

# Exmouth Neighbourhood Plan



## Social media campaign report

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### Contents

1. Introduction
2. Social media campaign
3. Overview of results
4. Video outreach
5. Engaging content and starting conversations
6. Key themes and comments
7. Coordinating with wider communications
8. Appendix of some social media comments

## 1. Introduction

As the Exmouth Neighbourhood Plan (ENP) entered its 2017 public consultation phase, the ENP team identified a need to use social media to help get residents excited about the event and to inspire them to get involved. Ultimately the aim would be to target new audiences, and to guide these people to the consultation event and leave comments.

## 2. The social media campaign

It was decided that a social media communications campaign should run from the beginning of August through to the 19 September public consultation event. Such a campaign would help ENP to reach and engage with new audiences, and to cement relationships with core audiences and existing stakeholders.

Social media was identified as a way to communicate with these audiences in a highly dynamic, visual and engaging way. The Loop Central team were tasked with creating and running the campaign.

### 2.1 Who to target:

- **18-40 year olds** – those currently under-represented in your survey results.
- **40-59 year olds** – this group tended to respond to your survey online, so they're relatively digitally savvy. They are also likely to play a pivotal role within families, interacting with their children as well as older generations.
- **Businesses, business groups and community organisations** – likely to already have a social media presence you can connect with.
- Although not a priority, a strong message could be communicated to **early-mid teens** – **that they can influence their parents** and what they have to say.

## 2.2 How to target these audiences:

- **Through Facebook** (using [facebook.com/exmouthneighbourhoodplan/](https://facebook.com/exmouthneighbourhoodplan/))

Facebook is popular with 18-40 year olds, particularly amongst parents with young children. It is cross-generational, where families share experiences and we can encourage conversations. It might not be the coolest place for teens, but it is where they interact with their family. We are also likely to find Exmouth- based businesses and community groups to connect with.

- **Through Twitter** (using [twitter.com/ExmouthNplan](https://twitter.com/ExmouthNplan))

Twitter is a place where you can provide quick updates, keeping people informed about what's happening. For this project, it should be a very useful tool for networking with businesses and community groups to get the word out.

## 2.3 Campaign planning

Loop Central worked closely with the ENP team to plan the campaign in more detail. Specifically, we looked at messaging, logistics, how to manage negative comments, coordinating with internal/external communications, and updates to the website.

During this stage, updates were also made to ENP social media profiles, such as new wording and graphics to better reflect the campaign ahead.

Facebook and Twitter followers stood at 5 and 6 respectively. So, from the planning stage onwards, there was much to do to build an audience and lift social media to where it needed to be.

## 2.4 The campaign(s)

The campaign was divided into two sections:

- **Initial mini-campaign** – during the four weeks of August – consisting of a drip-drip of information to profile raise, seed messages and start conversations.
- **More intensive campaign** – between 1-19 Sept – consisting of promotional activity aimed at driving people to the consultation event and encouraging them to leave comments.

Each section of campaigning consisted of the following:

- Networking activity to build audiences and connect with relevant people.
- Sharing social media updates – around 3-4 social updates per week during August, increasing to 5-6 during September, such as sharing video clips and snippets from the six headline areas.
- Creating graphics to bring social updates and the plan itself to life.
- Managing Facebook adverts to broaden reach beyond your limited followers.  
Monitoring conversations and responding appropriately to comments
- Reporting back on campaign performance and learning points.

