

# Community Builder Neighbourhood Profile

## Exwick 2023-24



### 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.

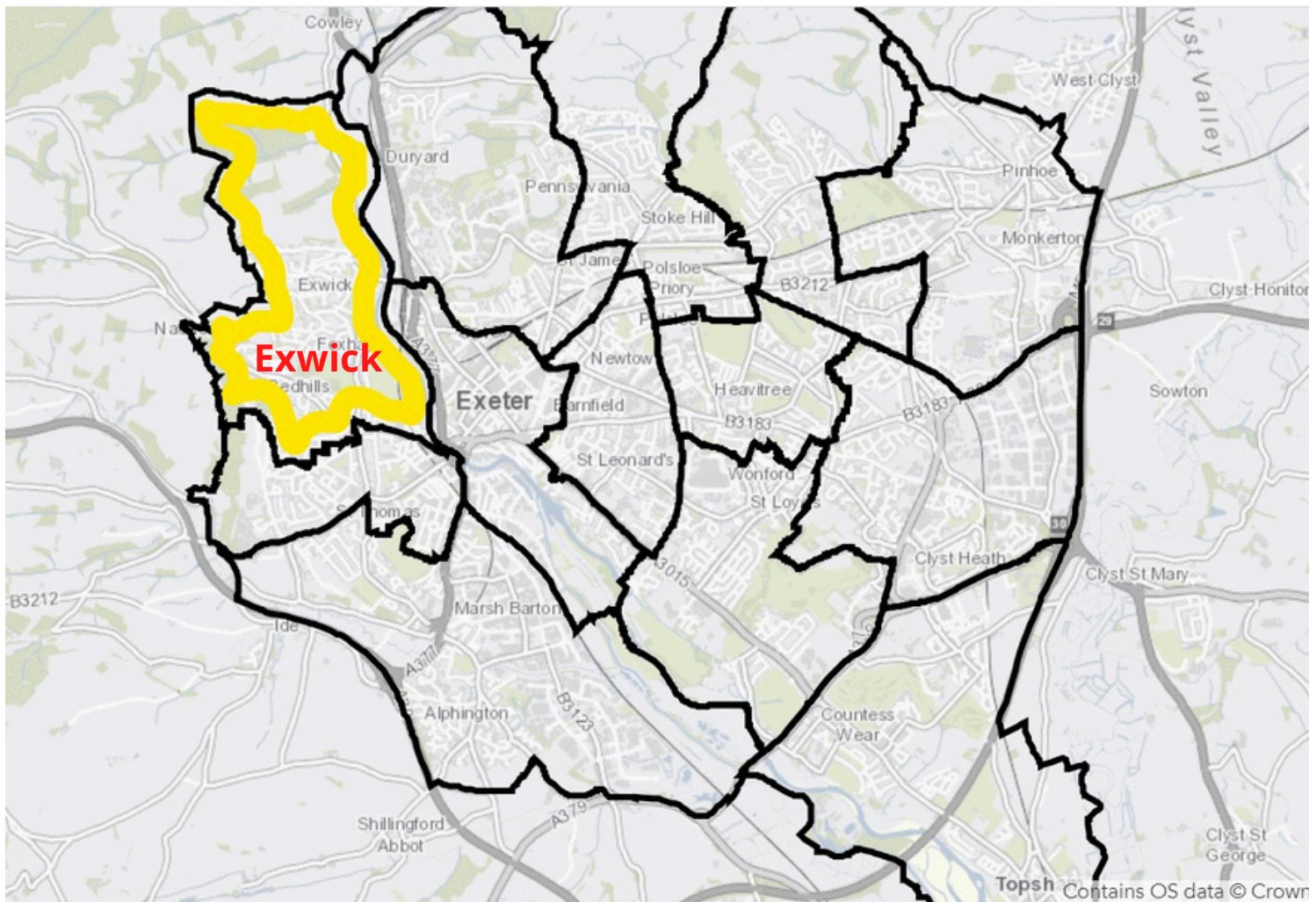


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### Picture Of A Place

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 St Gabriels (formerly 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 and Flowerpots Playing Field are both managed by Exeter College. Work will soon begin on the creation of new sports facilities to benefit the college and the wider Exeter community. The facilities include a new all-weather rugby pitch to replace an existing pitch at the Flowerpot Playing Fields, and a new sports pavilion to replace the old changing rooms near the cricket pitch. The new facilities will be available to local teams in the same way as the college's existing facilities. They will be available in the evenings and at weekends when not being used by the College. The Flowerpot Chill Zone is home to a skate park, and also has trampoline and basketball facilities.

**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 and trains on Thursday evenings at Exwick Playing Fields between May and August. They play competitive local matches both home and away. They also run the All Stars Cricket Programme for 5-8 years from May to July. 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.



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Kinnerton Way MUGA is 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 have been discussed to improve this area. Residents are working with the Council to improve the space and reinstall some play equipment. There have also been discussions about the management of the woodland area.

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** has now been taken over by Exwick Community Association, who were successful in securing funding from Exeter Community Energy to update the insulation in the building. Previously the centre had a new kitchen fitted and new hall flooring was laid when the building was managed by Inclusive Exeter.



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New sheds were also installed in the outside space during the pandemic, originally to accommodate supplies for their food project. These are available for users of the centre to store equipment now the project has ended. Groups currently using the centre include Slimming World, Karate, Urban Flow Street Dance, Soccer Tots and Exwick Tots (a baby and toddler group run by mums). New Hope Baptist Church also use it as their place of worship, holding regular weekly services and Bible study sessions.

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 Fit Steps, pilates, tango, Scottish country dancing, bingo and a folk orchestra. A Christmas mFair has become a regular fixture at the hall. 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 YMCA and 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.

