



# Town votes 'yes' in seafront poll

The people of Exmouth have voted 'yes' in a parish poll on whether the town council should call for more consultation on seafront redevelopment plans.

The poll, held last Wednesday, asked 'Should Exmouth Town Council recommend to East Devon District Council that before any

further planning applications are approved with regard to the Queen's Drive development area, that additional independent consultation should be carried out in addition to that required by the applicant and the Local Planning Authority?'

The number of ballot papers

issued was 4,794. The turnout was 17.8 per cent. A total of 4,515 (94.9 per cent) voted for the town council making the recommendation, with 279 (5.1 per cent) against. There were seven spoilt ballot papers.

In response to the vote, the town council said that the result 'corroborates the town council's view' that

more consultation is needed. The result is not legally binding on the town or district council. Any ensuing action will be discussed by the town council on Tuesday.

The district council plans new buildings and leisure facilities between the old lifeboat station and the Meer.

## Campaigners hail result of poll

Campaigners against the proposed redevelopment of Exmouth seafront have welcomed the results of the parish poll, which they say sends a 'clear message' that more consultation is needed.

In a statement, campaign group Save Exmouth Seafront (SES) said the result of the poll 'demonstrates that Exmouth residents do not feel confident to leave the future of Queen's Drive in the hands of EDDC'.

The group said the turnout of 4,794 residents was 'strong', as there were no postal votes or ballot cards, some altered polling stations, and what the group describes as 'minimal online promotion of the poll' from town and district councils.

SES spokesperson Louise

MacAllister said: "Despite the complex and wordy question that was imposed upon residents by the returning officer, the high turnout and overwhelming vote in favour of recommending consultation clearly demonstrates what SES have been saying all along; that the residents of Exmouth do not feel that the previous 'Splash' consultation in which only 518 responded is sufficient, or relevant to what is now being discussed for the future of Queen's Drive."

SES said it was 'noteworthy' that the 'yes' vote was in line with the results of a survey commissioned by EDDC councillor Megan Armstrong last year, and called on EDDC to provide 'independent and genuine consultation', and respect its findings.

## District council's EDA and Conservative groups in poll row

The ruling Conservative group on East Devon District Council (EDDC) has said that consideration of the parish poll result must include the 85 per cent of electors who did not vote, after opposition Independent East Devon Alliance group leader Ben Ingham called for it to 'heed what people say'.

Citing EDDC deputy leader Andrew Moulding saying the poll was not legally binding, Councillor Ingham said: "If the leadership of EDDC do not take heed of what the people say, can I point out it is not legally binding for the people of Exmouth to keep returning Conservatives to the district council. There are options for Exmouth at the next elections. I promise to make sure of that."

"The leadership at EDDC interpret consultation as telling people their initial thoughts for a project and then amending them over time to suit their own objectives rather than those of the general public."

"Cllr Moulding insinuates that those who complain are against change. He is wrong. We all want to see Exmouth regenerate into a prosperous seaside town. But that must be based on what the people want and ask for."

In response, the East Devon Conservatives issued a statement saying: "East Devon Conservatives note that the 17 per cent turnout was less than the two recent (town council) by-elections at 21 per cent



and 24 per cent. We also have to consider the views of the other 83 per cent who did not take part in the poll - perhaps because they do not feel strongly either way or perhaps because they trust their elected councillors on the district and town councils to do what is best for Exmouth? All those elected, irrespective of party, have to represent 'all the people' - that is those who disagree, those who agree and the silent majority."

"The Conservatives won a significant (EDDC) majority in 2015 with a manifesto that included a pledge to create a vibrant Exmouth."

"Conservative-run EDDC will move forward with the regeneration programme to provide jobs for local people and to ensure it meets the challenge of increasing the number of visitors to Exmouth."

## EDDC: consultation is planned

East Devon District Council (EDDC) says it has always planned more consultation on the future of Exmouth seafront, following the parish poll result.

Councillor Andrew Moulding, chairman of EDDC's Exmouth Regeneration Board and deputy leader of the council, said it would pay 'due regard' to Exmouth Town Council's response to the poll, when agreed, but added: "We have carried out extensive and detailed consultation in Exmouth and there have been numerous opportunities for people to have their say on the future of their town and the

seafront. The district council has always said that more consultation will be carried out by the developers when they bring their proposals forward."

"The developers' consultation will need to be conducted to the satisfaction of the council, in its capacity as landowner, and will be carried out before any formal detailed planning applications."

"The planning applications that then follow will reflect this consultation and will be subject to further public consideration during the planning application process."

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**SHAPE THE FUTURE OF EXMOUTH**

**STARTING TODAY**

**NEW NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

**OPEN MEETING**  
at Exmouth Town Hall  
on Thursday 28 April

Three sessions at 12-2, 3-5 and 6-8  
Call in when it suits you

**YOUR CHANCE: TO INFLUENCE HOW EXMOUTH WILL DEVELOP**

**YOUR CHOICE: EITHER WE PLAN AS A COMMUNITY OR WE ARE PLANNED FOR**

## Apartments plan approved

Proposals for the construction of 10 apartments in Exmouth have been approved by East Devon District Council.

The plan is for the apartments to be built at 83 Salisbury Road, with an existing building being demolished.

Members of Exmouth Town Council's planning committee previously gave their support to the application, after it was amended to address previous concerns about potential overlooking of neighbours, causing a loss of privacy, and the height and mass of the proposal.

# Household survey a first step towards plan for town

Sean Keywood  
[sean@woodburnjournal.co.uk](mailto:sean@woodburnjournal.co.uk)

All Exmouth residents are being given the chance to have their say about the future of the town, with a survey dropping through letterboxes this week.