## 3. Overview of results

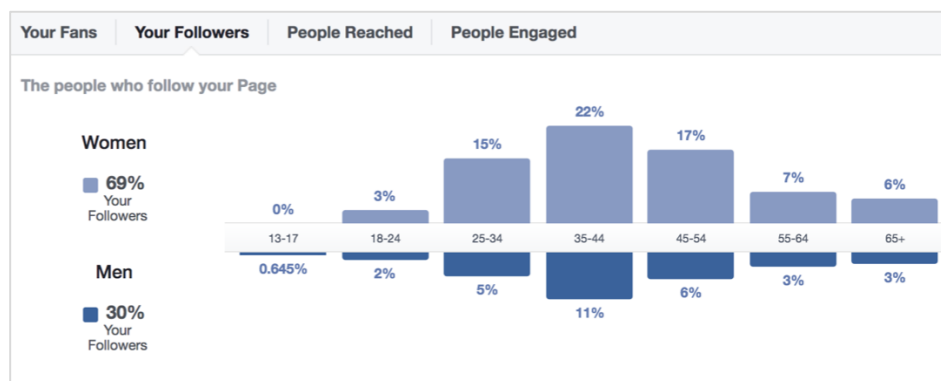
### 3.1 General campaign stats

All in all, 70 Facebook posts were created and shared, with this number at around 60 for Twitter. This is nearly double the planned number of posts and reflects the proactive approach that was taken to deliver an ambitious, lively and engaging campaign.

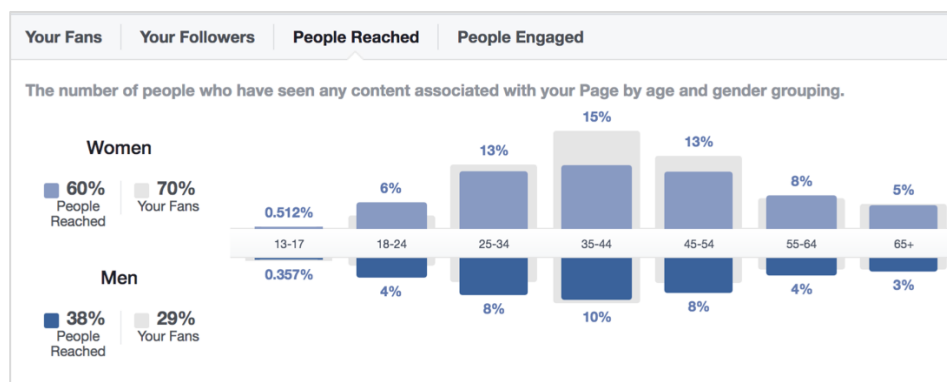
The campaign's reach averaged at around 2,000/day across Facebook and Twitter. This means that 2,000 people would have seen ENP content in some way per day – either one of the many Facebook or Twitter posts via ENP, or when these were retweeted/re-shared etc.

### 3.2 Facebook

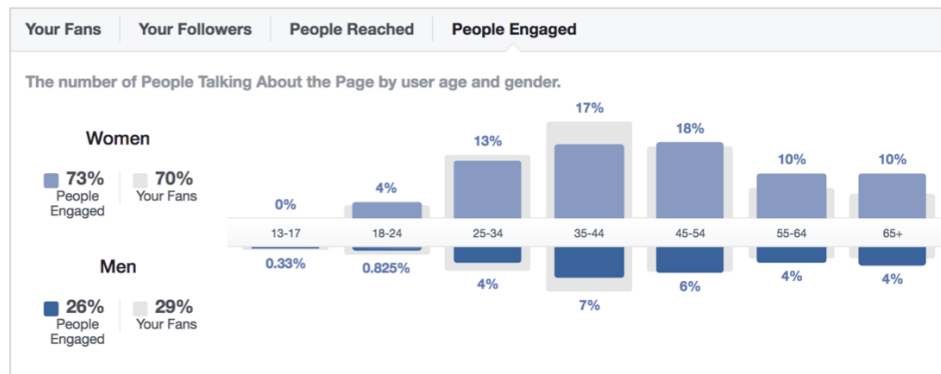
Facebook followers rose 5 to nearly 500. These followers consist of the following (below, which shows the success in reaching a broader range of younger audiences:



Facebook reached averaged at over 1,600 people per day, reaching these groups of people (as broken down in the following graph):



