

Issue 61 Spring

# Exe Press

2022

Newsletter of the Exe Estuary Partnership



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2022 – 2027**

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Cover Credit: Tony Cobley



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NEWS AND EVENTS PLEASE VISIT [WWW.EXE-ESTUARY.ORG](http://WWW.EXE-ESTUARY.ORG)



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## EXE VIRTUAL WINTER FORUM 2022

Following national guidance at the time of organising, this event took place virtually on the evening of 15th February and was attended by 46 people. The new five year plan can be found on our website - select "publications" from [www.exe-estuary.org](http://www.exe-estuary.org).

The new Exe Estuary Management Plan 2022- 2027 was launched at the Forum. Attendees got the first glimpse of the online Management Plan, following their input through workshops at the last Stakeholder Forum in September and a six-week public consultation. Further detail about the Plan can be found on page 3.

The event was chaired by the Forum Vice Chair, Ted Draper. The Forum Chair, Jeremy Rawlings, had to send his apologies due to unavoidable circumstances.

The evening was filled with a variety of interesting presentations, which all linked to sections within the new Management Plan, ending with question-and-answer sessions. Presentations included:

- Exe Estuary Management Partnership update and launch of the online Exe Estuary Management Plan 2022-2027 – Steph Harper-Chung, Exe Estuary Officer
- Accessibility on the Exe – Gordon Guest, Disabled Ramblers UK
- Exeter Port Authority Update – Grahame Forshaw MBE, Harbour Master

- The State of Nature - An Ecological Emergency – Sarah Jennings, DCC Natural Environment Team
- Update on the Devon Climate Emergency – Emily Reed, Devon Climate Emergency Secretariat
- Plans for Exe Estuary Trail maintenance works at Courtlands Boardwalk, Lypstone – James Leigh, DCC Engineer
- Dawlish Warren Beach Management Scheme Review – Martin Davies, Environment Agency

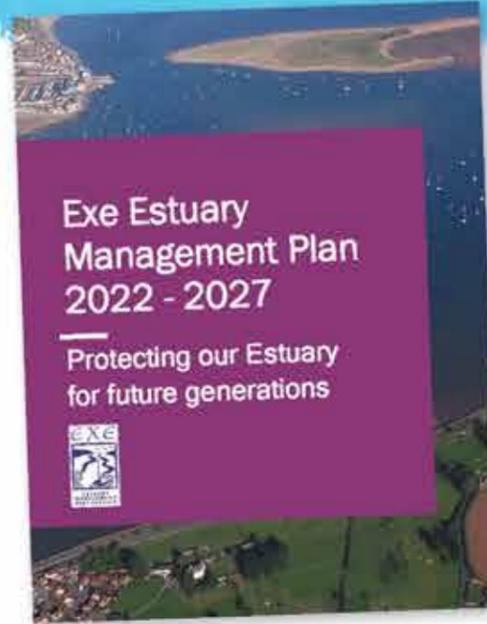
All presentations and a recording of the event can be accessed on the Forum page of our website at: [www.exe-estuary.org/get-involved/forum](http://www.exe-estuary.org/get-involved/forum)

Feedback from the Forum stated that the virtual technology worked well for the event, the topics covered were of interest and that it was good to see inclusivity on a variety of subject matter. Suggestions for future events requested more presentations from Exe user groups with topics that may be of greater interest to the general public. Therefore, we would like to invite any local groups or individuals to get in touch if they are keen to speak at a future Forum.

The next Forum will be held in September, please get in touch if you would like to receive an invite for this event.

Please contact the Exe Estuary Officer by email at [exeestua@devon.gov.uk](mailto:exeestua@devon.gov.uk) or by phone: **01392 382236**.

## LAUNCH OF EXE ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PLAN 2022 - 2027



Following a full public consultation with local stakeholders and key partners, the new and updated Management Plan for the Exe Estuary has been released.

The Exe Estuary Management Plan provides the framework for the management of the site, covering all aspects of the Exe from water quality to recreation. It aims to promote the sustainable use of the Exe Estuary, balancing the demands made on its natural resources and resolving conflicts of interest where they arise. The plan also incorporates the Management Scheme for the Special Protection Area, detailing policies which aim to achieve favourable condition of the wildlife and habitats.

