

AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

To: Cllrs. Farrow (JF) (Chair), Price (JP) (Vice-Chair), Ashkettle (JA), Bridge (PB), Dowdeswell (MD), Dunsbury (RD), Hayward (AH), Hurren (WH), Leat (SL), Osborn (RO), Paice (EP), Walden (JW), Warwick (TW) and Willey (DW).

The Guildhall,
Axminster, Devon

7th January 2026

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to attend an ORDINARY Meeting of the FULL Town Council which will take place on **Monday, 12th January 2026 at 7.00pm** at the Guildhall, West Street, Axminster.

This meeting will be recorded, and recordings will be held for one year by the Town Council. If members of the public make a representation to the meeting, they will be deemed to have consented to being audio recorded. If you wish to speak, please raise your hand and wait to be invited to speak by the Chair. Voting will normally take place by show of hands and the Chair will indicate the votes have been noted.

Members and the public are reminded that **remarks and representations must be addressed through the Chair of the meeting.**

Members are reminded:

- a) *Of their obligation to declare the existence and nature of any personal interests they may have in any items to be considered at this meeting and to withdraw if it is a pecuniary one.*
- b) *That, in reaching decisions, they should take into consideration the Town Council's decision to reduce its carbon footprint in the light of the climate/environment emergency.*
- c) *To ensure that their discussions include full consideration of the points set out in the Town Council's Risk Assessment Management policy.*

The Chair to highlight fire exits and Guildhall fire precautions for those present.

i) Announcement of the winner of the 2026 Robin Cross Award (Axminster Citizen of the Year) and Presentation of the Award.

ii) Open Public Forum session (limited to 15 minutes or as otherwise agreed by Chair presiding).

FC26/001

To note those members present:

FC26/002

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

(LGA 1972 s.85 (1))

FC26/003

To note the members of Council who are neither present nor whose absence has been approved (as above); and, to note any other apologies for absence received:

Continued Overleaf

FC26/004

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.

FC26/005

To consider and, if thought fit, to approve the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the FULL Council held on Monday 8th December 2025 as previously circulated to members and published online:

FC26/006

To consider any matters arising from the minutes of that meeting:

FC26/007

To consider and review the draft minutes of the following meetings of committees of the Town Council as listed below (as previously circulated to members and published online):

- i) Strategy & Finance Committee – 5th January 2026

FC26/008

To note any specific recommendations arising from those committee meetings and to consider whether the Council wishes to approve their adoption.

FC26/009

To consider any additional 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. (See FC26/021 to 023(IC) inclusive)

FC26/010

To consider matters pertaining to the casual vacancy that exist for the town ward seat. (Section 89; Local Government Act 1972) (The Local Elections (Parishes and Communities) (England and Wales) Rules 2006; Section 5); Clerk to provide report to Council.

At the time of the agenda publication, the Clerk had received one eligible nomination for co-option to the Town Council and members will be asked to vote on a motion for the co-option to take place.

FC26/011

To consider Council's financial matters:

- a) To consider and, if thought fit, to approve and ratify payments for December 2025.
- b) To consider and, if thought fit, to approve the Bank Reconciliation for December 2025; this document to be counter-signed by a member of Council in conjunction with bank statements.
- c) To receive, and note, Responsible Financial Officer's report and financial pack for December 2025 in the approved format (also published online) incorporating the Q3 budget out-turn report, and the Q4 forecast (to March 2026).
- d) To consider the current VAT return position (Q3) for the Town Council (incl. Guildhall).
- e) Questions to the RFO on these accounts / financial reports from members.

Continued Overleaf

FC26/011

To consider Council's financial matters (continued):

- f) To review and approve the Direct Debit / Standing Order schedule for forthcoming bank transactions (2026).
- g) To consider Council's Investment and Borrowing Strategy Policy; to consider whether the Town Council should take advantage of a Local Authority sector Investment service offered by Insignis Group to maximise credit interest revenue opportunities.

FC26/012

Planning matters:

- a) To consider any planning applications received prior to the agenda publication and currently awaiting consideration (and decision):

Hyperlinks to EDDC website can be found using the blue highlighted applications references.

