

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 History

- 1.1 In April 2019 Teignbridge District Council declared a Climate Emergency and has since aspired to become carbon neutral by 2025. In September 2020, it also declared an Ecological Emergency. Many other councils around the country, including Devon County Council, have also made similar declarations.
- 1.2 In April 2019 Exminster Parish Council (EPC) adopted an Environmental Policy and in July 2019 created the Environment Working Party (EWP) (ref 1).

### 2.0 The Environmental Policy

- 2.1 The Environmental Policy (ref 2) aims, where practical and economical, to make a positive contribution to protecting and enhancing the local and global environment by:

- minimising waste and pollution
- following a hierarchy of reducing, re-using and recycling
- seeking to eliminate the unnecessary use of energy and reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- providing information electronically, where appropriate
- avoiding using single use plastic items.

### 3.0 The Environment Working Party

- 3.1 The aim of the EWP is to provide EPC with ideas and recommendations on ways to protect and enhance the environment within which we live and work by initially developing within six months an action plan that reflects the Environmental Policy. This was later extended to include helping the EPC to put the plan into effect.
- 3.2 When designing its Terms of Reference, EPC's key objective was to use the principles in the Environmental Policy to develop an action plan that would be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely and would specifically:
- promote positive opportunities for the environment
  - identify more sustainable approaches and help address wider negative impacts on the environment, including those caused by development pressures, pollution and climate change
  - recommend options for more sustainable energy use, including exploring solar energy potential
  - identify further opportunities for enhancement of natural assets, including the potential for tree planting and hedgerow improvement (working with the Green Spaces Group).
  - identify ways to maximise recycling.
  - raise public awareness of the principles and opportunities offered through the Environmental Policy and seek their support in these issues.
  - make recommendations which fall beyond our capabilities, via the Council, to District and/or County.
- 3.3 Under the Terms of Reference, up to three members of the Council and up to four members of the community can be members of the EWP and they are appointed by the Council. In addition, the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council are ex officio members. Other community

volunteers are encouraged to attend EWP meetings and contribute to its work. The membership is reviewed annually at the Annual Council Meeting in May.

- 3.4 The Chair of the EWP is chosen by the EWP Members at their first meeting following the Annual Council Meeting and may either be a Member of the Council or not. The Chair is the main point of contact for the EWP and convenes and chairs the meetings.

#### **4.0 Emerging Actions and Themes**

- 4.1 Within the tight timescale and limited resources, early members of the EWP collated information and feedback from the community. Over 60 ideas and aspirations were gleaned at the Village Fun Day on 27 July 2019 and a public forum on 10 August 2019. Themes were originally in line with the Action on Climate in Teignbridge Group (ACT) but discussion within the EWP led to the development of 5 key themes which have now evolved into 6:

- Biodiversity and green spaces
- Carbon footprints
- Communications
- Recycling
- Sustainable energy
- Transport.

#### **5.0 Consistency with the Exminster Community Plan**

- 5.1 It was recognised that there are areas of overlap in scope and subject matter between the actions described below and responses to the Exminster Community Plan in 2019. Every effort is taken to ensure that actions are complementary and mutually supportive.

#### **6.0 The Working Party's approach to implementing and reviewing the plan.**

- 6.1 A draft Action Plan was drawn up by the EWP and accepted by EPC in March 2020, just before the outbreak of the Covid pandemic. Since then, the EWP has met regularly by Zoom to progress the actions in the Plan and as news of the EWP has spread through the village, other interested residents have joined from time to time to assist in its work. We aim to meet face to face again once the risk of Covid has subsided.
- 6.2 Each of the key themes has been tackled by individual members or groups of members, all co-ordinating their activities through the EWP. These groups, working in line with the broad actions contained within the plan are deemed to be operating with the implicit support and endorsement of EPC and report back to the Council and the community accordingly.
- 6.3 Recognising that circumstances change and new opportunities or issues emerge over time, it is envisaged that the plan should be reviewed and refreshed on a regular basis. This was not possible during the pandemic, but version 2 was prepared for submission to EPC in January 2022. It recognises that some of the previous actions have been completed or deemed unachievable. Some remain to be explored further and others are new actions in response to changing events or external priorities.
- 6.4 The context in which we work will continue to be guided by those efforts to address the risks of climate change and loss of biodiversity that are taking place at a global, national and

regional level. Our Parish may only be a small player in a big picture, but we are all responsible for playing our part as individuals and as a society.

