

ECS Committee 11 December 2024

Chairman's Report. Keith Lewis.

In addition to supporting the Planning Group over the past two months, I attended the Teignbridge Local Plan Inspection on 5 November with Andy.

In respect of the proposed Exeter Energy Plant at Grace Road Fields, the city council has now published notices in the E&E for the disposal of the land with responses needed by 31 December. I have sent a letter to the E&E letters page which I hope will be published on 5 December alerting the public and should follow this up with X and Facebook posts. Having written to ECC's chief executive about planning guidance in the Water Lane SPD requiring a master plan for the field to be developed before development, I had a reply confirming that this will be required to be done by the developer in collaboration with ECC. This should delay any planning application and give time for the public to develop an opinion about the loss of the field. The revised layout for the energy is disappointing as it now occupies half of the length of the field leaving just half available for community use, and the design of the buildings has become more industrial than that previously consulted upon by 1st Energy. The consultation is here <https://exeter.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/consultations-and-petitions/public-open-space-disposal-land-at-grace-road-field/> . 1st Energy webpage is here <https://1energy.uk/networks/exeter-energy-network/> .

Following my communications with the city council's Interim Director of Environment, Waste & Operations at the city council and Cllr Ruth Williams, the portfolio holder for this service, regarding the level of weeds plaguing our pavements and highways we can now see some progress with St Andrews Rd to Buddle Lane looking better, as well as Blackboy Rd to Pinhoe. I will send a letter to the E&E expressing our disappointment about the past level and quality of street cleaning, but to praise them for recent improvements.

Having been copied into emails between Redcoat Jon Bell and Historic England regarding the condition of the city wall I now have access to the condition report produced by the City Council, but it runs to 100's of pages so I have not had time to read it.

I was not able to attend talks to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the publication of W G Hoskins book 'Devon' at the DEI, having been invited by the Devonshire Association's new president Simon Timms, but pleased that Andy did attend.

Andy and I have been approached by Peter Childs of Devon Historic Buildings Group about the lack of progress with rebuilding the Royal Clarence. To investigate whether pressure can be placed on ECC, Andy and I had a meeting on Friday 6th December with Peter, 3 members of his group, Todd Gray and St David councillors.

On Tuesday 3rd December ECC's Executive committee discussed a number of matters that we need to monitor: City Point Update To consider the report of the Strategic Director Place and Strategic Director Corporate Resources; The Exeter Plan: Publication To consider the report of the Strategic Director for Place.

Society Programme.

We still need committee members to help find speakers for the rest of the year.

We need to decide the date of the April meeting as the third Saturday is the 19th- Easter weekend. I propose 12 April because it is 4 weeks after the March meeting and 5 weeks before the May meeting.

14 December is the second Saturday of the month – Alan Caig on the ‘History of Theatre in Exeter’ and a visit from Steve Race, MP for Exeter, who will give a short talk. We will need to start the formal part of the meeting at 10.50 or earlier.

18 January 2025 Estelle Buckridge Volunteer Manager, Exeter Heritage Volunteers will talk to us about their work. I will be away so need a volunteer to oversee the meeting.

1 February 2025 we have accepted the offer of a stall at the Mint Methodist talks in support of the Exeter History Book Festival.

15 February speaker – to be agreed. I may be away so need a volunteer on standby to oversee the meeting.

7 March 2025. A talk to the Devon Archaeology Association about the work of the Society by Keith Lewis.

15 March speaker to be agreed.

April speaker to be agreed.

Planning Group Report. Keith Lewis

The planning group have met four times since the last committee meeting, including 10 December, and the minutes of the first three meetings have been circulated. The next two meetings will be in January and Gert has agreed to chair these.

There were not many significant applications, especially any that will affect the street scene, other than the following:

The Changing Rooms at Exwick appeared in the list of 19 September as a **variation** to the existing 2023 planning approval to change the approved changing and teaching block for a single storey teaching block. We objected to that because it is not possible to make such a significant change via a variation in case law. I think we struck a nerve here with both the planners and Exeter College because a revised proposal was advertised in the 14 November list for a single storey mixed changing room and teaching block. We did not consider we could object to this but questioned aspects of the design and community use.

From 3rd October list we discussed a proposed six storey block on New North Road between the Exeter College building on Queen St and the residential blocks on NN Road. We challenged aspect of the design but considered that as it is placed between two six storey blocks it is acceptable. Members of the Bury Meadow Residents Association contacted me challenging our assertion as they wish to preserve dubious views of the Cathedral and into Queen St.

We objected to a request from the Harlequins Centre developers to remove a condition to have affordable rooms in the co-living proposals and to pay a financial contribution for off-site provision.

We have been asked to comment on a pre-application for Clarendon House by ECC planners. The proposal now has a tower of 10 floors, one of six and one of nine. Planning group will consider this on 10 December. The developer is soon to have a public exhibition on 16 December in Paris Street.

Of the planning applications advertised on 21 November, whilst there are some sensitive proposals around the Cathedral, others are domestic or minor changes. The list of 28 November does not have any significant applications.