

Axminster Town Council

Town Mayor: Cllr Jill Farrow Town Clerk: Paul Hayward



Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held Monday 3rd March 2025

Minutes were approved at Annual Parish Meeting held on 2nd March 2026

Present:

Chair of the Council – Cllr. Jill Farrow

Town Clerk – Paul Hayward

Representatives of The Axminster Chamber of Commerce

Representative of The Royal British Legion (Axminster branch)

EDDC Cllrs. Sarah Jackson and Paul Hayward

42 members of the public in attendance

1. Opening of the meeting; introduction and welcome

Introduction by the Mayor of Axminster, Cllr Jill Farrow who warmly welcomed all those present to the Annual Parish Meeting and highlighted the fire safety procedure and fire exits.

2. Apologies:

Apologies received from Town Cllrs. Burrough, Hurren, Keen, Leat & Thew, and also from County Councillor Ian Hall and District Councillor Simon Smith

3. Minutes of the last meeting:

Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 4th March 2024 were considered and noted. Cllr. Farrow proposed the adoption of the minutes from the chair. These were resolved by the majority of those present by way of a show of hands. Cllr. Farrow signed the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

4. No matters arising from those previous minutes.

5. To receive a presentation from representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, and local retailers, on the topic of Axminster's economy and the importance of the high street.

Summary of representations from those present following the presentation:

Concerns over decreasing footfall and loss of banking services which attracted shoppers to town centre.

Challenges of external factors (NI, rates, cost-of-living pressures) which are harder to deal with locally.

Positivity over localised chamber projects and campaigns.

Agreement on need to market the town as much as possible, encourage diversity and independent trading.

Chair thanked both speakers for attending and speaking with such enthusiasm and hopefulness.

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6. To receive a presentation from representatives of the Royal British Legion, and the Axminster Heritage Centre, on the forthcoming celebrations for the 80th anniversary of VE Day (in May) and VJ Day (in August).

The speaker from the RBL reported on the past year's activity from both the main branch, and the Women's branch, and outlined the calendar of events planned for the coming months. The RBL works cooperatively with a number of organisations across the town for the common good of Axminster and to promote the aims and objectives of the Legion. The speaker from the Heritage Centre spoke at length about the positive inter-connect between the two organisations and how the AHC tries to bring together groups across the parish to share in the common heritage that binds every resident together. There were a large number of exhibitions and events planned for the celebration period and all were welcome to attend.

7. The Town Mayor's 2024/2025 report.

Cllr. Farrow read out a report which has been published on the town noticeboard and on the website and via social media for public review and reference and which is also appended to these minutes.

8. Town Council's Budget and Precept report for financial year 2025/2026.

RFO read out the budget and precept report which has been also published on the town noticeboard and on the website and via social media for public review and reference. This report set out the Council's financial proposals and plans, and details of the Town Council precept, for the next financial year.

9. Parish Footpath / P3 report.

No report available from Parish Footpath Warden. Clerk outlined the ongoing works undertaken by the Town Council on behalf of Devon County Council under the Parish Path Partnership scheme (P3).

10. East Devon District Councillor's annual report.

This was presented verbally by Cllrs. Sarah Jackson and Cllr. Paul Hayward (also present in his role as Clerk to the Town Council).

11. Devon County Councillor's annual report.

No annual report provided by Cllr. Hall. Noted.

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12. Open Public Forum

No representations from members of the public present.

13. To consider any demands to hold a parish poll as requested by those present in accordance with paragraph 18 (Schedule 12) of the Local Government Act 1972.

No requests or petitions were made for a Parish Poll by those present.
Cllr. Farrow closed this section of the meeting.

14. A closing statement by Town Mayor, Cllr. Jill Farrow.

Cllr. Jill Farrow brought the meeting to a close by thanking those members of the public who regularly attended the town Council meetings, the members of Council who gave up their time to represent Axminster and the staff of the Council for their efforts, all year round. The Mayor stressed that the Council operated in an open and transparent manner, that all meetings were open to the public, that the Council engaged where it could with residents via print, online means and face-to-face, be that at regular Cllr surgeries, community events or simply by Councillors being visible in their community.

15. With no other business to attend to, the chair brought the meeting to a close at 8.15pm.

