

## Exe Estuary Management Partnership (EEMP) User Group Meeting with Cllr Jeff Trail BEM Agenda



### Meeting 2:

**Date:** Friday 29 September 2017

**Boat trip time:** Arrive 10:00 (brief at 10:30 for 11:00 departure)

**Meeting time:** 12:30-14:30

**Venue:** Exe Sailing Club, Tornado, Shelly Rd, Exmouth EX8 1EG

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### **Attendees**

Councillor Jeff Trail BEM, Chair of Exe Estuary Management Partnership  
Stephanie Clark, Exe Estuary Management Partnership  
Rowena Garne, Exe Estuary Management Partnership  
Councillor Maureen Ackland-Smith, Clyst St George Parish Council  
Emma Barton, Royal Yachting Association  
Myles Blood Smyth, Exmouth Mussels Ltd  
Leighanne Colebrooke-Taylor, McDonald's  
Gary Cooke, Exmouth Gig Rowing Club  
Ian Cudd, PWC User Group  
Ted Draper, Exe Sailing Club  
Jane Evans, Exciter Canoe Club  
Kate Fortnam, The Green Blue  
Pete Fox, Exmouth Quay Residents Association  
Rex Frost, Exe Sailing Club/Exmouth Water Users Group/Port User Group  
Vyv Game, Starcross Yacht Club  
Shaun Griffiths, Lower Exe Mooring Administration Ltd  
Gordon Guest, Disabled Ramblers and Exeter Polio Group  
Steve Hockings-Thompson, Exmouth Marina Ltd  
Councillor Michael Howe, East Devon District Council  
Karen Melling  
Joh Monks, Friends of Exeter Ship Canal  
Graham Nye, Exmouth Coastwatch  
David Radford, 5<sup>th</sup> Exmouth Sea Scouts  
David Rochester, Port User Group  
David Shawyer, McDonald's  
Geoff Skinner, Exmouth Community Association  
Graeme Smith, Teignbridge District Council  
Cliff Stevens, Exmouth Quay Residents Association  
Adrian Toole  
Alan Wood, Royal Yachting Association

### **1. Welcome – JT**

- Welcome, thank you for coming, housekeeping.
- Chair introduces himself and invites all to introduce themselves.
- Would like to thank Exe Sailing Club for the venue and refreshments.

## 2. Introduction from the EEMP Chair & purpose of meeting – JT

“My name is Cllr Jeff Trail BEM. Following the Devon County Council elections I have been appointed to the Exe Estuary Management Partnership (EEMP) as Chairman. As a person who has given many years of service to the military and now local government I accept the challenges ahead of me for the benefit of EEMP and all Exe Estuary users.

Over the past years Cllr Bernard Hughes MBE has, with his Officers and committee, worked hard to provide EEMP with the resources and finances to protect the River Exe and to assist with its preservation, whilst at the same time working with the assistance of all users. Yes, I have big shoes to follow but I am delighted to have been given the opportunity to fly the flag and maintain the standards set. The next couple of years are going to be challenging not only with the on-going work commitments within the committee but also the environmental responsibilities associated with EEMP. With ever decreasing financial assistance within all sectors, EEMP will need to explore ways to find the extra resources, volunteers and funds required to move forward to maintain and improve the service provided by EEMP. As a forward thinking, listening individual, I will endeavour to engage with EEMP and all user groups. All ideas are welcome for the benefit of the City of Exeter, Towns and Villages, and visitors to The River Exe.” *Cllr Jeff Trail BEM DCC Exmouth.*

