

# Community Builder Neighbourhood Profile

## Exwick 2021-22



### Introduction

Welcome to Exwick! This neighbourhood profile draws on the work of the Wellbeing Exeter Community Builder to bring you a community's eye view of the neighbourhood and what happens in it. You'll not find statistics here on demographics, health, education, etc. Please read this alongside the [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) tool from Devon County Council, which provides a wealth of quantitative data.

Our focus here is on local knowledge: what is it like to live here; what informal community activity is there; where are the important community focal points; what's missing, or of concern to local residents.

This is a snapshot rather than a directory, so may not have exhaustive listings (although we've done our best to avoid errors and omissions). It aims to highlight community strengths and areas for growth. It also aims to provide an informed commentary on the health of community life.

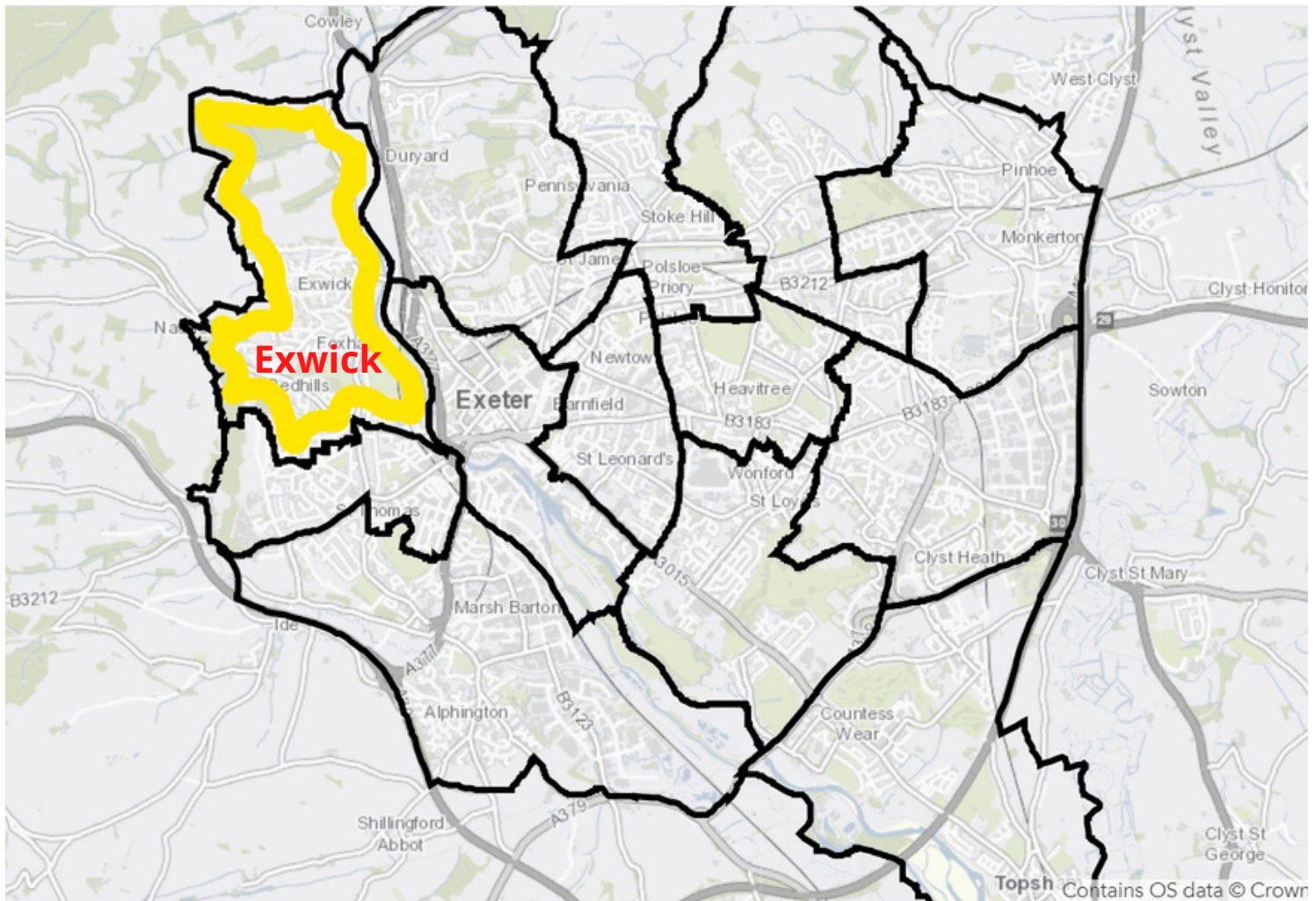


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### Picture Of A Place

Exwick is an area very much defined by its geography. It's quite a hilly area, perched on the edge of the city, and bordered on the other side by the river and the railway line. As a result, residents tend to focus on a series of local centres. The first is the area to the north of the ward, around Kinnerton Way, home to the Community Centre. Then there's the area that runs either side of Exwick Road (parts of the old village from St Andrew's Church to the Thatched House Pub) running parallel to the river. The middle section is located around the shops on Winchester Avenue (originally the drive to Cleve House) and then there's the Redhills area, bordering and interacting with western areas of St Thomas.



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There are two primary schools, Exwick Heights and Redhills, an Anglican church - St Andrew's, Exwick Community Church and New Hope Baptist Church. A Hindu temple meets for worship the first Saturday of each month. The area is also home to Exwick Ark Nursery and out-of-school club.

### Green Spaces

There are three sets of allotments: Guys & Hylton, which are adjacent to each other and cover an area of 14 acres. Rackfields, which is much smaller. There is also green space along the flood relief channel.

Exwick Playing Fields, managed by Exeter College.

Sports Hub, which hosts the First Steps Running Group, and a Couch to 5k.

Exwick Tennis Club is also based at the Sports Hub, and offers regular tennis-playing opportunities for adults and juniors, in partnership with Exeter College, along with professional training for students throughout the year.

