

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 8th February 2021 at 7.00 p.m.
Under Regulation 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020

Present:

Town Mayor Cllr. Ms. J.J. Farrow
Deputy Town Mayor: Cllr. Mrs. A. G. Sedgewick,
Councillors: M.N. Adamson-Drage, C.A. Doherty, Mrs. S.L.N. Leat,
 S. Sleigh, M.D.G. Spurway and J.W. Walden.

The Town Clerk (Miss H. Kirkcaldie), the Deputy Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer, (Mrs. Z. Adamson-Drage) (for part of meeting) and the Administrative Assistant (Mrs. S. Gay).

In attendance: Cty./Dist. Cllr. I.H. Hall, Dist. Cllrs. S. Jackson and A.T. Moulding.

6 Members of the public. 1 representative of the Press.

2021/0026 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: None.

2021/0027 TO NOTE THOSE NOT PRESENT: Cllr. M. Mynard.

2021/0028 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: CLLRS. DOHERTY, FARROW, MRS. LEAT, MRS. SEDGEWICK AND SPURWAY EACH DECLARED PERSONAL INTERESTS AS BEING MEMBERS OF THE AXMINSTER GUILDHALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IN RESPECT OF ANY ITEMS RELATING TO THE GUILDHALL.

CLLR. FARROW DECLARED AN INTEREST AS BEING A MEMBER OF AXMINSTER TWINNING ASSOCIATION AND A GOVERNOR OF AXMINSTER COMMUNITY PRIMARY ACADEMY AND AS A JOINT TENANT OF A TOWN COUNCIL ALLOTMENT AT WOODBURY PARK ALLOTMENTS

CLLR. ADAMSON-DRAGE DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS BEING THE SPOUSE OF THE DEPUTY-CLERK

CLLR. WALDEN DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS BEING A MEMBER OF AXMINSTER COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE.

CLLR. WALDEN DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS BEING CHAIRMAN OF THE GOVERNORS OF AXE VALLEY ACADEMY, AS A MEMBER OF AXMINSTER SKATEPARK STEERING GROUP, AXMINSTER TWINNING ASSOCIATION AND AS BEING SAFEGUARDING LEAD FOR AXMINSTER YOUTH CLUB.

2021/0029 CO-OPTION TO FILL CASUAL VACANCIES ON WEYCROFT WARD:

Applications had been received from Mr. O. Tucker and Mr. S. Holt. Cllr.

Sedgewick, seconded by Cllr. Walden, proposed that both candidates be co-opted. Agreed. It was noted and welcomed that Mr. Tucker was aged 18.

AT THE REQUEST OF THE TOWN CLERK, MATTERS OF URGENCY WAS BROUGHT FORWARD.

2021/0030 MATTERS OF URGENCY – CREATION OF CASUAL VACANCY IN WEYCROFT WARD FOLLOWING RESIGNATION OF CLLR.

FEATHERSTONE: It was noted formally that Cllr. Featherstone had resigned. The due process for notification of a Casual Vacancy will be followed.

2021/0031 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 14TH DECEMBER 2020: Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Walden, proposed that the minutes be approved for accuracy. Agreed. Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Walden, proposed that the minutes be adopted as policy. Agreed.

2021/0032 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 11TH JANUARY 2021: The Town Clerk stated that there was a drafting error in the fact that the third line in paragraph 2021/0011 was underlined. Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Walden, proposed that the minutes be approved for accuracy subject to that correction. Agreed. Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Walden, proposed that the minutes be adopted as policy. Agreed.

2021/0033 TOWN FORUM – BROKEN FOOTBRIDGE LINKING FP69 WITH FOXHILL PLAYING FIELD: Dist. Cllr. Moulding said the link was of long-standing. He urged that the link be re-instated.

CLLR. FARROW PROPOSED THAT AGENDA ITEM 12 BE BROUGHT FORWARD. AGREED.

2021/0034 WAY FORWARD IN RESPECT OF DANGEROUS FOOTBRIDGE: Attempts were being made to contact the landowner to request that appropriate warning signs be put in place and action taken to repair the bridge by them or authority given by them to the Town Council to undertake the action on their behalf should COVID 19 regulations preclude them from doing the work themselves. The Town Clerk said that in the longer term the creation of a permissive path might be an option. Dist. Cllr. Jackson suggested an alternative course of action may be to close that route and encourage people to use an existing, safer, access point to the south of the footbridge route.

TOWN FORUM WAS RESUMED AT THIS POINT.

2021/0035 TOWN FORUM – OLD COURTHOUSE GARDEN: A member of the public spoke regarding the proposed defibrillator, the proposed wild area on the station approach and the Old Courthouse Garden.