- My responsibilities to the Exe Estuary Management Partnership include the protection of the natural environment and historic environment which includes wildlife, heritage, history and archaeology.
- Also includes use of the estuary – farming, tourism, public transport, access and landscape.
- Promotion and understanding of the estuary.
- Protecting the estuary through pollution contingency planning, flood and coastal risk management, spatial planning and development management.
- This requires your assistance – I value your views and hope to work for the benefit of all.
- In the last meeting I was asked about my qualifications so I thought it would be best to tell you in this meeting as well.
  - o I am an elected member of Devon County Council
  - o I am a representative for Exmouth
  - o I plan to give as much time to this Partnership as I can- bearing in mind I do have a full-time job
  - o 21+ years in the Royal Marines attaining to the rank as Physical Training & Sports Officer and Unit Sgt Major
  - o 2 years on board HMS broadsword ships as a Sgt Major
  - o I have over 30 years experience as a powerboat coxswain
  - o I am also a former K2 Canoe specialist
  - o Keen sea and course fisherman
  - o Sailed a 24ft yacht from Sardinia to Malta navigating by ships compass in ragging seas via Sicily
- With regard to the zonation proposal we are not going to discuss these in detail tonight as we hope to have other issues raised that we can focus on.

## 3. Brief background of the EEMP – SC

- The role of the Exe Estuary Management Partnership is to coordinate the management of the Exe Estuary on behalf of local authorities, government agencies, conservation bodies and Fundus owners of the estuary and provides a contact point for local communities.

- Our main role is to follow our Management Plan which is available on our website.
- We work with users in order to balance the needs of wildlife and users on the Exe
- There is more than one partnership on the Exe:  
The South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership (SEDHRP) works on the Exe to implement mitigation from new housing pressures around the Exe whereas the EEMP has a much broader remit and aims to follow the Management Plan.

Q – Do you benefit from any of the mitigation funding?

SC – No, not directly. We only receive funding from this pot if we undertake a particular project through the SEDHRP to mitigate the pressures of new users on the wildlife of the Exe, e.g. the zonation consultation.

Q – What sort of legislative framework do you have?

SC – We aren't a statutory body and therefore we have no legislative power – we do work with the local authorities. Most legislative power lies with Exeter City Council (ECC) as the Harbour Authority. Our main role in this is to bring the bodies together.

Q – What does fund you?

SC – We have funding partners which include:

Devon County Council	Starcross Parish Council
East Devon District Council	Woodbury Parish Council
Exeter City Council	Clyst St George Parish Council
Teignbridge District Council	Bishops Clyst Parish Council
Exmouth Town Council	Natural England
Dawlish Town Council	RSPB
Powderham Castle	British Canoeing
RYA	Lympstone Fishery & Harbour Assoc.

- However, this does not cover costs.

JT – We will be about £22,000 short if working to basic budget with only money from Partners.

Q – When was SEDHRP formed?

SC – Formed around 1 ½ years ago. Consideration was given to join this partnership with the EEMP but it was decided the remit was too different.

GS – SEDHRP has a very narrow remit in comparison to EEMP. SEDHRP has a legal function whereas EEMP covers everything including local users. SEDHRP's primary focus is to mitigate the pressures of housing development around the Exe. They are well funded due to the money received from the roof tax of developments within 10km of the Estuary. They are accountable with Councillors who sit on the Executive Committee.

Q – There are still a lot of similarities though.

Q – Need to make a distinction - who is involved in that partnership? They are not very accessible and not good at responding.

GS – The Executive Committee is made up of 3 Councillors, the manager/officer for SEDHRP is Neil Harris, and SEDHRP itself is the body. During the consultation EEMP was used as a specialist contractor due to their connections with users.

Q – When the proposals were passed to SEDHRP they didn't change.

SC – There was a 6 week consultation run by SEDHRP after EEMP submitted its report, which allowed users to give feedback on the proposals. They then created a new report with the EEMP report forming part of the annexe.

Q – RYA is the only representative of users in the EEMP.

Q – and British Canoeing who have just joined.

JT – That is one of the reasons we called this meeting to involve more users.

Q – How many users are represented in SEDHRP?

A – None

MH – The local Councillors that form SEDHREC which is the Executive Committee should be your point of contact if you are unhappy. They should be used to voice your opinions.

Q – I have attended their meetings – and it seems that they accept everything that the officers tell them.

Q – I have also tried to talk to them and received no response.

Q – In my opinion the 3 Councillors on SEDHRP are all about money as they are all heavily involved in the planning committees. I don't believe they are independent in their motives.