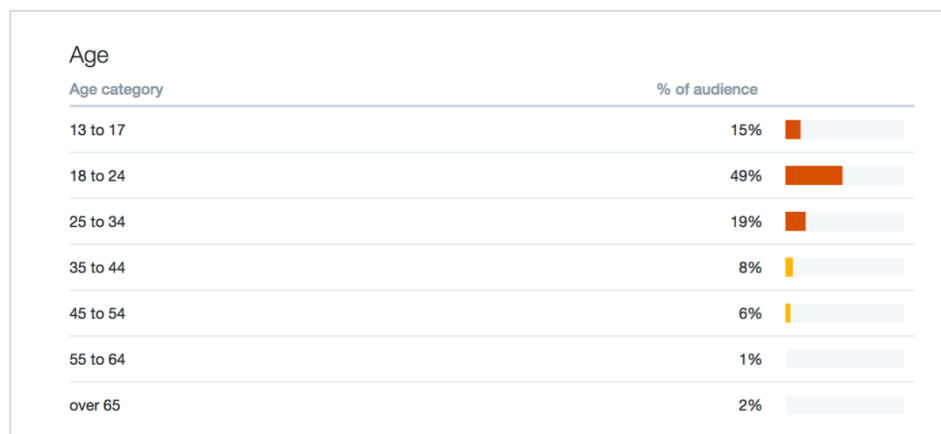
Facebook content was able to engage with the following (see graph on the next page):



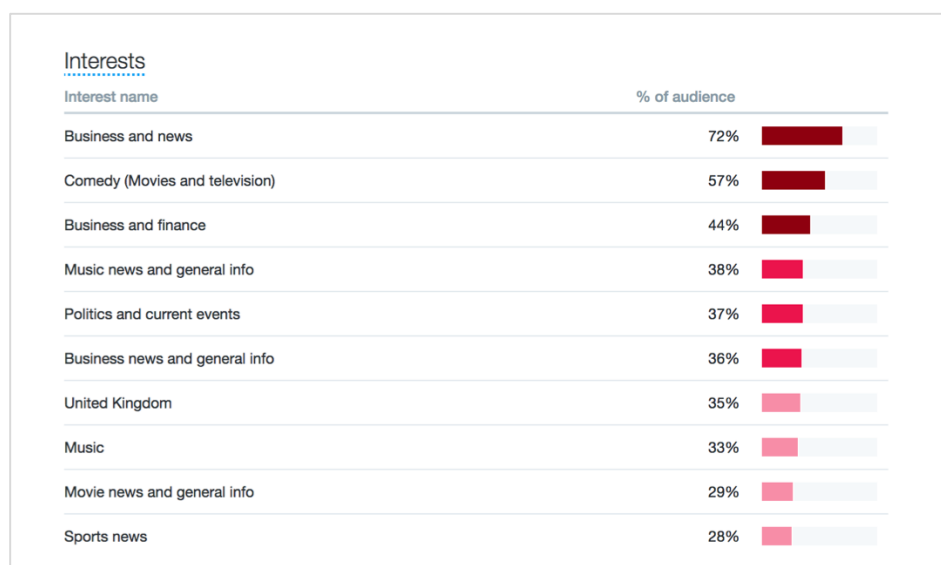
Facebook 'sponsored post' advertising was used to extend reach and encourage more engagement by getting ENP content out to more people, beyond just page followers.

## 3.2 Twitter

Twitter followers rose from 6 to 60, consisting of a younger audience:



Twitter was primarily used to engage with a more professional/business audience. 'Interests' shows that the campaign connected with the right people:



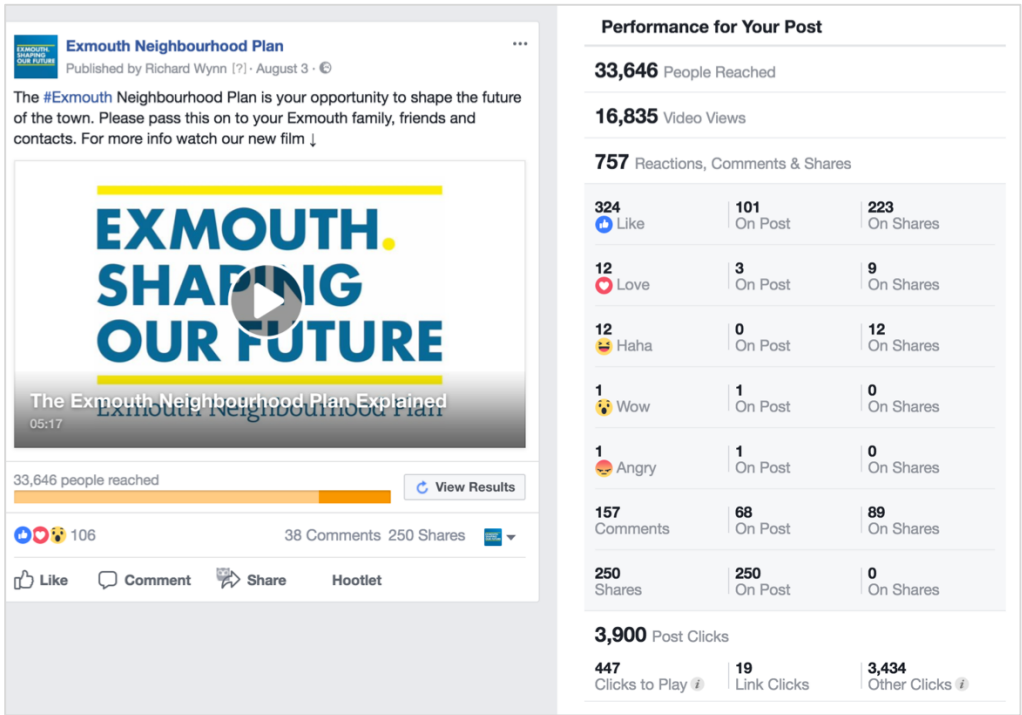
Engagement on Twitter ranged between 2-8% engagement. However, on numerous occasions ENP content was re-tweeted by business connections (i.e. Chamber of Commerce and influential business people), which extended reach into the thousands.

## 4. Video outreach

### 4.1 Exmouth Neighbourhood Plan official video

The video was boosted with a Facebook advert. It rippled out to reach **over 33,000 people** locally, achieving **just under 17,000 video views** and an average watch time of around 20 seconds. There were **757 reactions, comments and shares**, so it made people react and got them talking.

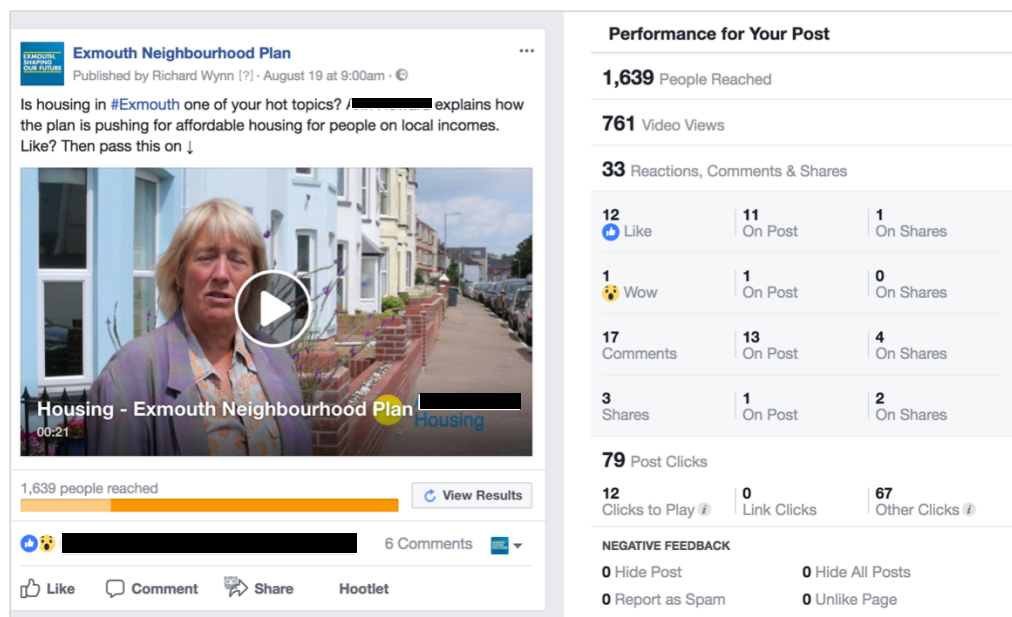
The video proved to be a fantastic resource. See snapshot results below:



### 4.2 Video snippets

Because of the shorter watch time on social media, short snippets from the official video were also used. These ensured that footage further into the main video was seen and heard.