2021/0036 FINANCIAL MATTERS – APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS FOR JANUARY

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CLLR. ADAMSON-DRAGE DECLARED A PECUNIARY INTEREST IN RESPECT OF PAYMENTS MADE TO THE DEPUTY TOWN CLERK. HE WAS PLACED IN THE WAITING ROOM FOR THE DURATION OF THIS ITEM OF BUSINESS.

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Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Walden, proposed that the payments as listed be approved.
Agreed.

CLLR. ADAMSON-DRAGE WAS RE-ADMITTED FROM THE WAITING ROOM.

2021/0037 FINANCIAL MATTERS - MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES: following some discussion, Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Farrow, proposed that no allowances be paid at present but that the matter be reconsidered in 3 months by the Finance and Strategy Committee. Agreed.

2021/0038 APPROVAL OF BUDGET FOR 2021-2022: Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Doherty, proposed that the net expenditure budget for 2021-2022 be set at £302451.95
Agreed.

2021/0039 RENEWAL OF BUSINESS BOND: Following consideration of the background information provided by the Responsible Financial Officer, Cllr. Walden proposed that the Town Council renew on a 2-year bond with the present institution and add to that sum £37,000 from funds presently in a shorter-term savings option. Cllr. Doherty seconded the proposal. Carried.

2021/0040 RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT: The Deputy Clerk said that she had submitted the latest Value Added Tax return, was updating the Asset Register and putting the paperwork in place for an additional signatory to the account.

2021/0041 FINANCIAL MATTERS - DEFIBRILLATOR FOR WAFFLE HOUSE: Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Sedgewick, proposed that £870 be allocated for the purchase of a defibrillator to be located within the Waffle House at Trinity House plus the cost of providing paediatric paddles and signage. Agreed.

2021/0042 FINANCIAL MATTERS - INSURANCE OF GAZEBO IN OLD COURTHOUSE GARDEN: The Town Clerk reported that this had been added to the insured assets of the Town Council.

2021/0043 COVID 19 MATTERS: information will be sought from A.C.E.R. regarding any unused Tesco Vouchers.

2021/0044 SAFER TOWNS INITIATIVE: Cllr. Sedgewick said that the deadline for expenditure of the £5000 grant was the end of March. She said that this would cover the cost of the cameras to be placed on Trinity House. She added that the Town Council had agreed to match-fund this grant and that money would be used to position cameras on the Symonds and Sampson building. The consent of both building owners for such works had been obtained. Cllr. Sedgewick, seconded by Cllr. Walden, proposed that these works on both these buildings be undertaken.

2021/0045 ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT POLICY: Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Walden proposed that this be approved. Agreed.

2021/0046 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND APPRAISAL POLICY: following discussion of the stages throughout the annual appraisal process it was agreed,

proposed Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Walden, that this be approved subject to the word “formal” in the second sentence of Clause 3.1 being altered to read “interim” rather than “formal”.

2021/0047 EMPLOYEE SELF-APPRAISAL FORM: Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Sedgewick, proposed that this be approved. Agreed.

2021/0048 PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT POLICY: Cllr. Adamson-Drage pointed out that there were instances when the word Councillors was used when the term “the Council” was more appropriate. There were other instances where there should be reference to both the Manager and the Council. Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Doherty, proposed that this policy be approved subject to those corrections. Agreed.

2021/0049 HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY: Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Adamson-Drage proposed that this be approved. Agreed.

2021/0050 OPERATIONS COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE: Deferred to the March meeting.

2021/0051 DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY: Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Spurway, proposed that this be adopted. Agreed.

2021/0052 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY: Cllr. Sedgewick, seconded by Cllr. Doherty, proposed that this be approved. Agreed.

2021/0053 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7TH DECEMBER 2020: These had been dealt with at the January meeting.

2021/0054 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14TH DECEMBER 2020: The Town Clerk confirmed that the donation to Axe Valley Ring and Ride had been paid. No progress had been made towards the opening of the Jubilee Field, despite efforts by the Town and District Councillors. Explanatory information will be put on social media.

2021/0055 MATTERS OF URGENCY: None.

2021/0056 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 22ND SEPTEMBER 2020: Cllr. Farrow, Chairman of the Committee, proposed, seconded by Cllr. Sedgewick, that these be approved for accuracy. Agreed. Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Spurway, proposed that they be adopted as Town Council policy. Agreed.

2021/0057 MATTERS ARISING FROM ABOVE MEETING: None.

2021/0058 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 20TH OCTOBER 2020: Cllr. Farrow, Chairman of the Committee, proposed, seconded by Cllr. Sedgewick, that these be approved for accuracy. Agreed. Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Doherty, proposed that they be adopted as Town Council policy. Agreed.

2021/0059 MATTERS ARISING FROM ABOVE MEETING: None.

2021/0060 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 24th NOVEMBER 2020: Cllr. Farrow, Chairman of the Committee, proposed, seconded by Cllr. Sedgewick, that these be approved for accuracy. Agreed. Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Walden, proposed that they be adopted as Town Council policy. Agreed

2021/0061 MATTERS ARISING FROM ABOVE MEETING: None.