### WHY RENEW THE PLAN?

The old plan covers the period of 2016-2021 and was based on the scientific report, the 'State of the Exe Estuary 2014', which detailed the information available on the condition of the environment at that time.

Things have changed considerably since then:

- The environmental conditions of the estuary will have changed
- Policy and legislation are different today than they were in 2014
- Stakeholders have changed, with new emerging user groups and businesses being present on the estuary.

Replacing the old version, the new Management Plan will cover management of the estuary over the next five-year period, from 2022 until 2027. The new Plan has been informed by the consultation and the online State of the Exe Estuary resource, and has been produced as an online version instead of a printed document.

Some of the main issues raised through the public consultation, which need to be addressed through the Plan are:

- Water quality
- Sedimentation
- Continuing to balance the recreational use of the estuary with the needs of wildlife (responses received highlighting concerns from both parties)
- Climate change
- Antisocial behaviour / enforcement

The Exe Estuary Management Partnership aims to achieve a balanced approach which involves and takes into consideration the needs of the various stakeholders, whilst delivering management of the estuary. Whilst the partnership takes into account the views of all stakeholders, the competent authorities within the Exe Estuary Management Partnership have a legal duty to protect and, where possible, enhance the SPA, SAC and SSSI.

The Exe Estuary Management Partnership would like to thank everyone who took the time to provide input into this review. The new Management Plan, as well as the Consultation Report which details responses from the consultation, can be found on our website at [www.exe-estuary.org](http://www.exe-estuary.org).

Steph Harper-Chung, Exe Estuary Officer

Email: [exeestua@devon.gov.uk](mailto:exeestua@devon.gov.uk)

Tel: **01392 382236**



# EXE ESTUARY ACCESSIBILITY



The Exe Estuary Trail provides 26 miles of great access for walkers and cyclists. The Exe Estuary Management Partnership aim to enable as many people as possible to benefit from this fantastic trail, and because it has a multiuse surface it makes it accessible for mobility scooters and buggies. Last year the Devon Wheeled Access Group and Disabled Ramblers UK worked with the Exe Estuary Officer to identify three possible routes which could be assessed for accessibility and promoted as easy access.

Three days were spent with the wheeled access group, the routes were assessed, and route descriptions drafted. These have been refined with the help of the group and are now available on the Exe Estuary Partnership website at [www.exe-estuary.org](http://www.exe-estuary.org) (Accessibility can be found under **Visitor information – Exploring the Exe**).

**The three routes are:** a loop around Bowling Green Marsh and Topsham, a loop from Exmouth Seafront including the town centre and marina and finally Exmouth to Lympstone and back along the Exe Estuary Trail. The whole of these routes, using the Exe Estuary Trail and adjoining paths and pavements, are accessible for wheelchairs, small mobility scooters (4pmh), power chairs and larger mobility scooters (8mph). They are also suitable for families and pushchairs.

The Exe Estuary Management Partnership aim to continue to work with access groups to identify other ways to make the estuary more accessible.



# BEACH WHEELCHAIR PROJECT SCHEME FOR EXMOUTH MOVES STEP CLOSER



*“ My ambition with this project has always been to enable as many people as possible to go to the beach with their families and friends, regardless of disability. Just imagine being in a position where you can see our wonderful beach but you are not able to go on it yourself... Well, hopefully, with Exmouth Town Council behind the project, everyone will soon have access and the project will succeed for many years to come. ”*

Councillor Pauline Stott

Exmouth Town Council is delighted to be able to let supporters of its beach wheelchair project know that the fitting out of the building is complete and the Council hopes to launch its scheme in Spring 2022.

The Town Council initiative will provide disabled people with greater access to the beach through the provision of specially adapted, all-terrain wheelchairs which will be hired out free of charge from the new premises. The wheelchairs have being generously funded by the Exeter Chiefs Foundation, the Clare Milne Trust and Devon Super Team.

The project, conceived initially and championed by Councillor Pauline Stott, has been under development for two years and is being funded through community donations raised via Councillor Stott’s successful

Crowdfunder appeal - with match funding from Exmouth Town Council, East Devon District Council, Devon County Council, The Norman Family Trust and the Freemasons of Exmouth. South West Water also provided a grant to Exmouth Town Council through its Water Saving Fund to support the installation of a water butt and hand held pressure washer which will be used to wash the wheelchairs down after use.