The housing snippet (below) created a conversation around housing for younger generations, for disabled people and how far the plan can push for affordable housing.



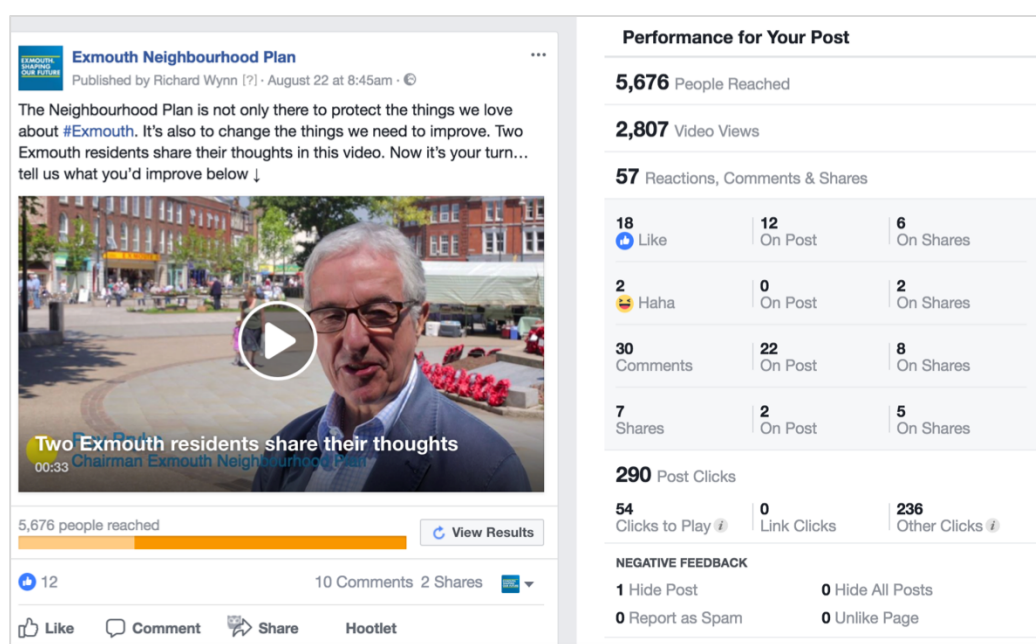
## 4.3 Results – official video and snippets

The official video and x10 offshoot snippets were shared, achieving a combined 24,000+ views. These videos provided the means to get messages out and engage audiences.

# 5. Engaging content and starting conversations

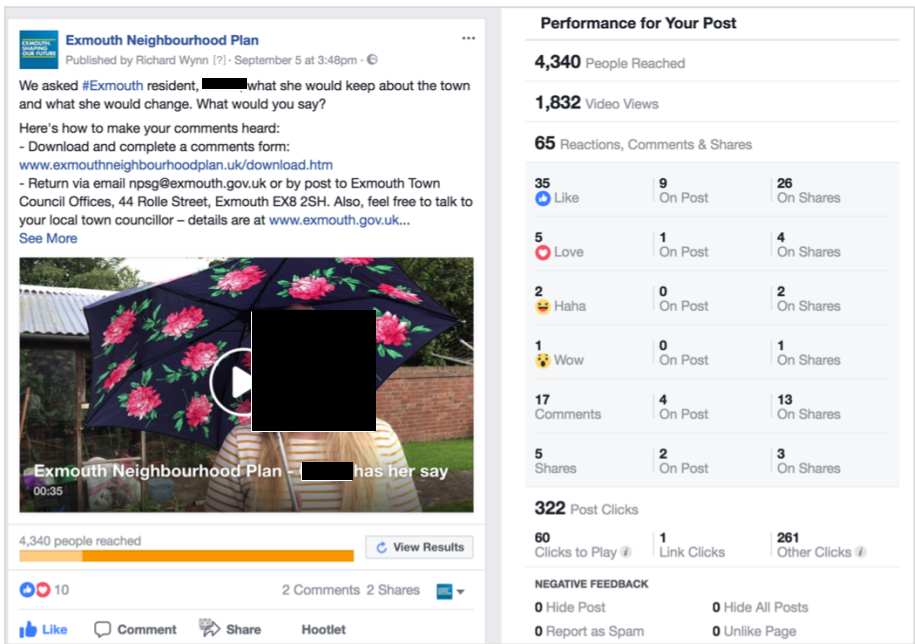
## 5.1 Giving people opportunities to comment