- 1) [25/2349/FUL](#) – The Red House, Axminster, EX13 5SE
Construction of 1 x new timber framed single storey reception building.
- 2) [25/2366/ADV](#) – Trafalgar Way / West Street roundabout
Erection of 4 no. non-illuminated sponsorship panels.
- 3) [25/2490/FUL](#) – The Heathers, Beavor Lane, Axminster, EX13 5EQ
Single storey rear extension
- 4) [25/2588/FUL](#) – Lower Westwater Farm, Westwater, EX13 7JD
Erection of purpose-built calf rearing shed.

- b) To ratify planning decisions made by way of delegated authority afforded to Chair of Planning Committee, Cllr. Leat, and the Council's Proper Officer in consultation with the members of the Council's Committee.

None.

- c) To consider any tree related planning applications received prior to the agenda publication and currently awaiting consideration (and decision):

[25/2544/TCA](#) – St Marys Church, Axminster, EX13 5NU
Tree works to T1: Cherry (fell to ground, and replant adjacent)

- d) To consider planning applications received after the agenda publication and currently awaiting consideration (and decision) – published on a supplementary agenda (if applicable): *To be advised.*

- e) To consider any planning correspondence received:

None advised to Council at time of agenda publication

FC26/013

To note any recent correspondence from DALC and NALC.

Continued Overleaf

FC26/014

To consider matters pertaining to:

- a) Axminster Chamber of Commerce; *Cllr Dowdeswell / Cllr. Hayward to present report.*
- b) Plastic Free Axminster; *Cllr Osborn to present report.*
- c) Axminster Climate Action Group; *Cllr Walden to present report.*
- d) Light Up Axminster; *Cllr Dowdeswell to present report.*

FC26/015

To consider any updates pertaining to Local Government reorganisation and devolution; in particular, the issues relating to Devon County (and the relationship between the County Council, the Unitary Councils, the District Councils and the smaller local authorities – town and parish councils); to further consider how such changes will affect the delivery and affordability of Town Council services and amenities: Clerk to present update report.

FC26/016

To note the date for the forthcoming Councillor/Employee joint training session in January 2026; 20th January 2026 – PM (starting at 1pm in the Guildhall)

FC26/017

To note any updates/information from the RFO pertaining to ongoing sale of The Old Courthouse buildings in Church Street.

FC26/018

To consider any matters considered as urgent by the presiding Chair for notation only.

FC26/019

To confirm the date of the next scheduled FULL meeting of the Town Council on Monday the 9th of February 2026, and other Council committee meetings.

- i) Operations Committee – 26th January 2026 - 7pm
- ii) Employment Committee – 2nd February 2026 – 7pm
- iii) Strategy & Finance Committee – 23rd February 2026 - 7pm

FC26/020

Recommendation: that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act namely, the financial affairs or business affairs or employment affairs of the Town Council by virtue of the fact that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Other Council Business to be considered (Part TWO – Confidential)

FC26/021 (IC)

To consider matters pertaining to The Old Courthouse and to note any correspondence received.

This matter is considered commercially sensitive and confidential due to the subject to be discussed.

Continued Overleaf

FC26/022 (IC)

To consider any matters pertaining to The Town Cemetery buildings and associated plant, equipment and materials (associated with the recent theft event in OCT 2025).
This matter is considered commercially sensitive and confidential due to the subject to be discussed.

FC26/023 (IC)

To consider matters pertaining to Guildhall building projects (in particular, reconfiguration of office & administrative & storage facilities and associated works).
This matter is considered commercially sensitive and confidential due to the subject to be discussed.

With no further business to be considered, the presiding Chair of the Council will close the meeting.

Paul Hayward

*Town Clerk
7th January 2026*

Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, members of the public are now allowed to take photographs, film and audio record the proceedings and report on all public meetings.

No prior notification is needed but it would be helpful if you could let the Chair, or Clerk, know that you plan to film or record so that the necessary arrangements can be made to provide reasonable facilities for you to report on meetings.

This permission does not extend to parts of meetings which are not open to the public. You should take all recording and photography equipment with you if a public meeting moves into a session which is not open to the public.