MH – I am the chair of the strategic planning committee. We have been told by the government that we need to build.

Q – The Councillors are all involved in planning.

MH – They cannot access any of the money as it is ring-fenced by SEDHRP and to be used for mitigation purposes only.

Q – Why did a member of SEDHRP tell us we were wasting our breath?

SC – I cannot speak on behalf of someone else. There were also positive responses to the proposed Wildlife Refuges. We amended proposals to reflect issues raised through the consultation, but we cannot please everyone. We did reduce the sizes of the areas for safety reasons, as well as other amendments. We did take on comments. There is a need for balance. The process was handed over to SEDHRP on 29<sup>th</sup> June. The executive decision will be made on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October at Exeter Civic Centre.

Q – Why aren't users represented on SEDHRP?

JT – I will aim to get a response from them for you.

**ACTION:** JT to get a response from SEDHRP as to why there are no user representatives on their working group.

Q – There is little information on the internet about objections to those proposals.

SC – The report produced by the EEMP contains details of all comments received.

Q – I read through the report and the majority of the responses were negative – I don't believe this is reflected in the report.

SC – Amendments were made in response to legitimate issues raised. Meeting people and discussing face to face helped to address any confusion. A number of opinions were changed after further discussion.

Q – There was a vagueness surrounding the maps as most users use charts.

SC – Ordinance survey maps, aerial images and charts were all used in the EEMP report to address this.

**ACTION:** SC to check SEDHRP Wildlife Refuge website is working, following suggestion that it wasn't.

Q – We don't have a voice on SEDHRP so we have to make a fuss to EEMP.

Q – I think this is a lesson learned and should be taken forward.

JT – That is why I called these meetings – possibility of more representation of users at meetings. I would like to have an open discussion – don't want opinions from just one set of users.

#### **4. Open Floor for Discussion - JT**

JT – An issue was brought up in the last user group meeting regarding trailer parking at Mamhead Slipway and Camperdown carpark.

RF – There is no signage to explain what to do with vehicles with larger engines – there needs to be signage to say where each different engine size can and can't go. It is a safety issue. Signage needed for which craft can use which areas. There is nothing at Mamhead.

MH – I will speak to some officers at East Devon and follow up, however we have to make sure the signage is short and sharp otherwise people won't bother to read it.

RF – Orcombe point needs tide tables to support signage that says "careful".

MH – I will see what I can do.

JT – Cllrs funding at DCC might be able to pull some budget.

JT – There have been issues with PWCs coming over to the powerboat area. There should be signage to say whether they can or can't be there, needs clarification from ECC.

PF – In code of practice for PWCs it says they should only use their area.

JT – Individuals cause issues as they don't know the codes of conduct whereas groups can help to educate newer users.

SHT – We need a designated harbour master from ECC. All boils down to a lack of harbour master.

PF – We want everybody to respect the estuary but who's going to enforce?

SC – I emailed Exeter City Council after the previous user meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> and this is the email response that I received:

“ECC is committed to achieving Port Marine Safety Code compliance and is working towards that with assistance from the MCA. We understand that in some areas, enforcement being one, we need to improve things. A meeting has been arranged with the Port User Group for October and we'll take that opportunity to explore with the users how anti-social behaviour on the water can be better addressed.”

JT – Port User Group – would like to attend and report back.

PF – Rumours about patrol boat. I heard funding was withdrawn by ECC?

GS – There are different patrol boats – that one is a separate issue.

RF – PUG chased ECC but they did not come back to us with any information about the harbour master etc.

SC – The patrol boat to be owned by SEDHRP will eventually happen – may need to contact them directly if you would like more detail on their plans.

JE – RCUG – meeting with ECC. Various vague statements were made but nothing seemed to be happening. Waterways Management Plan not drafted.

JT – Buoys not maintained need to be repainted. Poor communications/lack of communications re: bylaws. I will have a look into the harbour master issue.

PF – Could some of the money from the roof tax go to funding a new harbour master as that would mitigate enforcement issues?