2021/0062 MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 12th JANUARY 2021: Cllr. Mrs. Leat, Chairman of the Committee, proposed, seconded by Cllr. Sedgewick, that these be approved for accuracy. Agreed. Cllr. Mrs. Leat, seconded by Cllr. Farrow, proposed that they be adopted as Town Council policy. Agreed.

2021/0063 MATTERS ARISING FROM ABOVE MEETING: None.

2021/0064 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 18th JANUARY 2021: Cllr. Sedgewick, Chairman of the Committee, proposed, seconded by Cllr. Farrow, that these be approved for accuracy. Agreed. Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Leat, proposed that they be adopted as Town Council policy. Agreed

2021/0065 MATTERS ARISING FROM ABOVE MEETING: None.

2021/0066 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND STRATEGY COMMITTEE HELD ON 25TH JANUARY 2021: Cllr. Farrow, Chairman of the Committee proposed that these be adopted subject to the penultimate sentence in minute 10 being corrected to read “It was agreed that a working party consisting of Cllrs. Farrow, Sedgewick, Leat and Spurway be convened to look into the Five-Year Plan.” Agreed.

2021/0067 MATTERS ARISING FROM ABOVE MEETING: None

2021/0068 MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 26th JANUARY 2021: Cllr. Mrs. Leat, Chairman of the Committee, proposed, seconded by Cllr. Sedgewick, that these be approved for accuracy. Agreed. Cllr. Mrs. Leat, seconded by Cllr. Farrow proposed that they be adopted as Town Council policy. Agreed.

2021/0069 MATTERS ARISING FROM ABOVE MEETING: None

2021/0070 MINUTES OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE HELD ON 1ST FEBRUARY 2021: Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Adamson-Drage, proposed that these be approved for accuracy. Agreed. Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Adamson-Drage, proposed that they be adopted as Town Council policy. Agreed.

2021/0071 MATTERS ARISING FROM ABOVE MEETING: None

2021/0072 LANDSCAPING OF LAND ON APPROACH TO RAILWAY STATION: in the absence of Cllr. Mynard this matter could not be progressed. Cllr. Walden said that the intention was that the area have an informal look. The area would be maintained largely through volunteers. Cllr. Sedgewick said that the project should be led by the

Town Council and the time of its outdoor staff should be made available.

2021/0073 TO RENAME THE FORMER SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE IN MEMORY OF DOUGLAS HULL: Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Adamson-Drage, proposed that the Senior Citizens' Centre be renamed in memory of the late Cllr. Hull. Cllr. Leat said that she felt that it would be more appropriate to name the garden after Cllr. Hull but she felt that no decision should be taken until a decision has been made on future use of the Old Courthouse. A vote was taken, and the proposal was defeated

2021/0074 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN: Cllr. Sedgwick said that she had asked the Town Clerk to arrange a meeting to discuss this in the context of comments received from the District Council as soon as possible.

2021/0075 LOCAL PLAN ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION: The Town Clerk will arrange a meeting to discuss this as soon as possible.

2021/0076 DEFERRAL OF OUTSIDE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS UNTIL MAY: Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Leat proposed that membership of outside committees remain unchanged until May. Agreed.

2021/0077 CORRESPONDENCE:

- a. Various re COVID 19
- b. Healthwatch Voices

Cllr. Walden proposed 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. Cllr. Sedgwick seconded the proposal. Carried.

2021/0078 CEMETERY CHAPEL QUOTES: the third quote was still awaited.

2021/0079 PLANNING CONSULTANCY COSTS: Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Walden, proposed that the planning consultants proposed fee of £575.00 for the preparation of the planning application for the proposed works to the Jubilee Fountain be approved. Agreed.

2021/0080 SAFER TOWNS INITIATIVE CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION COSTS: the ballpark figure for work on the Trinity House site was £4400. Some final information had been requested from the contractor by the planning consultant to clarify the position as to whether the works would or would not need planning permission. It was agreed that should the works be delayed by the planning process, a request for payment of the grant on the basis that planning permission was pending would be made.

2021/0081 TENANCY MATTERS: Two applications for possible use of the Senior Citizens' Centre had been received. These will be considered at a later date.

It was agreed that legal advice should be sought regarding the various existing tenancy break and protection clauses as that would be key to any future decisions regarding the property.

The clean-up contractor had identified items considered not economic to clean down. Cllr. Farrow said that there seemed to be a lack of clarity as to whether the Town Council or the Tenants were responsible for these items. The Town Clerk will seek clarification regarding the whether the tenants had removed all their items from the premises before the contractors

started their work and clarification as to what the insurers consider to be contents as opposed to structure.

DRAFT FOR APPROVAL ON 8TH MARCH 2021

Signature Date.....