

Axminster Town Council

Office Hours
Monday, Wednesday, Thursday
10am – 12 noon

Mayor: Cllr Jill Farrow
Town Clerk: Paul Hayward

www.axminstertowncouncil.gov.uk



THE GUILDHALL
WEST STREET
AXMINSTER
DEVON
EX13 5NX

Tel. 01297 32088

Email: Clerk@axminstertowncouncil.gov.uk

**Minutes of the meeting of the Operations Committee held on Tuesday,
7th June 2022 at 7.00 p.m. at Axminster Guildhall**
Draft minutes – yet to be approved: Part ONE version

Meeting began at 7.00pm.

Chair, Cllr. Walden, welcomed all in attendance and outlined fire precautions, exits etc.

Public Forum:

No public representations received as no members of the public present.

Chair closed public forum session at 7.05pm.

OC22/145

To note members of the committee present.

Cllrs. Walden (JW) (Chair), Brooker (A) (ABr.) (Vice-Chair), Burrough (KB), Farrow (JF), Holt (SH), Paice (EP) and Sedgewick (AS).

Also present, Clerk to the Council, Paul Hayward.

OC22/146

To note and, if thought fit, to approve apologies (and reasons for absence).

(LGA 1972 S.85 (1))

None received (although a late apology was noted from Cllr. Spurway but not approved by members of the committee).

OC22/147

To note members of the committee not otherwise in attendance.

Cllrs. Mynard (MM) and Spurway (MS) – see above, OC22/146.

OC22/148

To receive any declarations of interest from members of the committee in relation to items of business on this agenda and to note any dispensations previously afforded. This does not preclude the need for members to declare any additional interests that may arise during the meeting.

KB, JF and AS declared an “Affects - Other Registrable Interest” in respect of their roles as Trustees of the Guildhall Management Committee.

KB also declared a “Directly Relates Pecuniary Interest” in agenda item OC22/160v) and stated that she intended to leave the room during the consideration and vote on that matter. Noted.

OC22/149

To consider and, if thought fit, approve the minutes of the Operations Committee meeting held 7th June 2022 and to consider any matters arising (not included within this agenda as business to be attended to.)

After noting a typographical error to be corrected, **Chair proposed approval of these substantive, corrected minutes. Seconded by EP. Resolved unanimously.**

Signing of the approved minutes was deferred until a corrected final copy could be produced by the Clerk.

Continued overleaf.

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OC22/150

To consider any matters arising (not included within this agenda as business to be attended to) from the meeting of the 7th June 2022 and to receive progress report from Clerk:

Clerk confirmed that all matters from that meeting of the 7th June 2022 were either complete, in progress or subject to further discussion below on this meeting agenda. Noted.

OC22/151

To consider any matters listed on this agenda that Councillors consider should be dealt with as confidential business as per the provisions of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

None raised by members, other than noting the inclusion of agenda item OC22/166 within Part Two business as per agenda published.

Operations Committee business to be considered:

OC22/152

To consider matters pertaining to the Guildhall building (and curtilage):

i) Replacement of twin noticeboards at Guildhall frontage with 3-bay version in an MMT material and a re-siting to maximise parking space provision; to potentially be integrated within replacement planter design (already approved and resolved upon).

It was proposed by Chair, seconded by JF, that the Council purchase two new 3 bay (9 x A4 per bay) recycled Plastic Noticeboards for the Guildhall frontage, one for the use of the Town Council and the other for the use of the Guildhall. Agreement also proposed that the installation of these noticeboards to be integrated to within the renewed planters (also to be made from recycled plastic, as per previous resolution of the Council). Clerk to provide a full costing of the project to the FULL meeting of the Council in September for final approval. Resolved unanimously.

Clerk: Please note and action accordingly.

ii) To consider costs of water cooler within Guildhall building for staff and visitors.

It was proposed by Chair, seconded by JF, that Council should provide this amenity "in principle" for both staff and users of the Guildhall (cost split to be reviewed and agreed between landlord and tenant) but that Committee would wish to consider the installation of a mains-water-fed unit rather than one which used plastic bottles, in accordance with Council's published aims to reduce plastic usage. Delivery and ordering of the unit to be delegated to the Clerk and the Chair of Operations Committee accordingly. Resolved unanimously.

Clerk: please action accordingly. Clerk was also asked to ensure that cold water was available for Town Council's ground-staff in anticipation of the excessive temperatures forecast in July and August. Noted.

OC22/153

To consider matters pertaining to the Old Courthouse (OCH) Complex:

None to be considered at this time other than to note the ongoing negotiations for the re-opening of the Arts Café and the ongoing legal work to provide tenancy documents to all tenants at the OCH. Noted.