Exwick Cricket Club is open to men and women, meets to train weekly at Exwick Playing Fields on Thursday evenings between May and August. They play competitive local matches both home and away. They have future plans to build some permanent outdoor cricket nets and are in preliminary discussions about building a Cricket Pavilion with community access, which would include meeting rooms.

Kinnerton Way MUGA, adjacent to the community centre. The area has a number of small play areas, at Gloucester Road, Burrator Drive, Station Road, Haccombe Close, Lavender Road, Addison Close and Hylton Gardens.

Cemetery Fields Play Area Project - plans are in development to improve this area. Residents are working with the Council to improve the space and reinstall some play equipment. The residents are in contact with Exeter Connect for support with formalising the group and fundraising for the project. The Council also discussed helping to manage and maintain the woodland area.



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Flowerpot Playing Fields, also managed by Exeter College, with changing facilities, etc. The Flowerpot Chill Zone is home to a skate park, and also has trampoline and basketball facilities.

Barley Valley Park and Whitycombe Valley Park are now managed by the Devon Wildlife Trust. The Trust is investing in Barley Valley Park (through which the Exeter Green Circle 12-mile circular route passes) to improve access.

### Community Hubs and What Happens In Them

Community hubs can be buildings, spaces, organisations, even people. They can be community-owned and run, council property, and commercial businesses. What they have in common is that they bring added value to the activities and energy associated with them by bringing people together in ways they might not otherwise do, being a focus for local expertise and connection, and facilitating the casual encounters that fuel fantastic community action.

Exwick has a community centre and a well-used Parish Hall. It is worth bearing in mind that, owing to the topography of the ward, not all residents feel these venues are accessible for them.

Exwick Community Centre - Inclusive Exeter have now taken over running the centre, and have applied for funding to update it. Renovation plans are underway; a new kitchen has been fitted and a new hall floor has been laid. New sheds were also installed in the outside space during the pandemic, originally to accommodate supplies for Inclusive Exeter's food project. These are available for users of the centre now the project has ended. Groups currently using the centre include Slimming World, Karate, Urban Flow Street Dance and Soccer Tots. Exwick Tots (a baby and toddler group run by mums) is about to reopen with a new leader. New Hope Baptist Church also use it as their place of worship, holding regular weekly services and Bible study sessions.



