

AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY, 8th JUNE 2021 AT 7.00 P.M. AT AXMINSTER GUILDHALL

1. PRESENT: Cllr. Walden (Chairman), Cllr. Farrow, Cllr. S. Sleigh, the Town Clerk and the Administrative Assistant.

1 Member of the public, 0 representative of the press.

2. APOLOGIES: Cllrs. M. Mynard.

3. NOT PRESENT: Cllr. M.D.G. Spurway on account of technical problems.

4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Sleigh, proposed Cllr. Walden as Chairman. There were no other nominations. Agreed.

Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Sleigh, proposed Cllr. Spurway as Vice-chairman. Agreed.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

CLLR. FARROW DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS BEING A MEMBER OF THE AXMINSTER GUILDHALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IN RESPECT OF ANY ITEMS RELATING TO THE GUILDHALL.

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

CLLR. WALDEN DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS BEING VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE GOVERNORS OF AXE VALLEY ACADEMY, AS A MEMBER OF AXMINSTER TWINNING ASSOCIATION AND AS BEING SAFEGUARDING LEAD FOR AXMINSTER YOUTH CLUB. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD NEED TO ALTER HIS REGISTER OF INTERESTS AS THE SKATEPARK STEERING COMMITTEE HAD BEEN WOUND UP.

6. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE: No amendments were proposed.

7. PUBLIC FORUM: A member of the public made various points to the Committee regarding items which would be discussed later in the meeting:

- a. A request for clarification of the arrangements in respect of the snagging period for the Jubilee Field.
- b. A concern regarding the Town Council's suggestion that a van was needed for the Handyman.
- c. A suggestion that a D handle strimmer would be more suitable for some work undertaken by the Lengthsman.
- d. That one of the small industrial units at Millwey was available for let.
- e. That the variation in which authority is responsible for maintaining which parts of the public realm has resulted in a widespread weed problem in the town.
- f. That a seat on the Minster Green needed attention. He was advised that this was the responsibility of the Parochial Church Council.

8. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

- a) Clarification regarding whether the proposed sites for the Vehicle Activated Signs would operate in both directions.
- b) Discussions with a householder regarding a mirror to facilitate traffic exiting the Woodbury Lane Allotments.
- c) The ordering of a plaque for the seat in memory of the late Mr. Pye.

9. UPDATE ON SECTION 106 MATTERS: The Town Clerk reported that at a site meeting at Cloakham Lawn Sports Centre it had been confirmed that the District Council was not prepared to provide a site on the former Millwey Rise Football pitch. Of two possible sites at Cloakham, the site of the previous skatepark was the most cost-effective option. Various options whereby the project could be taken forward with maximum speed and at best value for money were discussed and will be followed up.

The Town Clerk will seek details regarding the provision of the proposed Fun Trail as part of the upgrade of the Millwey Rise Play Area.

She reported that matters relating to the Raymonds Hill Play Area were moving forward in a positive way.

The Town Clerk asked that further discussion on the proposed play park at Raymonds Hill should be referred into committee as the matter was one relating to potential legal confidentiality. Agreed.

10. UPDATE ON VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGNAGE: The Town Clerk had not been able to contact the relevant officer at Devon County Council to confirm that the poles at all sites would work with a camera pointed in either direction.

11. UPDATE ON TOWN SIGNAGE: there was no further information available. The Chairman will contact Axminster Heritage.

12. UPDATE ON JUBILEE FIELD: Confirmation had been received that the field had been transferred to the District Council by the Developer. The legalities for its transfer from the District to the Town Council were being processed.

The Town Clerk said that the proposed cutting of the field, once it came to the Town Council, would be by the outdoor staff but that given the situation with no Cemetery Groundskeeper in place it might be necessary to buy in outside assistance.

13. REPORT ON REVIEW OF EQUIPMENT AND SERVICING ARRANGEMENTS: The Town Clerk gave an update on those items of equipment which had been serviced and which remained outstanding. This will assist in identifying items of equipment which are nearing the end of their useful life and for which replacements should be considered. Some would need to be replaced like for like but others, such as the small tractor and some of its attachments could be sold on and the revenue received put towards a second-hand van or other item and that these larger ticket items be referred to the Finance and Strategy Committee for discussion leading into the budgeting process.

Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Walden, proposed that purchase of the following items of equipment be approved:

- a. Additional water pump for cemetery – necessary if interments take place in times of very wet weather and would provide a back-up if one failed.
- b. Engraver for marking equipment for identity and security purposes.
- c. Woodworking vice (second hand would be acceptable).
- d. Suitable storage container for salt to prevent contamination of other equipment.
- e. D handled strimmer for use on banks.