By using lots of video, photos and branded graphics across both Facebook and Twitter, the campaigns were kept highly visual, as people tend to find this more engaging. Alongside this visual approach, the campaign continually gave people the opportunity to comment and their say, as shown in this video snippet:



## 5.2 Vox pop videos

‘Vox pops’ – short videos of people having their say – were used as a way to get people talking and to start conversations



With the above example, although only achieving 4 comments on the ENP page, the post rippled out across Facebook where other conversations started (in total 17 comments were made in relation to the post).

All in all, prior to and after the consultation event, eight vox pops were created and shared. Combined total views were 5,000+.

## 5.3 Sharing photos to get people talking

When photos of town centre and play parks/green spaces were shared – alongside a call to action to say what you would improve – people were encouraged to have their say. There were lots of Facebook comments. Here’s one example from Twitter:





## 5. Key themes and comments

There were many positive comments received.

Some did expressed negativity towards the consultation process, but these were far outweighed by the level of engagement and constructive comments made.

A core theme emerged around simply making more of what Exmouth has to offer. Many comments seemed to say that while the town has a good base, some of it is tired and in need of updates. For example, improvements to the Orcombe end of the beach and the Magnolia Centre featured.

Because much of the campaign was structured around the six areas – for example, a video snippet for each was shared – a range of comments were received across these areas. Here's snapshot of some common threads:

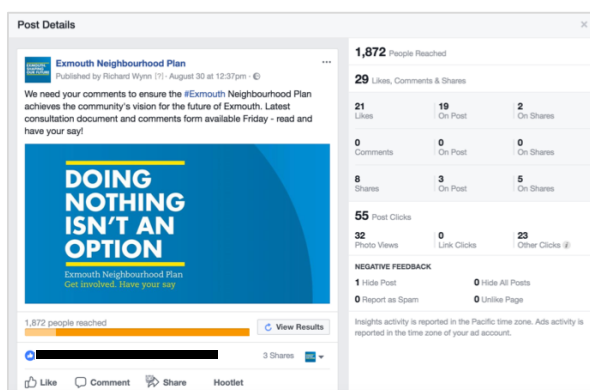
- **Natural environment** – seafront, especially keeping developments authentic and play areas for children, plus improving the Orcombe Point end.
- **Built environment** – improving Magnolia Centre and train station, pedestrianisation.
- **Employment and economy** – surprisingly there was very little Facebook engagement on this topic, although people tended to retweet on this topic on Twitter.
- **Housing** – a greater mix of affordable required, particularly for younger and disabled.
- **Getting around** – one-way system in the town, parking issues in central areas.
- **Community facilities** – protecting green spaces and parks.

**Comments either made directly on the ENP Facebook page or to the ENP Twitter account have been compiled in this report's appendix** Comments beyond these pages have not been included as this would entitle a much larger exercise.

## 6. Coordinating with wider communications

Because Loop Central worked closely with the ENP team, the social media campaign was also able to support your wider communications. For example:

- When the consultation document became available, a link was shared to this via Facebook and Twitter encouraging people to download the documents.
- The public consultation event, library exhibition and ward drop-ins were promoted.
- A targeted Facebook advert and posts supported the primary school book bag initiative, reinforcing the message to parents to get involved.
- The campaign reinforced wider messages, such as Doing nothing is not an option:





## 7. Appendix of some social media comments

The following is a selection of social media comments organised in the following way: a brief description of the social media post(s), followed by comments in quotes. An estimate of each commenter's age has been provided (based on a brief look at their Facebook/Twitter profile photo).

### Post of the official video - Shaping Exmouth's Future - posted 3 August

██████████ (20s) – "Sounds great"

██████████ (50s) – "What a fab video"

██████████ (30s) – "Biggest issue is housing"

██████████ (30s) – "Great video. Looking forward to the 19<sup>th</sup>"

██████████ (30s) – "You told us about Exmouth but not what the plan is?"