## **References**

1. Environment Working Party Terms of Reference: [APPROVED-Environment-Working-Party-TOR-2020-7-6.pdf \(exminsterparishcouncil.gov.uk\)](#)
2. Environmental Policy: [ppp-2019-04-29-Environmental-Policy.pdf \(exminsterparishcouncil.gov.uk\)](#)

## **Abbreviations**

DCC	Devon County Council
EPC	Exminster Parish Council
EWP	Environment Working Party
TDC	Teignbridge District Council

## **ENVIRONMENT ACTION PLAN**

Each of the actions below is prioritised using a 'traffic light' system and has its origin from discussions in EWP meetings.

**Green** - those which are achievable in the more immediate future ('Quick Wins')

**Amber** – need more resourcing and commitment, so medium term

**Red** – considered to be long term aspirations by the community.

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## **COMMUNICATIONS**

**ENV1** Continue with a Communications Plan and from that an Awareness Programme providing information to residents showing all events and activities

**Why:** To keep everyone aware of climate change issues that affect the Parish and current progress of local environment actions. This can also be used to promote good practice, share good ideas, tips etc

**Origin:** Environmental Policy, EWP Terms of Reference.

**For action by:** EPC, EWP

**When needed by:** Awareness Programme to be reviewed at each EWP meeting.

**Funding required:** EPC funding of: Comms Officer, licensing, security, website, webpages, email accounts, Facebook pages; printing costs, venue hire, etc to be determined individually.

## **CARBON FOOTPRINTS**

**ENV2** EWP to regularly invite the community in Exminster to measure their personal carbon footprint. EPC to measure the overall Parish carbon footprint on an annual basis.

**Why:** In order to raise awareness of everyone's individual carbon use.

**Origin:** Environmental Policy.

**For action by:** EWP, EPC.

**When needed by:** Include in Awareness Programme as a six-monthly feature.

**Funding required:** EPC funding of posters, leaflets, website, webpages, email accounts, Facebook pages.

**ENV3** EPC to conduct an annual environmental review of Parish Council assets and its management practices.

**Why:** In order to monitor the carbon footprint of the assets and management practices of the Parish as a whole.

**Origin:** Environmental Policy.

**For action by:** EPC

**When needed by:** set up by July 2022 for annual review

**Funding required:** There is minimal extra cost in staff time.

## **BIODIVERSITY AND GREEN SPACES**

**ENV4** Continue to build a baseline record of the natural flora and fauna and their habitats in the village and to monitor any changes over time. This includes obtaining relevant data and records on species and habitats such as those held by the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre. Explore the capture of relevant records on the Parish On-line Mapping system.

**Why:** To understand the natural assets within the Parish and help focus work to protect and enhance those assets.

**Origin:** Environmental Policy.

**For action by:** EWP, EPC.

**When Needed by:** ongoing activity.

**Funding Required:** EPC funding of posters, leaflets, website, webpages, email accounts, Facebook pages. Projects will be costed for approval by EPC.

**ENV5** Advise on and arrange planting and management works by the Green Spaces Working Party to enhance natural habitats and promote diversity, including:

- tree planting and hedge establishment or management.
- wildflower introduction
- nesting/roosting features
- sympathetic grassland management.
- other beneficial habitat creation, such as scrapes/ponds.

**Why:** To protect and enhance our biodiversity and wildlife habitats.

**Origin:** Environmental Policy, Community requests.

**For action by:** EWP.

**When Needed by:** On going activity.

**Funding Required:** EPC funding of posters, leaflets, website, webpages, email accounts, Facebook pages. Projects will be costed for approval by EPC.

ENV6 Closed/Not used

**ENV7** Engage with the community to build awareness of and encourage actions to promote biodiversity. This will include:

- Promotion of national and regional campaigns, e.g.: Blue Campaign wilding of gardens, Big Bird and butterfly counts.
- Engagement as per the Communications Plan through web content, social media, Scene magazine and meetings to promote the benefits and value of strong biodiversity.
- Potential for guest speakers, nature walks etc.

**Why:** To inform and engage with the wider community.

**Origin:** Environmental Policy, Community requests.

**For action by:** EWP.

**When Needed by:** On going activity.

**Funding Required:** EPC funding of posters, leaflets, website, webpages, email accounts, Facebook pages. Projects to be costed and potential funding sources considered.

**ENV8**

Work in partnership with others managing land in and around the Parish to achieve strategic gains for biodiversity and place the Parish within a wider Nature Recovery Network. This includes:

- developing a vision for the Parish at the centre of a more landscape approach to nature recovery;
- aiming to build a partnership with conservation organisations and land management agencies including DWT, RSPB, TDC, DCC;
- working with relevant land managers in and around the Parish to facilitate and promote positive biodiversity management, including contractors managing green space in Milbury Reach, Sentry's Orchard, NHS New Leaf Nursery and St Martin's churchyard.