The Exmouth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is behind the document, which it hopes will kick start the consultation process that will eventually see the plan drawn up.

The Neighbourhood Plan has to cover the area within the East Devon Local Plan, but is a way for residents to influence what happens in Exmouth during the next 15 years.

The questionnaire is being delivered to every home and business in Exmouth, and has space for whole families to reply, with questions on subjects including travel, shopping and community facilities.

Steering group chairman Roy Fryke said: "It's part of the process of ensuring there is strong community involvement, which is the golden thread. If we don't get that right, not only are we failing to put into the neighbourhood plan what people want, but when it comes to next year when we have the referendum, we

**“We're hoping people around the town will get a sense of excitement, thinking 'We can improve things'”.**

Roy Fryke,  
Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

won't have enough people ticking the positive box.”

Along with the survey, the steering group is also preparing for an open day, which all residents can attend.

This event, at Exmouth Town Hall next Thursday, April 28, between noon and 2pm, 3pm and 5pm, and 6pm and 8pm, will allow people to have discussions with the steering group and begin to suggest specific issues, which can be placed on a big map of the town.

There will then be consultation events in individual council wards in May and June.

Also in June, the report on the survey's findings is expected from independent organisation Devon Communities Together.

More focused stakeholder groups will

then get together in July with a first draft of the neighbourhood plan expected in the autumn.

It will eventually have to be approved by residents in a referendum, and by an inspector, before it can come into force.

Mr Fryke said: "It carries legal weight. It has to be considered when there's any kind of development."

"Once we've got the plan adopted, developers and planning committees will be asked, does [a scheme] fit with the local plan and the neighbourhood plan."

"We're hoping people around the town will get a sense of excitement, thinking 'we can improve things'."

"We have a choice - either we plan, or we get planned for."

■ The deadline for completed surveys to be returned is May 2.

■ Drop-off points include Exmouth Town Hall, Riverbank Post Office and The Shell Garage, Exeter Road, with other drop-off points to be confirmed.

■ Surveys can also be posted to Neighbourhood Plan Survey, Exmouth Town Council, St Andrews Road, Exmouth, EX5 1AW.

## SHAPE THE FUTURE OF EXMOUTH



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Please bring completed surveys on the 28th or collect from the Town Hall.

Further delivery points will be advertised shortly.

and a say on local issues write to Readers' Letters, Exmouth Journal, Fair Oak Close, Exeter Airport Business Park, Exeter EX5 2UL or email [exmouth.letters@archant.co.uk](mailto:exmouth.letters@archant.co.uk). Deadline for letters is 9am, Monday.



development. In the plan, I would urge you to make an appropriate comment on the recently delivered pamphlet.

The proposers of the town poll would like to thank the many shops and organisations that displayed posters and the volunteers who handed out leaflets, which resulted, in the words of the Returning Officer, in a good turnout.

**MALCOLM DODD**  
via email.

## Neighbourhood Plan drop-in sessions

Everybody is invited to drop in at Exmouth Town Hall this Thursday for the first public discussion about the new Neighbourhood Plan.

This is the beginning of a year-long consultation, led by the community. The aims are to produce proposals from the residents and business people of Exmouth and to secure extra funding to implement town actions.

This is our chance to influence how Exmouth will develop. Our choice is either to plan as a community or be planned for in the traditional way. There will be local sessions throughout Exmouth in the next few weeks to focus on each ward, but this is the first opportunity to find out more, talk with members of the steering group and let us have first thoughts.

It is also a chance for people to complete and deliver the survey already delivered to each household and business.

There will be three drop-in sessions: 12 to 2 pm, 3-5pm and 6-8pm. The invitation is to drop in for half an hour or so.

We hope that Exmouth will take this

unprecedented opportunity to be involved in a new approach to what happens in our town.

**ROY FRYKE**

**Chairman, Exmouth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.**

## Back independent consultation call

Exmouth Town Council says 'the result corroborates their view that further consultation is desirable'. The outcome of the town poll demands independent consultation, not developer's consultation that the town council is repeatedly referring to.

If the town council had intended to support independent consultation, why did the chair, at the town meeting, reject a proposal for the local councillors to show they represent Exmouth by holding an independent consultation and present the results to East Devon District Council (EDDC)?

I recall she said: "We don't have the resources. It would cost more than £16,000, so you might as well vote on your parish poll."

The town council also says the outcome 'reiterates a motion passed by them last August'. This motion, the chair at the town meeting acknowledged, was never recorded in the council minutes or put forward to EDDC.

How can they now claim to have urged EDDC for consultation when the motion was not sent - or followed up?

And was this a motion for independent consultation or for developer's consultation?

There would be no need to urge EDDC for a developer's consultation, as this must be carried

out by law.

As I pointed out on BBC Sunday Politics South West last week, if the town council and EDDC had responded to requests to have independent consultation on the latest proposals, there would have been no need for the people to feel the only way forward was to exercise their right through the town poll mechanism.

Both the town council and Councillor Moulding refer to further and more consultation. Both parties appear to continue to ignore the independent consultation demanded in the town poll and repeatedly refer to developer consultations.

The latter is an exercise in feedback on details of designs already made to satisfy the requirements of the planning authority.

An independent consultation would give feedback from respondents on the requirements of the community for their seafront.

For example, the developer might ask if respondents would like the flats to look modern or traditional. An independent consultation would ask if respondents want flats at all. It would now be timely for the town council to become explicit in its support of independent consultation and urge Cllr Moulding to do likewise.

**RON METCALFE**  
Via email.

Make sure you have your say over local matters. Email your letter to [exmouth.letters@archant.co.uk](mailto:exmouth.letters@archant.co.uk)