The Council is hoping to recruit a team of volunteers to help operate the scheme and anyone who feels that they can offer some of their time is encouraged to register their interest with the Council via [reception@exmouth.gov.uk](mailto:reception@exmouth.gov.uk)



Competitively priced deep water moorings with good access from Starcross available on annual licence from Powderham Estate. All enquiries and bookings for moorings to be made via Powderham Estate Office.

**Tel: 01626 890243.**

# EXMOUTH'S NEW WATER BOTTLE REFILL STATIONS



Councillor Steve Gazzard, Mayor of Exmouth said:

**“** We're delighted to have worked with our partners to install these water bottle filling stations and I would encourage everyone to use these units and fill their reusable bottles. Not only will they help us reduce single-use plastic bottles but also promote healthier lifestyles by ensuring we drink plenty of fresh clean water.

Simon Findel-Hawkins, Venue Manager, Sideshore, commented:

**“** The Sideshore team are delighted to be working with the local council and community to highlight the importance of eliminating single-use plastics, which can be extremely detrimental to our beautiful surrounding environment.

Councillor Jeff Trail BEM, Devon County Council Chairman and Councillor for Exmouth added

**“** Single use plastics are a scourge on the environment with an estimated 800 plastic bottles being thrown away in the UK every minute. Many of those bottles end up polluting the sea and endangering wildlife.

Cllr Denise Bickley, East Devon District Council Assistant Portfolio Holder for Climate Action and Emergencies said

**“** This is excellent news and we hope that residents and tourists alike will take advantage of the new water stations in Exmouth.

For further information please contact the Town Council on **01395 276 167** or email us on **reception@exmouth.gov.uk**.



From left to right: Diane Love (Consort to ETC Mayor), Councillor Steve Gazzard (ETC Mayor), Councillor Jeff Trail (Chairman DCC), Councillor Aurora Bailey (ETC), Councillor Brian Bailey (ETC), Councillor Ollly Davey (EDDC & ETC) and Chetna Jones (ETC Deputy Town Clerk).



From left to right: Councillor Tim Dumper (ETC), Simon Findel-Hawkins (Sideshore), Councillor Paul Millar (EDDC and Sideshore Board member), Councillor Mike Rosser (ETC), Councillor Alex Sadiq (ETC Deputy Mayor) and Anna Jones (ETC staff).

Exmouth people encouraged to fill reusable water bottles at the new water bottle refill stations to reduce single-use plastic waste

The Town Council, working in partnership with Sideshore, Devon County Council and East Devon District Council has installed two water bottle filling stations to encourage the use of reusable water bottles and reduce the amount of plastic waste.

With thanks to Devon County Council for providing the space and East Devon District Council for providing the water, the Town Council has installed a unit by the train station to provide commuters, shoppers and visitors access to free water to fill reusable water bottles.

Also, thanks to Sideshore, who has generously provided the space and water, the Town Council has installed a second unit along the seafront by the water sports centre.

The units consist of a pedestal bottle filling station with a simple push-button actuation system to fill a bottle quickly and efficiently with little waste, and provides clean, hygienic water in accordance with the strict regulations.

There are plans to deliver further water bottle refill stations later in the year.

Statistics show that 13 billion plastic bottles are thrown away each year in the UK and less than 50% of these plastic water bottles are recycled. Shockingly, plastic bottles take an average of 450 years to degrade. This means that the plastic bottles are dumped at landfill for hundreds of years. The single-use bottles take up the limited landfill space and litters both the sea and the countryside, and its cheaper too.

# MAINTENANCE WORKS TO COURTLANDS BOARDWALK BETWEEN LYMPSTONE AND EXMOUTH

Courtlands Boardwalk is the raised timber boardwalk on the Exe Estuary Trail between Lymptone and Exmouth.

A routine inspection of the structure by Devon County Council has found extensive deterioration of the timber elements – including the main structural beams, the deck planks and secondary timber elements.

An ongoing programme of regular monitoring inspections has been put in place to keep the boardwalk open and ensure it is safe to use. Some quite extensive patch repairs have already been carried out, for example replacement of rotten deck planks and propping of the timber main beams underneath. Such repairs will continue to be made as necessary as a longer-term solution is developed.



Devon County Council is currently developing a solution that will involve complete replacement of the defective timber elements.