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OC22/154

Update on Section 106 projects ongoing:

i) Millwey Rise Playground extension project (update)

Clerk provided a verbal update to members on the progress with this project and his negotiations with EDDC on the proposed transfer of the land at Millwey to facilitate the creation of an additional infant (and accessibility compliant) play area adjacent to the existing play facility. Noted.

ii) Jubilee Field climbing wall installation project (update)

Clerk provided a verbal update and confirmed that he and the Council Administrator would be meeting with the play provider w/c 11/7/2022 to run through the build timetable and associated arrangements. Clerk also confirmed that the signed S106 Funding Agreement had been returned to EDDC as requested and receipt acknowledged.

iii) Axminster Skatepark OS / CCTV / Lighting project (update)

Clerk provided a verbal update to members but advised that this matter was also to be discussed in Part Two business at the FULL Council meeting on 11/7/2022. Noted

OC22/155

To consider matters pertaining Town Centre development and regeneration:

i) Gateway Signage – options and scoping proposals

ii) Town Centre signage project (update and WP progress report).

It was proposed by Chair, seconded by AS, that – prior to the meeting of the working party – Clerk be directed to liaise with the EDDC and DCC highways team(s) to seek their consent for the removal of the existing fingerpost signs, to be replaced with modern, clearer and easier-to-maintain versions. Additionally, Clerk to liaise with Council Administrator to produce drafts of possible gateway signage for the WP and OPSCOMM to consider when they next meet.

Resolved unanimously.

Clerk: please action accordingly.

It was suggested that the (4th) Gateway sign on Chard Road (currently missing) be replaced with a new Gateway sign further north adjacent to the Lodge Lane lay-by. Clerk confirmed that he would discuss this matter with the DCC Highways officer to seek their agreement/consent. Noted.

OC22/156

To consider matters pertaining to the Jubilee Field Open Space amenity:

i) To consider update from Clerk on proposals to create a dedicated water supply into Recreation Field for amenity and maintenance.

Clerk confirmed that he and the Council Administrator would be meeting with SWW's installation contractor on 18/7/2022 to determine where a supply could be brought into the field and what the potential costs would be. This information would then be brought back to Committee to consider and agree a course of action. Noted.

ii) To consider suggestion that “desire path” access into field from Swain Close be adapted with steps to create a safer access point for users and those with dogs & children.

It was proposed by Chair, seconded by SH, that the installation of steps NOT be taken forward as there was a perfectly adequate hard-standing pathway from the entrance down into the field currently. Furthermore, the proposer also put forward the suggestion that the grass between the two “wild” areas not be mown in the future so as to deter users from using the slope which was recognised as becoming slippery under certain weather conditions. Resolved unanimously.

Clerk: please action accordingly. Another Jubilee Field matter was deferred into OC22/163.

Continued overleaf.

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OC22/157

To consider matters pertaining to the Town Cemetery:

i) To consider request for the donation of a memorial bench in the cemetery; to consider design, colour, material etc and to agree whether a memorial bench policy is required / appropriate.

It was proposed by Chair, seconded by Vice-Chair, that:

1) The donation of the bench be accepted and that delegated authority be afforded to the Clerk to make the necessary arrangements re: purchase, payment, siting and installation.

2) Furthermore, that the Committee did NOT feel that a specific Memorial Bench Policy was required.

Resolved unanimously. Clerk: please note and action accordingly.

OC22/158

To consider matters pertaining to Town Allotments:

i) To consider delegating authority to the Clerk (and Council Administrator) to arrange waste skips at the Allotment site(s) as and when required to maintain site safety and provide tenant amenity.

Noting that the Council budgeted annually for costs relating to this specific expenditure, it was proposed by Chair, seconded by Vice-Chair, that the Clerk be afforded delegated authority to make arrangements to supply waste skips to the allotments sites as and when required, with precautions taken (as necessary) to prevent abuse of the amenity and/or fly-tipping.

Resolved unanimously. Clerk: Please note and action accordingly in conjunction with the Council Administrator, the grounds-staff and the Allotment Holders Association secretary. Noted.

OC22/159

To consider matters pertaining to Health and Safety Working Party (group):

i) To receive update from Clerk on recent meeting with H&S retained consultant.

Clerk provided a verbal update on this matter and confirmed that he and the Council Administrator were due to meet with the retained H&S consultant shortly to assess current situation with regard to this matter and to start bringing together procedures, protocols and policies to ensure compliance. Noted.

OC22/160

To consider proposals for new/improved/replacement amenities in the parish:

i) To receive update on additional bench amenity outside the retail shop on Millwey Rise.

Clerk confirmed that EDDC had provided their consent for a bench installation at the designated location, paid for and maintained by the Town Council. It was proposed by Chair, seconded by EP, that Council proceed as a matter of urgency, arrangements to be delegated to the Clerk to execute. Resolved unanimously. Clerk: Please action accordingly.

A concern was raised regarding the potential for anti-social behaviour once installed and it was agreed that the situation would be monitored and, if necessary, the bench removed and re-sited.

Continued overleaf.

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OC22/160

To consider proposals for new/improved/replacement amenities in the parish (continued):

ii) To consider additional proposal to re-purpose former Bus Stop plinth / alcove on Chard Road (adj. to First Avenue) as an amenity site for public bench.