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Exwick Parish Hall is run by an independent committee. Exwick Community Church, which is a Baptist church, meets here for Sunday worship, and runs events such as Messy Church, Friday Friendship (a drop-in social group aimed at people of all ages, including parents and carers with young children). Other regular groups include keep fit, Fit Steps, pilates, ballroom and latin dancing classes, bingo, even dog training. A Christmas market was also held here one year. The event brought together local businesses and was well attended. A series of yoga sessions have been running here, initially in the garden and then moved inside as regulations allowed. These were started to address a need for low-cost, gentle exercise in Exwick and were developed through a collaboration between local residents, the Community Physical Activity Organiser, Community Builder and Live & Move, who helped fund the project. The Parish Hall and Exwick Community Church are working in partnership to redesign and raise funds to rebuild the Parish Hall. Ideas for the new building include a community café and two rentable hall spaces.

The Jubilee Garden at the Parish Hall is being developed by staff from the local YMCA accommodation (who are also very active in the wider community), supported by YMCA residents. They have added a fire pit, raised beds, a seating area and a new shed. During the pandemic, a Covid-safe crazy golf event was held in the garden by the YMCA and Exwick Community Church. A local landscape gardener is keen to set up a gardening group based here.

Exwick Community Association - this group re-formed over 4 years ago, with the aim of providing an 'official' umbrella with insurance and a bank account that local activities could sit under. It has now formally reconstituted, and organised some events (including a summer fair with St Andrew's Church and Exwick Community Church), but has recently lost its treasurer. Future plans include a planting project around Exwick Community Centre.

Thatched House Pub hosts informal resident meet-ups, such as a small group who meet regularly to play scrabble, and another who are keen on canasta. A walking group also uses this as its base, and an informal drop-in depression and anxiety group also meets here.



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Café on the Heale - this new café has opened up in the place of the Exwick Pantry. They have created a larger space for tables and chairs, providing an additional space for residents to meet, which is much needed. The new owner seems keen to develop it and is open to ideas.

St Andrew's Church - Andy's Café is a community café attached to St Andrews Church, currently open to the public only directly after a service on Wednesday morning. The café space is used for a weekly AA meeting and community events and meetings, and is available for occasional community use via prior arrangement. The church itself has hosted bric-a-brac sales and BBQs.

### What Else Is Happening?

The Flow Project, with help from local residents, planted trees and fruit bushes along the River Exe in this part of the city. This has created a ribbon orchard for foraging and helps support wildlife. The Flow Project runs two Wassail events every January, one in Exwick and one in St Thomas. This ancient tradition is a fun event for all ages and brings the community together with storytelling, music, singing and refreshments.

Guides and Brownies run sessions at Exwick Heights School on a Thursday.

The local PCSO has organised two Community Action Days recently on Farm Hill (northern Exwick). This included a litter pick and rubbish clearance, as well as kids' activities, live music and a BBQ.

Exwick Two's Company is a befriending services for adults experiencing social isolation, part of the national Linking Lives initiative.

The Exwick Sunflower Competition was set up by some local residents to help strengthen and bring the community together through growing sunflowers. They organise two annual events; the first is the launch of the Sunflower Competition in April, held in the Parish Hall. Free sunflower seeds are available, along with children's activities, and singing from two local choirs, as well as cream teas.



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The second event is the End of Summer Party, where the competition winners are announced. This is a barn dance in the Parish Hall, where people bring food to share. Although the pandemic has put these activities on hold, a Sunflower Trail took place instead, where people who had sunflowers in their front gardens could put themselves forward to be part of the trail. A map was created and shared on Facebook. If people didn't have sunflowers in their gardens there was another way they could be involved, by painting or drawing a sunflower picture to put up in their window.

Exwick Easter Window Trail and Exwick Christmas Window Trail - residents were invited to decorate their windows and maps were produced and shared on Facebook, so people could take a walk around the trail. These were co-ordinated by local residents.