As the defects are so extensive, the replacement work will be quite intrusive and will therefore require a closure of the trail while the work is carried out. A temporary diversion route will be put in place while the trail is closed at this location.

The timescales for this work are yet to be determined and will depend on further discussions regarding ecology and tourism. Further announcements will be made in due course to keep everyone updated.

# NATURALLY HEALTHY MAY 2022 ACTIVATION FUND APPLICATION



## MAY 2022 IS NATURALLY HEALTHY MONTH IN DEVON!

In our modern, hectic world there is growing evidence that taking the time to reconnect with the natural environment offers huge benefits for our health and wellbeing. Many Naturally Healthy interventions offer a chance to learn new skills, meet new people and increase activity levels in a safe and supportive way. Regardless of age or fitness there is something for everyone.

Active Devon and the Devon Local Nature Partnership are proud to once again support Naturally Healthy Month through our Connecting Actively to Nature programme, to pull together partners to support people to lead healthier and more active lifestyles whilst benefiting from Devon's wonderful natural environment. To help achieve this we have an Activation Fund of up to £200 per organisation to help run a project, event, or activity.



All projects, events or activities should take place in May 2022 and involve people being Naturally Healthy or Naturally Active for one or more of the following reasons:

- Physical and Mental health and wellbeing
- Learning about and connecting to nature

If you are interested in applying and would like more details please contact Kate Hind at **kate.hind@devon.gov.uk**





## DAWLISH WARREN BEACH MANAGEMENT SCHEME

### ENVIRONMENT AGENCY UPDATE FEBRUARY 2022

#### CURRENT SITUATION

Although this year has again seen the rate of beach lowering and dune erosion being relatively stable or even accreting (see figure 1 below), change at Dawlish Warren will continue with an ongoing trend for beach lowering and dune erosion as the spit changes naturally to prevailing coastal conditions. Although variable, this rate of change has generally been faster than predicted and a 'post scheme review' has been commissioned to investigate what further options or improvements that could be made based on updated information and evidence since scheme completion in 2017.

#### GEOTUBE REPAIR WORKS

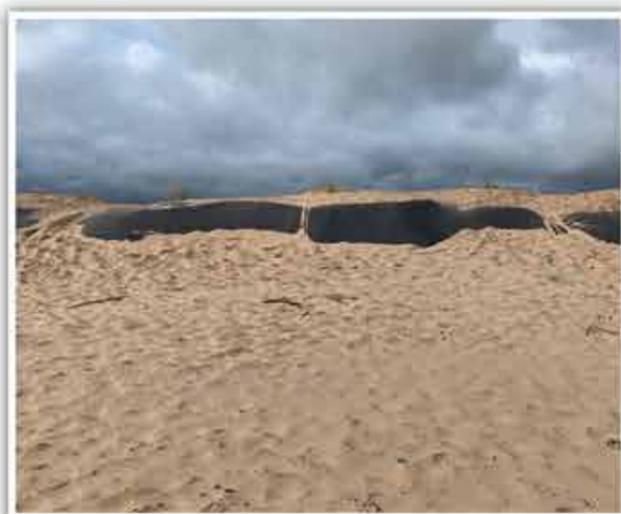
Following the exposure of sections of the geotube defence in 2019 and malicious vandalism in 2020, repairs are needed to reduce the risk of further damage and defence failure, and to allow time to agree a longer-term approach for adaptation with authorities, landowners and stakeholders at this dynamic and complex site. Permissions to do temporary repair works proposed at the end of 2020 are now expected to be granted early 2022 and if so works are expected to be complete by autumn this year. As the exposed geotube continues to cause the internationally important SSSI and SAC dune features of the site to be 'unfavourable', a condition within the permissions requires these repairs and small geotube to be removed by 2027.

#### POST-SCHEME REVIEW

A series of workshops led by the Environment Agency were held during 2021, supported by stakeholder organisations including Teignbridge District Council, Natural England, Network Rail and Exe Estuary Management Partnership (EEMP). Draft reports have been produced and are being reviewed following feedback. This strategic study includes i) a review of existing site management; ii) a range of potential high-level options and impacts; iii) proposals for future management and; iv) a technical lessons learnt review. A summary of findings to date was presented at the EEMP forum on 15 February. A copy of the presentation is available through the Exe Estuary Management Partnership, email: [exeestua@devon.gov.uk](mailto:exeestua@devon.gov.uk)



Fig 1. Comparison of beach levels along damaged geotube 2021- early 2022



To help simplify and facilitate feedback on this complex study, the project team are developing a 'summary and signposting' document which will be used to consult more widely. It is expected this document will be ready for circulation to stakeholder organisations in March and, following feedback and review, for circulation and feedback from Partnership members in April and May. Following feedback, all reports and proposed recommendations for future management will be updated for wider circulation during summer 2022.