GS – Money from developers needs to be used towards impacts from additional pressure – if they thought money was for existing issues they would appeal. With regard to the patrol boat issue, the patrol boats would be two different types of vessel. There could be a way to mesh the patrol boats – we weren't able to get to that point as ECC weren't able to offer funding.

MH – I have asked ECC and I have not received a response; however, they are not here to defend themselves.

– No laws are enforced other than generic laws and those on the beaches which is not controlled by ECC.

SHT – Issue: During the summer months there is some careless use of the Exe, I am worried about the imminence of a bad accident occurring in the future. In which case who would be responsible?

GS – It would be ECC if it occurred within the harbour area.

– Could be “failure of duty of care”.

GG – Want to see money towards amenities on the estuary. I'd like to raise the issue of disabled access in broad terms – there is very little disabled access around the estuary. Has anyone spoken to anyone with knowledge on how to make signage more accessible to those with disabilities?

Need more disabled access toilets, not just public but in pubs, cafes, etc. Access issues - how to get on the beach, etc.? How is that information getting out? Need to engage with people. Need accessible recreation.

RF – We have a sailing for the disabled programme – which we run around 2x a day depending on the conditions. However, we are currently at capacity.

JT – It comes back to education and needing to educate people about the needs of people using the estuary.

GN – I'd like to go back to the comment made about speeding and say that I agree, especially during the summer. A major accident is imminent. Registration numbers are used in other areas.

IC – PWCs happy to register and display number. Why aren't all vessels registered?

JM – Pressure on ECC. Makes sense to see estuary as navigable waterway to Exeter. We need to encourage more boat users to go up the canal and this will bring more credibility, encourage more businesses on the Exe and improve opportunities. DCC has a role, roadworks on A379 could have raised bridge and increased navigability. Exeter Ship Canal – Cllr Whitton – should include in EEMP work.

PF – That bridge can't have a long life – we need joined up communication. Opportunity to raise the bridge was missed. Don't know which Councillors to contact.

JT – We will find out who to talk to with regard to Councillors. I don't know the answer right at this moment. With regards to ECC encouraging use that again would be something we would have to contact ECC about. We will attempt to speak to ECC about these issues.

**ACTION:** JT to contact Exeter City Council to ask them to explore opportunities to encourage more boat use on the Exe.

GG – Some councils have selective hearing. Multiuse trail costing millions was justified by tourist income. There is money in one part of the council and none in another.

JT – We have just received money for potholes – Exmouth is about to receive a refit in October. Mounting costs means all services and councils will have to pull funding. Budgets are getting tighter. We have to look at necessity.

VG – Rib registration – what would we have to do to implement?

– Need concentration on ribs and PWCs.

GS – I think if you were going to implement registration you would have to do it to every vessel otherwise it would be seen as targeted. Can't discriminate against type of craft, include motorised craft and bigger sailing craft. Need agreement. You would also need a reasonable size sticker with clear font. It is however, not impossible to do.

EB – Wake and speed bylaws in other areas.

– In some respects, the Exe is now lawless. It is a highly protected Ramsar site but it is not controlled.

AW – Visitors vessels could be a problem for the registration system. The Exe gets a lot of visitors. Needs resources.

EB – Registration could be done two ways, either voluntary or enforced by the harbour authority. Voluntary registration would solve some issues but not all. There is no national boat registration scheme.

DR – Please don't forget the needs of young people. Young people don't always make rational decisions especially out on the water – lack of experience.

– Also need safe access to water.

MBS – I continue to have various problems with the zonation consultation. I never see people in the proposed area during the winter. I feel that my democratic position has been usurped. There is only pressure during summer.

PF – We need an officer who's going to tell people they are going too fast etc.

RF – I don't see a problem with 98% of users – users don't often fight amongst themselves.

SG – Safety, management etc. is down to the harbour master. No financial benefit to ECC.

JE – It is their statutory obligation.

SG – They have no interest in their role as the harbour authority.

MH – EDDC would have an active role, however ECC can't hand it over as it is a statutory ruling. Providing we can get a patrol boat – hopefully we will start a discussion soon.