██████████ n/a) – "Is this plan a 'Council Initiative '? Who are the people behind the Exmouth Neighbourhood Plan?"

██████████ (60s) – "Who are these people please?"

██████████ (40s) – "Sounds great but unfortunately EDDC and the powers above them can always over-rule anything that has been decided to be in the best interest of the town. Unless the neighbourhood plan has some power with the government and governing bodies to change it"

██████████ (50s) – "Excellent. Date in my diary. Tell all your friends"

██████████ (20s) – "Hope parking is one thing that comes up or can be brought up"

██████████ (50s) – "Omg ██████████ and ██████████ you need to watch this"

██████████ (30s) – "██████████ you should go to this - we are out of the country on the 19 "

██████████ (na) – "What times on the 19th please? Please be open past working hours!"

██████████ 40s) – "All looks good, great film, look forward to is how its put in place"

██████████ (50s) – "They won't listen when you tell them what you want for Exmouth, , when they wanted to build a road linking Dinan Way to the A376 replacing the rat run that is Summer lane it was blocked saying it would affect the National Trusts A La Ronde the t\*\*ts couldn't have looked at the map as the new road would have been further away from it than Summer lane is now"

### Posts – video snippets shared during August:

██████████ (40s) – "More contemporary art please. A venue that big bold art can be displayed and art/work spaces. It seems where the artists go the tourists follow"

[REDACTED] (60s) – “Pushing [for housing] but - what is it plan to do that. Sounds like just talk - no real plan at all”

[REDACTED] (40s) – “Is that going to b housing 4 disable people as well xx”

[REDACTED] (20s) – “How about we stop catering for the 55+ and start investing in homes for the younger generations!”

[REDACTED] (40s) – “Maybe a one-way system around town. The Parade and Rolle Street are a nightmare with bus stops and loading bays opposite each other therefore making it a single lane anyway”

[REDACTED] (30s) - Maybe consider sorting out the state of the roads and pavements first.... And maybe stopping shops blocking the paths with tables chairs and billboards... I'm sure that they don't rent the space!!!!!! Those funds could be put to use as well and maybe improve the pedestrian crossing facilities by the roundabout by the pound shop”

[REDACTED] (20s) – “I think some money needs to be spent on the Orcombe end of Exmouth both blocks of toilets there are quite truly disgusting. The amount of money the town/district council has spent over the years in other areas is a massive amount and I think that end of the beach gets a lot of visitors and if a bit of thought went into it just a bit of upgrading would make it a lot nicer place to visit. And obviously a decent cafe/bar restaurant somewhere there would be a goldmine”

[REDACTED] (30s) – “A park like they have on Teignmouth seafront would be great for the kids, we have days out to Teignmouth as my son loves playing in that Park then playing on the beach”

[REDACTED] (40's) – “I would like residents only parking to be considered in the Victoria road, St Andrews road and Morton road areas. Trying to park anywhere near my home, is near on impossible during the summer months, as spaces are taken by people working in the town and beach goers not willing to pay for a space. I've lived in this area for nearly 15 years and I see it only getting worse when the seafront is developed”

Ideal Cleaners – “Hopefully we will be able to make the meeting... the local economy and jobs is crucial to the area. I also believe that the local road infrastructure needs to be updated! This summer it has been almost impossible getting around on our roads due to the vast number of people visiting our town. The Exeter Road during rush hours is just grid lock both ways. What also doesn't help is the zebra crossing down by the sports center and train station, these back up traffic during the peak times of the day to a stand still”

### **Posts – vox pop videos shared end August/September:**

[REDACTED] (50s) – “Can anyone tell me when is the extra meeting call and is it an open meeting where Exmouth residents can come along to”

[REDACTED] (20s) – “There's far too many coffee shops”

[REDACTED] (60s) – “It is overall a good Neighbourhood Plan, but I see nobody is saying that the large development in Queens Drive is necessary or wanted and as this is such an important part of Exmouth it should be included”

[REDACTED] (40s) – “Do have your say - a real consultation process, for a change..”