## PRAISE CONTINUES FOR EXMOUTH TIDAL DEFENCE PROJECT AS WORK DRAWS TO A CLOSE



The contractor responsible for completing works on the Environment Agency's new tidal defence scheme has been praised by the Exmouth in Bloom community environmental group for delivering on their promise of restoring the site back to its former glory.

Kier had been working on the site, along Exmouth's popular seafront, for the last two and half years to help reduce the risk of tidal flooding to more than 1,800 properties.

To enable the construction works to take place, three mature Holm Oak trees had to be removed. Understandably, this caused the community some concern as the trees played host to birds, squirrels, and other species. The removal of the trees was undertaken outside of nesting season and under the watchful eye of an ecologist to ensure the welfare of any remaining animals in the area.

A commitment was made to replace the trees upon completion of the work and six new Holm Oak trees have now been planted, alongside around 800 mixed hedging plants, including Hawthorns, Holly and Viburnum. Once established, the new landscaping will provide a safe haven and feeding station for birds, squirrels, hedgehogs and bees.



Graham Bell horticultural advisor for Exmouth in Bloom said:

**“** We're grateful to Kier for delivering on their commitment to replace the trees and for helping to ensure that nearby wildlife continues to have a safe habitat for many years to come.

Philip Ramsay programme director for Kier Regional Civil Engineering said:

**“** Reinforcing Exmouth's tidal defences was a critical project to protect the town from flooding. It's equally important to Kier to mitigate the impact of construction works on the local area, so we were glad to be able to deliver substantial landscaping improvements at the same time.

The project was delivered by the Team Van Oord joint venture partnership, comprising Van Oord, Kier, Mackley and Royal HaskoningDHV, on behalf of the Environment Agency.

The scheme incorporated a multitude of measures to improve the town's flood defences, including new flood walls, pedestrian gates and a new drainage system. In addition to the reconfiguration of the Alexandra Terrace junction on the seafront, improving safety and user-friendliness for road users and pedestrians.



# FREE LITTER WORKSHOPS & RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS



## Would a school you know like to take part in Britain's biggest Litter Pick?

Keep Britain Tidy have announced that the seventh annual #GBSpringClean and #GBSchoolClean will take place between **25th March to 10th April 2022**.

Last year hundreds of schools across the country took part and it's easy to register your school on the Keep Britain Tidy website: [www.keepbritaintidy.org](http://www.keepbritaintidy.org)

Devon County Council have resources available to make it easy for schools to organise their own litter picks, either in school grounds or out in their local community or on a local beach. These include details like who to contact about getting rid of the litter collected and whose permission you would need to ask for before the litter pick. Download these from our Waste Education website: [zone.recycledevon.org/litter](http://zone.recycledevon.org/litter).

The website also contains loads of other activities and resources for teaching about materials, how to recycle them and the science behind them. Check out the [zone.recycledevon.org/activity-finder](http://zone.recycledevon.org/activity-finder) to find activities about plastic, plastic pollution and litter. Activities include turning potatoes into plastic, being a plastic detective and looking for microplastics in washing up water.

In Devon we are also lucky to have a team of dedicated Waste Educators who can visit schools and teach about waste, litter, plastic pollution and much, much more! Devon's Waste Education Team can help you by providing litter picking equipment and fun interactive curriculum linked workshops. The workshops and litter picking activities will help children understand the importance of stopping litter travelling down drains and waterways and into the Exe Estuary and the sea beyond. Workshops are free to schools; funded by Devon County Council and delivered by Resource Futures.

In the popular Plastic Pirates workshop Reception or KS1 children must work together in the school grounds to rescue animals from plastic pollution, learning about the oceans,



Our Waste Educator Sally, dressed up as a pirate, talking about animals trapped in plastic pollution, in our engaging outdoor workshop – Plastic Pirates, available for free to local schools

their creatures and the importance of putting litter in the bin, rather than the sea - all while being guided by our Waste Educators dressed as pirates!