Walks with a Camera - a local resident is doing some informal photography meet-ups. A piece was included Exwick News and now other people have come forward to join her. There is a regular page in Exwick News, where some of the photos they have taken can be displayed.

Exwick Walks - an informal group of residents meet twice a week for a short stroll along the flood relief. They meet at the bench near Exwick Centre on a Tuesday and Saturday at 10.45am.

Sound Walks - a local musician created a collection of short local walks focusing on some of the sounds that can be found in the suburban neighbourhood. The walks explore the sounds of different places, and the changes that the seasons bring. Illustrated maps of the walks were created and available for people to download as a pdf.

Little Libraries - a local resident is leading on a project to bring the first little libraries to Exwick. Four residents have agreed to host the little libraries in their gardens. Wood for Good secured some funding to build the first one. Some local residents have been involved with this and it will be installed shortly on Burrator Drive.



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Natter Club - a local resident recently established this popular social group, where people who were lonely or isolated could come together and have a friendly chat and an uplifting time. The group has 28 members, with around 15 people attending each week. The group currently meets at Trefoil Lodge.

### **Spreading The Word: How Do People Connect?**

Exwick News is a free community magazine, set up by a local resident with support from the Community Builder in January 2018. Councillor Rob Hannaford agreed to fund the first three editions with a grant from Devon County Council, and the first edition was distributed in April 2018. It is distributed free to households throughout the area by volunteers and can also be picked up at shops, the two health centres and other local community hubs. It carries articles on local issues and features on local organisations as well as advertising and listings. The publication is now self-sustaining through advertising revenue, and has helped hugely with social cohesion and a sense of community in Exwick, which people very much value.

Facebook Groups - the simply-named 'Exwick' is the largest, with 4000 followers at time of writing, who share information about activities and events, ask for recommendations, and discuss local issues. Other Facebook groups include Exwick CB, Exwick News, Exwick Community Association, Exwick Parish Hall, Exwick: To Buy, Sell or Give Away, Exwick Parking Issues, Exwick: Help Out Others. Exwick Arts aims to bring local artists and crafts people together. Be Inspired Exwick Community Group was created by a local resident who wanted a space to share inspirational ideas, recipes, arts and crafts with the aim to inspire and help people's wellbeing. The resident who has set this up is a yoga teacher and also wanted to offer free yoga sessions through the page via zoom.

Noticeboards - there are noticeboards at Exwick Parish Hall, Tesco on Kinnerton Way, outside the Funeral Directors on Exwick Road, in the entrance to St Andrew's Church and in Andy's Café (next to St Andrew's Church). Foxhayes Surgery and Exwick Health Centre also have noticeboards.





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Local schools - both schools are really supportive in helping to share information about events or activities by putting up posters. Exwick Heights shares information about events with parents electronically and although Redhills School doesn't currently have this system, it has sent flyers provided by the Community Builder home with children. The Thatched House Pub and the Fish & Chip Shop on Exwick Road are happy to display posters. Café on the Heale is also happy to display posters for local events in their window, and holds copies of the Exwick News.

### **Where Are The Gaps and Concerns? What Potential For The Future?**

Residents are deeply concerned about the lack of youth provision in Exwick, particularly for teens. This is being discussed by key organisations and residents. There's an expressed need also for further opportunities for exercise classes such as Tai Chi and Yoga locally, as well as outdoor sessions.

Parking is a particular issue for those living around Exwick Heights School and on the bend in Gloucester Road, where parents and carers dropping and collecting children from school park their cars on the pavement and block residents' driveways. Local people are also concerned with the number of speeding vehicles, particularly along Exwick Road and Kinnerton Way, and the number of commuters who work in the city or travel from Exeter St Davids and park in the area, putting pressure on spaces for residents.

There have been concerns about the amount of drug-use and dealing in the area. Needles have been found in local parks and near bus stops. Residents have commented on a particular area by the river at Flowerpots under the railway bridge, where people congregate.

There are concerns about recent planning permission granted for development in the Redhills area. Some residents feel this potentially paves the way for Teignbridge District Council to press ahead with substantial development on greenfields sites beyond the city limits, which would have a significant impact on the Exwick area.