Clerk confirmed that EDDC had provided their consent for a bench installation at the designated location, paid for and maintained by the Town Council. It was proposed by Chair, seconded by EP, that Council proceed as a matter of urgency, arrangements to be delegated to the Clerk to execute and that some design options be prepared for the overall improvement of the plinth/alcove (subject to further EDDC approval/consent). Resolved unanimously.

Clerk: Please action accordingly.

iii) To consider request that the WI bench on Minster Green be replaced with an MMT version and that the commemorative brass plaque be reinstalled in recognition of the former benefactor; that the old bench be taken to Town Cemetery for re-use if feasible.

It was proposed by Chair, seconded by KB, that Council proceed as a matter of urgency, arrangements to be delegated to the Clerk to execute, subject to the approval/consent of the PCC. Resolved unanimously. Clerk: Please action accordingly.

iv) To consider proposal that the Town Council noticeboard outside Raymonds Hill Post Office be replaced as the current unit is starting to become unsafe.

It was proposed by Chair, seconded by KB, that Council proceed with expenditure of up to £1000 for a new 15 x A4 noticeboard and support legs as a matter of urgency, arrangements to be delegated to the Clerk to execute, subject to the approval/consent of the landowner (the proprietor of the Post Office and store). Resolved unanimously

Clerk: Please action accordingly.

v) To consider the previous resolution of the Council to provide a waste amenity at the Bow Bridge layby in order to minimise dog fouling waste (which is deemed to be a hazard for livestock in the adjacent field used by footpath users) and to consider/agree any further amenity at that location.

KB left the room at this point in light of her earlier declaration of interest as a tenant on the land in question.

Chair reiterated the fact that the Town Council had approved this proposal some years ago but regretted that it had never been installed. Subsequently, it was proposed by JF, seconded by the Chair, that the Council proceed with the provision of the amenity, using one of the dual-purpose bins provided to the Council under the Welcome Bank Funding scheme; therefore, the only expenditure would be for the costs of the installation and subsequent emptying of the contents on a cycle to be agreed upon, dependent on usage. It was also suggested that another Council dog waste sign be installed at this point to encourage dog owners to be responsible for their dog's waste. Resolved unanimously.

Clerk: Please action accordingly.

KB re-joined the meeting at this point.

Continued overleaf.

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OC22/161

To consider matters pertaining to Risk Management Assessments (standing Committee agenda item):

Nothing to consider in respect of this matter. No further action required. Chair moved to the next agenda item.

OC22/162

To consider matters pertaining to Council's assets, plant and equipment:

i) To consider options for the safe transport of larger plant and equipment to amenity sites across the town.

After discussion, Clerk was asked to obtain quotes for suitable trailers to resolve the issue. This matter to be considered by the Committee when it next meets in September.

ii) One item of business is to be considered in Part Two due to confidential elements of the subject matter. Noted (see below – OC22/166)

OC22/163

Chair's Announcements / Matters of Urgency to be noted:

A matter deferred from OC22/156 was discussed. It was noted that a member of the public had reported that the EDDC Jubilee Oak tree on Jubilee Field appears to have died. Clerk was asked to relay this information to EDDC and ask whether a replacement could be planted later in the year (within peak tree planting season). Noted.

A further matter was raised regards a complaint that had been received in relation to recent works at Jubilee Field. Clerk confirmed that he was meeting with the author of the complaint shortly and a further report would be brought back to Council for their review.

Finally, Clerk raised an issue regarding the (previously resolved) disposal of the balcony "cinema" seating at the Guildhall. Clerk was asked to make further enquiries of interested parties and return back to the Committee with the outcome of those discussions. Noted.

OC22/164

Date of next scheduled meeting for the committee; 6th September 2022 *

* There being no meeting of this committee scheduled for August 2022.

OC22/165

If appropriate, Vice-Chair of Committee to propose that, under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, (as amended by the Local Government Act 1972, the public, (including the press) be excluded from the meeting as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. Resolved unan.

Continued overleaf.

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Matters to be considered in committee session (Part Two):

To be agreed upon by members of the committee as and when appropriate (see OC22/151)

OC22/166

To consider matters pertaining to Council's assets, plant and equipment (Part Two).

i) To consider costs for replacement of IT equipment, and additional expenditure to provide suitable facilities to employees to enable them to execute their work in accordance with Council's direction and resolutions. This matter is considered confidential as the matter under consideration also relates to an employee health and welfare issue.

It was proposed by JF, seconded by Vice-Chair, that committee authorise the expenditure of up to £2000 on the equipment and software required to replace IT items that had become unusable, and to provide further items that would assist staff members in the execution of their employed duties; delegated authority afforded to the Clerk to procure said items within the budget resolved upon. Resolved unanimously.

Clerk: Please note and action accordingly. Please identify these purchases within the schedule of payments for Councillor's review and approval at the next FULL Town Council meeting.

With no further business to attend to, the Chair closed the meeting at 20.20hrs.

Signed Date. 6th September 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the Operations Committee held on Tuesday,
5th July 2022 at 7.00 p.m. at Axminster Guildhall
Draft minutes – yet to be approved: Part ONE version.