Some of the comments from teachers about our workshops last year were:

*“ So lovely to be outside and hands on with the children. It felt really special and the children loved the range of activities presented in a diverse way with lots of hands on experience. Thank you once again!*

*“ This workshop was exactly what we needed to start our habitats enquiry. Both classes really enjoyed it. It was an excellent combination of information, participation and movement. Thank you Alex. You were great.*

So why not book a Waste Educator to help your school tackle Britain's litter problem and be part of the solution!

Contact the team at the Zone Education website: [zone.recycledevon.org/contact-us](http://zone.recycledevon.org/contact-us) or select workshops and book them online at: [Zone.recycledevon.org/workshops/](http://Zone.recycledevon.org/workshops/)



Infographic of the last Great Big Clean event from Keep Britain Tidy

# EXETER PORT AUTHORITY MARINE SERVICES

We offer a range of professional marine services across the Exe Estuary, Exeter Canal and Quay.

- Mooring servicing, maintenance and installation
- Vessel towing and salvage
- Boat storage facilities
- Visitor moorings on the Exe Estuary
- Berths on the Exeter Canal



Tel: 07565 204712  
email: [epa@exeter.gov.uk](mailto:epa@exeter.gov.uk)  
[www.exeter.gov.uk/epa](http://www.exeter.gov.uk/epa)

EPA Mooring Services, Trinity Buoy Store,  
Camperdown Terrace, Exmouth, EX8 1EQ



## WINTER BIRD WATCHING WITH STUART LINE CRUISES

The Exe is one of the most important estuaries in Europe for wildlife, particularly for wintering waders and wildfowl. There are so many ways to explore the Exe Estuary and our Guided Bird Watching Cruises have been a great success. Passengers have the opportunity to discover and learn all about the local species, habitat, feeding methods and behaviours of the thousands of birds on the Exe Estuary and East Devon Coast. Our knowledgeable Ornithologists Dave Smallshire and Derek Carter provide live commentary on board making it suitable for beginners and beneficial to experts. We are lucky to have them on board with us, their knowledge is truly valuable for understanding this site of specific interest.

So far, we have been lucky enough to see a variety of species on our trips from Avocets, Spotted Redshank, Brent Geese, Kingfishers and even Glossy Ibis. On occasion passengers have been greeted by a local Seal, usually basking on the sand banks. Each trip is unique, and you never know what wildlife you may be able to spot.

Exeter's canal first opened in 1566 and was the first canal to be built in Britain since the Roman era. This 6-mile-long canal was originally 16 feet wide and 3 foot deep but was

extended in 1701 to allow for ocean going vessels to reach the city centre. As part of our special event cruises, this trip is truly unique due to its large history.

This trip starts by cruising up the River Exe to Turf Locks, this is where the journey into Exeter Canal starts. As Pride of Exmouth glides further along the canal we bring traffic to a standstill as one of Exeter's main roads comes to a halt when the Countess Weir Swing Bridge ceremoniously opens to allow her through. Along the towpath we pass one of the area's most popular pubs, The Double Locks. This place truly comes to life in the summer months. Finally reaching our end point of Exeter Quay Basin.

The brilliance of this trip is that it can be offered either with a departure from the picturesque Exmouth Marina or the historic Exeter Quay. More information on these trips can be found on [www.stuartlinecruises.co.uk](http://www.stuartlinecruises.co.uk)



## GREAT NEWS!!

giving nature a home  
rspb

The RSPB Lookout in Bowling Green road, Topsham is back open after two years of lockdown closure.

The lookout is an adjoining room to the public bird hide where our willing volunteers are ready to greet you and your family in a warm, welcoming safe space where you can get incredibly close to the birds of Bowling Green marsh. We are opening every weekend between 10AM and 4PM serving teas, coffees, cake and ice creams. Visit this web address: <https://events.rspb.org.uk/bowlinggreenmarsh> for information about our great events on offer.



Fancy volunteering?  
Contact the team at:  
[exe.estuary@rspb.org.uk](mailto:exe.estuary@rspb.org.uk)

## NEW WILDLIFE WARDEN ON THE EXE

It's all change in the small South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership (SEDRHP) team for 2022 – after four and a half years walking the shores, heaths and dunes, Amelia has moved over to East Devon's Countryside team in the role of Participation and Engagement Officer. We wish her a fond farewell and welcome our new team mate Trudi, who has started with us as Wildlife Warden.