**Why:** To achieve a more strategic impact through partnership.

**Origin:** Environmental Policy.

**For action by:** EWP, EPC.

**When Needed by:** On going activity.

**Funding Required:** None.

**REDUCE, RE-USE AND RECYCLE**

**ENV9**

Continue to explore opportunities for recycling packaging and products.

Encourage the community to reduce food waste and talk to local businesses and schools about how they deal with this.

Encourage the community to repair and reuse clothing and other items.

Organise events to engage with and explain to the community about the benefits of a circular economy.

**Why:** to maximise recycling and discourage all forms of littering.

**Origin:** Environmental Policy, community requests, EWP Terms of Reference.

**For action by:** EWP, EPC.

**When needed by:** This is an ongoing activity.

**Funding required:** EPC funding of posters, leaflets, website, webpages, email accounts, Facebook pages. Projects to be costed for funding by EPC.

## **SUSTAINABLE ENERGY**

**ENV10** EPC to lobby TDC through the planning process requesting that all new development is built to Building for Life 12 or Passivhaus standards with a view to optimising energy efficiency.

Research and offer general advice to Exminster residents on how to optimise the energy efficiency of their homes and reduce their reliance on fossil fuels.

Publicise to residents the grants available from Government and industry towards the capital cost of new insulation and heating systems.

Publicise the free professional advice available from the Local Energy Advice Partnership (LEAP) and similar organisations designed to help lift people out of fuel poverty.

**Why:** To significantly reduce reliance on fossil fuels, help lift households out of fuel poverty and reduce long term maintenance costs.

**Origin:** Environmental Policy, Community requests. EWP Terms of Reference.

**For action by:** EWP, EPC.

**When needed by:** Ongoing.

**Funding required:** EPC funding of posters, leaflets, website, webpages, email accounts, Facebook pages. Projects will be costed for approval by EPC.

ENV11 Closed/Not used.

## **TRANSPORT**

**ENV12** Lobby DCC and TDC for public transport facilities to be introduced in the Matford development at the earliest possible time.

Engage with Devon County Council and Stagecoach over access to bus services during the construction of the Matford development and report to the Parish Council.

**Why:** To encourage the use of public transport rather than private cars, reducing traffic congestion, air pollution and reliance on fossil fuels.

**Origin:** Environmental Policy.

**For action by:** EWP, EPC.

**When needed by:** The start of homes being occupied.

**Funding required:** None at present.

**ENV13** Encourage the use of electric vehicles by residents by promoting the provision of EV charging points in the Parish, especially in areas where residents lack the means of charging such cars at home.

**Why:** To encourage the use of electric vehicles, thereby reducing air pollution and reliance on fossil fuels.

**Origin:** Environmental Policy, Community requests.

**For action by:** EWP, EPC, DCC.

**When needed by:** A public charging bay in Exminster village is awaiting scheduling by DCC. The opportunity for further phases remains to be explored.

**Funding required:** None at present.

**ENV14** Encourage the provision of community electric vehicles and electric bikes in central locations within Exminster village and the Matford development.

**Why:** To encourage the use of community electric vehicles rather than private cars, to encourage active travel by cycle and to provide a means of personal travel for residents without their own car.

**Origin:** Environmental Policy.

**For action by:** EWP, EPC.

**When needed by:** A community car in Exminster village is dependent upon provision of EV Charging Bay, later in Matford.

**Funding required:** None at present.

**ENV15** Encourage residents to use public transport rather than private cars.

Respond to Devon County Council's consultations on its Bus Services Improvement Plans.

Request National Express to reinstate the express coach stop outside the Victory Hall and consider creating a new coach stop to serve the Matford development.

**Why:** To improve our local bus services and to reduce traffic congestion, air pollution and the use of fossil fuel.

**Origin:** Environmental Policy.

**For action by:** EWP, EPC

**When needed by:** Ongoing

**Funding required:** EPC funding of posters, leaflets, website, webpages, email accounts, Facebook pages.

**ENV16** Promote active travel - walking and cycling - by ensuring its provision is prioritised, safe, well sign-posted and convenient.

Look for ways to promote safer driving in the village, including the setting of a 20mph speed limit.

**Why:** To encourage more active lifestyle choices, improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists and help reduce air pollution and the use of fossil fuels.

**Origin:** Environmental Policy, Community requests.

**For action by:** EWP, EPC.

**When needed by:** On going – timetable dependant on specific proposals

**Funding required:** EPC funding of posters, leaflets, website, webpages, email accounts, Facebook pages. Projects will be costed for approval by EPC.

ENV17 Closed/Not used.