Also consider the comments recorded in the 5x vox pops used during the campaign.

## Posts - photos of areas of Exmouth:

[REDACTED] (60s) – “It's good to see that some restoration is happening to that wonderful old building at last” (related to photo of Thomas Tucker building)

[REDACTED] (60's) – “This place... why change something that's been around before our time” (related to photo of Harbour View Cafe)

[REDACTED] (40s) – “Our family have used most of these, Maer playground is a favourite and we'd love to see more adventure/"wild" spaces”

[REDACTED] (60s) – “I have used most [referring to play parks] with my children who are now grown up. Still use Phear Park with my grandchildren and less often the park in Carter Avenue as it's not convenient now we have moved house. Great pity the Fun Park on the Seafront has now closed!”

[REDACTED] (20s) – “We use most of these [referring to play parks]. It would be better to have less graffiti and damage done by teenagers that are just bored. Maybe something for the teens would distract them from causing damage. Although the phear park play area has a cattle grid at the bottom and top that dogs will just run over so maybe gates would be better”

[REDACTED] (na) – “Would be great to see a water splash play park like in Heavitree. Phear Park is lacking in baby swings. As is Maer. More obstacle course type equipment would be good. Other than that the parks are great. The recreation ground one is ace”

[REDACTED] (30s) – “As most of the buildings have flats above its hard to make a lot of big changes to this area. Fixing the paving and smartening up the shop fronts would do a lot to improve the look of the area [referring to the Magnolia Centre]. There is a good mix of independent shops in Exmouth but needs more”

[REDACTED] (30s) – “Worst part of the town in my opinion [referring to the Magnolia Centre], would be great to see it updated! Just some cladding if maintained would help a great deal. But paving is also poor.

[REDACTED] (30s) – “Train station is an eyesore and would be the first thing I would demolish and rebuild. It's the first main building you see as you come into town that way and would be a lot nicer if it looked pretty much how it used to but on a smaller scale!”

[REDACTED] (30s) – “The outer parts of the centre are fine. Original character can still be seen but the actual block (boots, WH Smith, co-op) is just awful. Whoever designed that needs to be hung drawn and quartered! If it had stayed true to being rebuilt in a quintessential English way - put pretty cobbles instead of uneven paving slabs. People would naturally be drawn to it... big mistake to get rid of character”

[REDACTED] (30s) – “Put some grass there [referring to central areas]. We have way to much concrete in the town”

[REDACTED] (50s) – “Magnolia Centre needs major facelift. The Strand is fabulous- pedestrianisation is the key to community centres”

## **Posts: The consultation documents and sharing main points from the proposed plan:**

██████████ (50s) – “This document is worth a read. ...I shall be commenting, just waiting for the town council to fix the link to the word version of the consultation form”

██████████ (40's) – “By affordable do you mean Devon actual wages as opposed to the National average?”

██████████ (na) – “Do what St Ives have done, stop second home ownership”

██████████ (na) – “Maybe SMALL market stalls in the area outside the front of co-op get rid of the circle and flower beds and open it right up for a useable space”

██████████ (na) – “Creating stunning new architecture should also be on the list. Modern or even futuristic architecture can sit alongside period, Old architecture and would give Exmouth a great mix of buildings”

## **Posts: Related to the consultation events**

Grapevine Brewhouse (n/a) – “To all our local customers ... please note the new plans on Exmouth are available to view in the library”

██████████ (40s) – “Still time to get down to Ocean to #HaveYourSay on @ExmouthNPlan . Lots of people there this afternoon and a great buzz of ideas!”

██████████ (30s) – “It was brilliant. Very professional, friendly and well thought through. I feel really proud to be part of such a positive, forward thinking community”

██████████ (40s) – “I thought it was very professional and well organised. Well done to all the team!”

██████████ (30's) - Every campaign needs a ██████████ she's glamorous, articulate and honest and is so right - finally exmouth people have a voice well done team neighbourhood plan!

██████████ (30s) - “Thank you for the hours of work you have put in to creating a plan for Exmouth that reflects our views - well done!”

See also the 3x vox pops recorded at the event, capturing people's reactions.