Trudi comes from a people engagement background with a focus on conservation and the environment. Until recently, she was a warden for Natural England working on the Thames Basin Heaths, after cutting her teeth as a seasonal warden on Greenham Common with the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxford Wildlife Trust (BBOWT).

Previous to that, she was an outreach officer in Bristol City Council's Sustainable Travel team, which she did part-time while volunteering for a practical conservation traineeship with Avon Wildlife Trust, and completing a Diploma in Countryside Management.



Photo caption: Trudi (left) & Julie, Devon Loves Dogs (right).

Trudi says she has always been fascinated by nature, but first got excited by aquatic habitat when she worked for a communications team in the Waterways department of the Environment Agency. She says

“I was concerned with how leisure boats on the River Thames affected wildlife, in particular river bank creatures such as water voles. It sparked an interest which has been growing ever since. So now I'm really looking forward to learning more about coastal wildlife, in particular seeing how we can work together with local communities to minimise the potential impacts of leisure and recreation by continuing positive communication. I love meeting people in the outdoors, talking about wildlife and I welcome all conversations. Just please give me some nice weather!

Sign up to our quarterly newsletter at [www.southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk](http://www.southeastdevonwildlife.org.uk) or follow us on social media for the latest updates.



## LOWER OTTER RESTORATION PROJECT

Work on the Lower Otter Restoration Project is progressing well as the new landscape starts to develop.

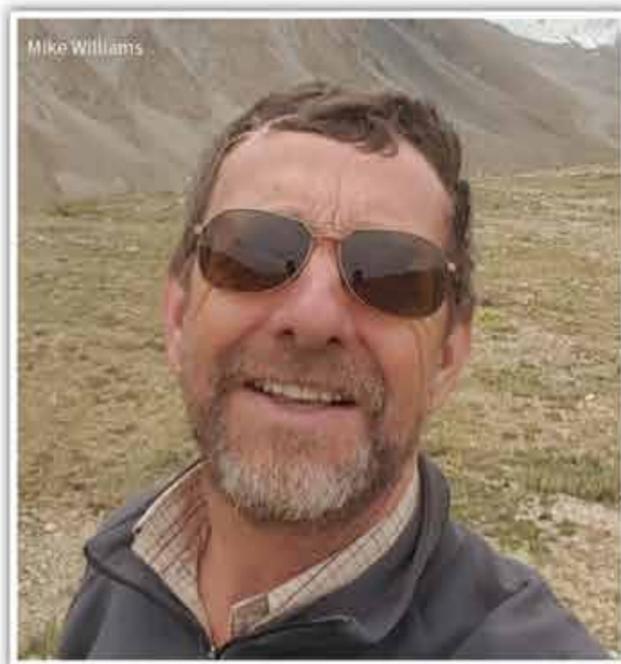
The Project is managing coastal change proactively with the creation of 55 hectares of wetland, which will teem with marine invertebrates, attracting new bird and fish species and increasing the biodiversity and wildlife value.

Seven new purpose-built viewing platforms will enable people to enjoy the wildlife and the footpath network will see improvements to some paths and new access on the former landfill site next to South Farm Road.

As well as happy wildlife, the project will also bring benefits for people with the raising of South Farm Road 2.5 metres above the floodplain, a new road bridge near South Farm Cottages, a new footbridge and a 55-space public car park. The new pitches at Budleigh Salterton Cricket Club are complete giving a flood-free future for the game.

Even while the contractor Kier is still busy on site, the project partners, the Environment Agency and landowner Clinton Devon Estates, are seeing great promise. More wildfowl and waders are already using the new freshwater habitats in the developing creek network to rest and feed. Bird enthusiasts enjoyed a flock of over 30 adult and juvenile European white-fronted geese early in the year – the largest number recorded for some 40 years, as they are generally uncommon in Devon – and a flock of nine glossy ibis, another infrequent winter visitor not seen since 2014.

Next year saltwater will be allowed to re-enter the lower valley through a managed 70 metre wide breach of the estuary embankment. The new intertidal environment, with its salt marshes and mudflats, will encourage a greater range of bird species to visit and stay for longer. These are expected to include waders: oystercatcher, lapwing, whimbrel, dunlin and several species of plover. Fish including sea bass, mullet, gobies, sand smelt and flounder will also favour the saltier, sheltered water to feed and grow.