14. UPDATE ON PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY:

- a. Footpath 69 - further information was awaited from the District Council as to the timing for the closing off of access to the defective footbridge. There was a need to provide an access gate from District Council land to the existing stile.
- b. Need for a Protocol on Clearing Vegetation on Urban Footpaths – following discussion, Cllr. Walden proposed that on urban public rights of way where it is necessary to keep vegetation well cut back to ensure public accessibility that this be

done. Cllr. Sleigh seconded the proposal. Agreed. Cllr. Farrow added that it should be made clear that Town Councillors would support staff and their line managers in these matters. This view was endorsed.

15. UPDATE ON JUBILEE FOUNTAIN: listed building consent had been obtained. Work would start once arrangements regarding any need for a scaffold licence had been agreed with the Highway Authority. Cllr. Walden proposed that the £327.50 fee being charged by Western Power Distribution to remove the fuse for a period longer than half an hour be paid. Agreed. The Town Clerk said that investigations into the removal of the fuse had revealed that Street Lighting was responsible for the working of the lights. Cllr. Walden proposed that they be asked to ensure that they were in working order before the fuse was replaced. Agreed. He said that he did not feel that it was essential that the lighting feature was functional, should the supplier indicate that it could not be put in working order.

16. STREET FURNITURE: The Handyman is going to try to repair the seat outside the Methodist Chapel using recycled plastic to avoid the problems involved in demolishing the concrete ends.

17. MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE CEMETERY:

- a. Paths – the Town Clerk explained the desirability of putting a new path from the field gate up through the Cemetery Field to reduce the frequency with which vehicles are using the paths in the old sections in order to access the Z section. An alternative might be to use the bonfire area, which is ready to use and move the bonfire to the Cemetery Field. At present there is only one way into or out of the Cemetery for vehicles and there are problems for parking vehicles. Cllr. Walden felt that a site visit would be a helpful exercise prior to any further discussion. Cllr. Farrow proposed that as this would a major capital expenditure for the whole Town Council to consider it should be passed to the Finance and Strategy Committee. Cllr. Walden seconded the proposal, Agreed. Cllr. Sleigh suggested that advice be sought from a groundworks contractor.
- b. Arrangements for upkeep of Cemetery following Retirement of Caretaker – these were working well.
- c. Anniversary of Rights of Burial – the Town Clerk said that leases on some of the oldest interment plots were coming up for renewal and Council needed to decide how to handle any requests to renew such leases. It would be a very complicated exercise to contact those who might be owners of such rights of burial. Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Walden, proposed that should an application be received to renew an expiring right of burial, this be granted at the price and for the term prevailing for a Right of Burial at the time the request for renewal was received. Agreed.

18. MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE ALLOTMENTS:

- a. Removal of Accumulated Rubbish – the Administrative Assistant reported that there was an accumulation of rubbish on a particular plot at Millwey which it would be desirable to remove. The matter was referred into committee.
- b. Visibility Splay at Lower Gateway at Woodbury – following discussion of the various options, Cllr. Walden proposed that the bank/vegetation be lowered by about 3 feet to improve the visibility and to see whether that addressed the problems.
- c. Tree Matters – in response to a request for advice from the District Council regarding the need for any further Tree Preservation Orders, this was seen to be too costly to do as a blanket exercise.

19. REVIEW OF OPERATION FORTH BRIDGE: in response to various points raised in a report by the Town Clerk, Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Sleigh, proposed that some minor purchases to facilitate the presentation of any floral tribute be made and that the photograph be disposed of. Agreed. The lower display board was deemed to have been satisfactory despite the background differing from that of the upper board.

20. HEALTH AND SAFETY: No matters had been raised by any members of staff since the last meeting.

21. HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE: The Town Clerk had not completed work on these.
22. MEMBERSHIP OF HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE: The Handyman will represent the outside staff and the Administrative Assistant would represent the office staff and all members of the Committee who were available.
23. MATTERS OF URGENCY: a request had been received for a single depth grave and this was approved as the individual to be concerned was the sole surviving member of a family.

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. Spurway seconded the proposal.

Agreed

23 Quotations received – removal of accumulated rubbish. There is a large pile of rubbish on a plot on Millwey Rise which was attracting other rubbish. There is a contractor who would clear the plot for £170. Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Farrow, proposed that this be approved. The plot will then be relet.

Allotment Tenancy Matters: none.

Actions List.

Contact D.C.C. re Vehicle Activated Signs/sites	Town Clerk
Order plaque for Geo Pye memorial seat.	Administrative Assistant
Update on Fun Trail	Town Clerk
Arrange removal of fuse on Jubilee Fountain.	Administrative Assistant
Check on progress with heads of terms re Jubilee Field transfer to ATC	Town Clerk
Arrange site visit for Cemetery.	Town Clerk
Cemetery field to go to Finance and Strategy	Town Clerk
Seek advice from groundwork contractor.	Admin Asst/Town Clerk
Arrange purchase of new equipment.	Office staff
Arrange removal of rubbish	Administrative Assistant
Complete draft terms of reference for committee.	Town Clerk

Signed Date