MBS – Need to consult users on what boat to get, people who have knowledge on what boat would be fit for purpose.

MH – SEDHRP will be out to advise on habitat protection. However, I would hope that if an officer did witness speeding etc. they would attempt to speak to the person causing problems.

GS – Unfortunately we cannot force ECC to take an active role as the harbour authority.

GS – I would like to mention that Teignbridge District Council is undertaking a consultation separate to that of the Wildlife Refuges, regarding changing of the bylaws along the beaches. We are looking to protect users by creating an exclusion zone for powered vessels unless Lifeboat or active fishing in order to keep swimmers etc. safe.

## **5. User Group Representation on the EEMP – JT**

JT – I called this meeting in order to get user groups together. I would like to increase the amount of user representation on EEMP. I'd like to put forward a user representative to sit on the Partnership. Would it be useful to have a meeting every six months?

RF – We could try and have another one and see how useful they are?

Attendees agreed.

Outcomes / achievements of this group need to be recorded.

JT – I will go to ECC and speak to them about your views and see what kind of response I get and relay it back to you.

SC – Discussions about restructuring the Partnership so far have indicated that we may be looking at a Partnership Committee and an Executive. Once we look at our structure in detail we can confirm this. We are not looking to reduce the number of user representatives, but to improve user input.

Management Group have agreed to change overall committee structure. We will continue to allow input from a broad range of Partners through the Partnership Committee. A smaller Executive will oversee the delivery of the Management Plan. Under this new structure, local interest will be represented. Current representation is from the RYA and British Canoeing. Users will need to agree on whether to keep these as the main representatives or propose different ones. We would hope that they would properly represent the full geographical interest around the whole of the estuary. The Forum is still in place to allow users the opportunity to come together, through the winter meeting and through their Forum Chair and Vice Chair – we hope that you make greater use of this. If User Groups want an additional annual meeting, to allow them to get together for discussion, the EEMP can help to facilitate this. Users can begin to think about this now, the EEMP will be in touch to discuss further at the beginning of 2018.

JE – Balance is required. We need a balance between conservation representatives and users.

JT – We are updating our contact database in order to involve as many people as possible. Information will be going out – we will be sending out contact sheets.

JT – Summary of floor:

- Educate – via signage etc.
- Funding issues
- Disabled Access
- Registration of vessels
- Enforcement by ECC – Harbour Master
- Duty of Care
- Communications
- Mitigation Funds

### **SC – Future Initiatives**

- Continuation of education programme alongside East Devon District Council
- Clean Up Events will continue – Clean Up on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September had almost 150 volunteers. Mostly filled a skip with rubbish, including concrete blocks which had damaged propellers of some boats coming into their moorings. Pair of clay smoking pipes was found from the 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century. We also found a steering wheel and a pair of underpants! Fantastic support from local businesses again: Stuart Line cruises gave volunteers a free trip, EDDC allowed free parking and supplied the skip. McDonald's supplied water and snacks. RSPB supplied the tractor. Krispies gave all volunteers free fish and chips. The Railway Club provided a venue and supplied hot drinks and ACE Music played.
- Exe Press newsletter and leaflets promoting Exe and activities.
- Winter Forum – 6<sup>th</sup> February. Please email SC with any topics you'd like to suggest for inclusion.

- Codes of Conduct – updating and creating around 12 codes. Will be setting up meetings from the 11<sup>th</sup> October.

EB – I think that's a bit soon, we had an issue with a lack of consultation last time.

During this discussion several concerns were raised about lack of consultation time and time constraints. Minimum one month's notice requested. Also three mixed user group meetings requested instead of separate user group meetings – one for the East, West and head of estuary.

SC – Meetings have already been set to adhere to the timeframe that was requested of me. I will request an extended deadline to enable me to rearrange the meetings.

GS / VG –One code might be a more effective idea.

## **6. Goodbye and Thank You – JT**

- Thank you all for coming.
- Thank you to Exe Sailing Club for the venue.