Mike Williams

**“The Lower Otter Restoration Project is managing the inevitable by transforming this area into saltmarsh and mudflats”,** said Mike Williams for the Environment Agency. **While we are excited to see the new species we are also taking great care to ensure the existing wildlife on the site is not harmed.**

# NATIONAL COASTWATCH INSTITUTION EXMOUTH

## EXMOUTH LOOKS FORWARD TO A PROGRESSIVE YEAR AHEAD



Drone view- Dave Littlefield

National Coastwatch Institution (NCI) Exmouth looks forward to a progressive year ahead.

2021 proved to be a busy year for NCI Exmouth with over 21,000 marine vessels logged passing their window and 46 incidents reported to Her Majesty's Coastguard (HMCG).

This year promises nothing less with new initiatives in the pipeline, national events to celebrate and the ongoing everyday work undertaken by the watchkeepers looking out for the safety of all water and beach users.

One of the exciting new developments this year will be the appointment of a Water Safety Officer. This person will be working closely with the other search and rescue organizations to better inform the public about safety around our coastlines and the particular dangers associated with Exmouth. Many visitors are often unaware of how dangerous certain sections of our beach can be, many fail to read the warning notices placed at critical points along the promenade and some don't understand the meaning of the flags placed by the lifeguards for their safety.

**“**Station manager Ivor Jones said **“We are keen to see the number of incidents we are involved with each year decrease. The way forward for this is to engage with the public and increase their awareness around water safety. We have a lot of exciting ideas as to how we will accomplish this and look forward to developing this role over the summer”**

Since the loss of HMCG stations NCI have become 'The eyes along the coast'. Their Exmouth station is equipped with high quality optics and more recently with CCTV that allows a view from Orcombe Point up the estuary to Topsham. It is hoped that this year will see the installation of a new camera which will give them 'eyes' even further along the coastline. This is a work in progress, so watch out for updates in the summer edition.

2022 will see two days of celebrations at the station. Firstly the Queen's Jubilee, followed by National Coastwatch day. Both of these occasions will see NCI Exmouth engaging with colleagues from other local organizations to put on events for visitors and locals alike to enjoy and participate in. These activities will be based around Coastwatch house, opposite Ocean on marine parade. Further details will be published nearer the time so look out for this information and join in the fun.

# EXETER HARBOUR

## A NEW OUTLOOK FOR EXETER CANAL BASIN



**The Friends of Exeter Ship Canal have announced a transformational vision that would see Exeter Canal Basin given new life as the city's active harbour front.**

It builds on recognition of Exeter as a Heritage Harbour in 2020. Reviving the waterway represents good value and renewed interest.

The Friends' plan, Exeter Harbour – A new outlook for Exeter Canal Basin, is a contribution to the long-term strategy for sustaining Exeter's waterways set out in their earlier report, Making the Canal Matter Again to Exeter. *"People and businesses, existing users and visitors would be able to discover the opportunities and attractions of a working harbour at the head of the canal,"* say the Friends.

As well as the interest of more boats of all kinds visiting, the Friends' all-round vision includes a prosperous and well promoted boatyard with vessels being restored and repaired, historic and traditional vessels welcomed, water taxi services and extended boat trips, and reviving the maritime use of the basin's buildings and quays.

The Friends, a volunteer group dedicated to the waterway's future, explained: *"It's what the waterway needs—interest centred on thriving new uses by boats that also mean plenty for people to see and do.*

*"Exeter has a fine maritime history but turned its back on it for years. Today it is recognised that new waterway and maritime activity is the best way to secure its heritage and the benefits this brings for everyone.*

*"Close to the city centre, the Harbour will be the terminus for a green waterway route for passengers, renewed commercial operations, and visitors and leisure users afloat and ashore. It is a destination and focal point for the city, port and estuary,"* the Friends believe.

They hope a feasibility plan involving all stakeholders will now take it forward.

Visit [www.friendsofexetershipcanal.co.uk](http://www.friendsofexetershipcanal.co.uk) or contact Mick Green, Secretary, [michael.green@endorsehr.co.uk](mailto:michael.green@endorsehr.co.uk).

Ray Alexander

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

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