase of the sea defence works starting again in September, including along the Esplanade by the Imperial Hotel and Premier Inn, GB wondered whether this might give an opportunity for someone to approach the Premier Inn to speak to them about better upkeep of the building as well as the issue of them allowing meeting space for community groups.
- **Virtual Chamber of Commerce Business Awards:** JT explained that the recent virtual awards had been very successful, with nearly 800 applicants (c300 more than usual) for less than half the award categories, which had been adapted for the Covid-19 situation.
- **Manor Gardens/Seafront Flower Planting:** MD stated that she was disappointed at the lack of summer planting in Manor Gardens and on the seafront by EDDC, although she understood the current issue of manpower. NC updated the meeting that an order for plants has been placed and will be planted in these areas and the Magnolia Centre from the first week in August.
- **Wildflowers:** Members thanked StreetScene, ETC Town Maintenance Team and Exmouth in Bloom for all the hard work in grass cutting (allowing wildflower areas to grow), weeding and other activities across the town. NC explained that as part of the rewilding programme, which has been brought forward due to the Covid-19 situation, grass is being cut into clear paths alongside areas left deliberately long for wildflowers. There will be a publicity campaign around this, with leaflets and plaques.

**14. Date of Next Meeting**

14.1. The date and time of the next meeting will be **Wednesday 16 September at 1500**, held virtually via Zoom.

The meeting finished at approximately 1630.