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**Exwick Community Association (ECA)** is a small charity run by a group of local residents, with the aim of improving the area and creating opportunities for local people to come together. The charity was set up over 20 years ago, but restarted and formally constituted over 6 years ago, with the support of the Community Builder. The ECA put on events and activities, as well as offering support to existing groups and individuals who have ideas for projects in the area. Some of their activities include the Exwick Summer Fair, Christmas Fetes, litter picks, Bio Blitz Day and the Exwick Community Art Group. The ECA has also taken on the running of Exwick Community Centre.

The **Thatched House Pub** is a community pub and hosts a regular quiz night. There is also space for informal resident meet-ups and meetings with prior arrangement. This space has previously been used by the local panto group, a local book group and regular scrabble and canasta sessions take place there. The pub hosts regular themed nights, Halloween, Christmas and New Year events as well as hosting the annual MacMillan Charity Coffee Morning.

St Andrew's Church is now linked with St Matthew's Church in Heavitree. There is also a community space attached to the church known as Andy's Café, although it is not open as a cafe any more and is used for a coffee morning after the Wednesday morning service. The room is also used for a weekly AA meeting and a community craft group, along with providing another community space for occasional use with prior arrangement.



The church has hosted other activities such as bric-a-brac sales and BBQs and most recently a Family Christmas Film Cinema Screening. There is also a new parent and baby group that has started on Monday mornings.

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### What Else Is Happening?

The Flow Project, with help from local residents, planted trees and fruit bushes along the River Exe in Exwick. 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 bi-annually. 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 over the last few years 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 service for adults experiencing social isolation, part of the national Linking Lives initiative.

Exwick Summer Fete is organised by the ECA in collaboration with the local churches, community groups such as Exwick History Society and the community art group. This is a well attended community event with food, music, stalls and free kids activities. In addition, there have been art exhibitions and a local history display.

Exwick Youth Club has two sessions on a Thursday evening for young people aged 8-18 years and is run by the Exwick Youth Council. The Youth Council restarted again in 2022 with the support of the Community Builder, CPAO and the Exwick Community Association. It was supported by some initial funding from Live & Move and then some additional grant funding from Exeter City Council, Devon County Council and **The National Lottery Awards For All** and The Exwick Old School Trust.

Art For All, Exwick's community art group, is run by a local artist and is a project of the Exwick Community Association. It was supported in its development by the Community Builder. The group is thriving and provides opportunities to explore different art mediums in a warm welcoming space. They have two art exhibitions alongside the Exwick Summer Fete.



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Exwick History Society is an active and enthusiastic local history club who organise events and activities throughout the year. Some activities include guided history walks in Exwick Cemetary and Springtime Tree Walk. The Community Builder has supported the group to link in with the other activities and groups happening in the area. They recently collaborated with the local Community Gardening Group to organise a history walk and litter pick on Hamlyn's Lane. They also support the local summer fete by running activities and put together a local history display at Exwick Parish Hall. The history group meet monthly on the first Friday of each month at Exwick Parish Hall.

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.

Exwick Walks is an informal group of residents who 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 with support from the Community Builder and Wood For Good, who secured some funding to build the first one along with some local volunteers. A local artists, who runs the art group, painted the outside of the library with a colourful sunflowers design. The library is situated on Burrator Drive and is used regularly by families passing by on their way to school. it is valued hugely by local people.



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Exwick Community Food Larders – a food larder on Gloucester Road was set up to combat food waste by a local resident in her garden, with support from the Community Builder. It was built by one of her neighbours, with a generous donation of wood from Wickes DIY Store. The larder is well used by residents. Another food larder, The Exwick Pantry, is shortly to be installed on Burrator Drive.

Exwick Community Garden – residents in Farm Hill have adopted some patches of unused land to create a community garden, with support from the Community Builder. They have organised regular sessions with a wide variety of activities, including building bug hotels, wildflower planting and a number of litter picks in the area. They have installed an old bath as a planter and filled it with herb plants which are flourishing. The latest addition to the site includes an apple tree and water butt.

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

The new Exwick Newsletter is a free community publication that was produced in collaboration with the local history group and editor of the well-loved Exwick News publication.

Exwick News was produced by a local resident with support from the Community Builder in January 2018. It was initially funded with a grant from Devon County Council, and later with grants from Exeter City Council. The first edition was distributed in April 2018 and ran for 5 years. It was distributed free to households throughout the area by volunteers and could also be picked up at shops, the two health centres and other local community hubs. It carried articles on local issues and features on local organisations as well as advertising and listings. The publication was self-sustaining through advertising revenue and helped hugely with social cohesion and a sense of community in Exwick, which people very much valued.

A new magazine is being planned, West of the River, which will cover the west side of Exeter, and there will also be a website with listings of all the activities and groups in the area.

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The [Exwick Facebook group](#) is the largest, with 6.7k members at the time of writing, who share information about activities and events, ask for recommendations, and discuss local issues. Other Facebook groups include Exwick CB, Exwick Tots, Exwick Community Association, Exwick Parish Hall, Exwick: To Buy, Sell or Give Away, Exwick Parking Issues, Exwick: Help Out Others. [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.

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

Both local schools are really supportive in helping to share information about events or activities by putting up posters, posting on Facebook pages and directly sharing information about events with parents.

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

Residents still feel that there is a lack of youth provision in Exwick, particularly for teens. There are ongoing discussions by key organisations and residents, with the support of the Community Builder. Residents have also expressed a need for further opportunities for gentle exercise classes such as seated exercise, Tai Chi and evening 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.

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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 grave concerns about the recent planning application for a substantial housing development at Atwells Farm, on greenfield sites beyond the city limits, within Teignbridge District Council's jurisdiction, which would have a significant impact on the Exwick area.