

AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY, 7th SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 7.00 P.M. AT AXMINSTER GUILDHALL

1. PRESENT: Cllr. Walden (Chairman), Cllr. Farrow, Cllr. A.G. Sedgewick, the Town Clerk.

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

~~IN THE TEMPORARY ABSENCE OF CLLR. WALDEN, CLLR. SPURWAY TOOK THE CHAIR.~~

2. APOLOGIES: Cllr. M. Mynard and Cllr. M.D.G. Spurway (Vice-chairman) and the Administrative Assistant.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

CLLR. FARROW AND MRS. SEDGEWICK EACH DECLARED PERSONAL INTERESTS AS BEING MEMBERS OF THE AXMINSTER GUILDHALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IN RESPECT OF ANY ITEMS RELATING TO THE GUILDHALL.

COUNCILLORS FARROW, SEDGEWICK AND WALDEN EACH DECLARED PERSONAL INTERESTS AS BEING MEMBERS OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP

CLLR. FARROW DECLARED PERSONAL INTERESTS AS BEING A MEMBER OF AXMINSTER TWINNING ASSOCIATION AND A GOVERNOR OF AXMINSTER COMMUNITY PRIMARY ACADEMY, A MEMBER OF THE LABOUR PARTY, THE NATIONAL TRUST AND THE CO-OP, A FRIEND OF FERNE ANIMAL SANCTUARY, A VOLUNTEER COLLECTOR FOR DEVON AIR AMBULANCE TRUST AND AS A JOINT TENANT OF A TOWN COUNCIL ALLOTMENT AT WOODBURY PARK ALLOTMENTS.

CLLR. SEDGEWICK DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS BEING LIAISON COUNCILLOR ON AXE VALLEY LOCAL ACTION GROUP

CLLR. WALDEN DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS BEING VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE GOVERNORS OF AXE VALLEY ACADEMY, AS A MEMBER OF AXMINSTER SKATEPARK STEERING GROUP, AXMINSTER TWINNING ASSOCIATION, LIAISON COUNCILLOR WITH AXMINSTER JOB CLUB, A MEMBER OF THE LABOUR PARTY, COMMUNITY UNION, NATIONAL TRUST AND AS BEING SAFEGUARDING LEAD FOR AXMINSTER YOUTH CLUB.

4. PUBLIC FORUM: A member of the public made representations regarding the relatively early closure of the West Street public toilets, particularly during the holiday season.

CLLR. WALDEN PROPOSED THAT ITEM 5 ON THE AGENDA BE BROUGHT FORWARD CONSIDERATION AT THIS POINT. CLLR. FARROW SECONDED THE PROPOSAL. AGREED.

5. CONSIDERATION OF DISTRICT COUNCIL'S CONSULTATION ON PUBLIC TOILETS:

Each section of the questionnaire was considered and the Town Clerk completed the online consultation in line with Councillors' comments and submitted it at the end of the process. The Town Clerk will email the District Council with an additional comment regarding the need for longer opening hours, especially in summer.

6. MATTERS AND ACTIONS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON 3rd AUGUST 2021 NOT COVERED AS AGENDA ITEMS:

- a. Cemetery Site Visit – Councillor asked that considerable advance notice be given for this.

- b. Further information is awaited regarding the air compressor and generator from the Handyman.
7. UPDATE ON SECTION 106 PROJECTS:
- a. Fun Trail – there was nothing to report on this.
 - b. Skatepark – the Town Clerk was in the process of applying for a grant from the Police Commissioner to provide a closed-circuit television system for the skate park. She indicated that at this stage there was insufficient information regarding actual costs. Cllr. Walden said that he thought that use of ballpark figures was the best that could be done at this stage.
- A request had been received for £1250 towards legal costs relating to the proposed skatepark site. Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Sedgewick, proposed that this expense form part of the unspecified substantial sum of money agreed by the Town Council to deliver this project. Agreed.
- c. Raymonds Hill Play Area – finalised draft plans are awaited from the planning consultant prior to submission to the District Council.
8. UPDATE ON VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGNAGE: The Town Clerk said that the position of the pole on the site in Crewkerne Road had been agreed with the Neighbourhood Highway Officer and the consent of the site owner was now awaited.
9. UPDATE ON TOWN SIGNAGE: Cllrs. Walden had been unable to progress this because of pressure of work over the past month and will report as soon as possible.
10. JUBILEE FIELD:
- a. Update on position –no matters to report.
 - b. Heads of Terms – the clause precluding erection of a structure on site had been removed. Following discussion, Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Farrow, proposed that the Heads of Terms be approved subject to no adverse comment from the Town Council solicitors. Agreed.
11. PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY:
- a. Update on FP 69 – the Town Clerk reported that, to date, the Hon. Footpath Warden had had little positive response to his approaches seeking quotes from contractors. The Town Clerk will seek an update prior to the Town Council meeting. She will ask the Handyman to see if any kind of handrail could be put in place in the meantime.
 - b. Footpath Maintenance – following the resignation of the Lengthsman, the Handyman will check the urban paths and any elsewhere which follow a confined route on a monthly basis to ensure they remain passable.
12. STREET FURNITURE - BENCHES: the bench honouring Mrs. Spiller will be placed on a suitable footing. That at the former Methodist Church will be repaired using salvaged wood.
13. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS: a local electrician will be asked to inspect these and reposition those which so require in readiness for Festive Friday.
14. DISTRICT COUNCIL “WELCOME BACK” FUND: A request had been sent for four benches and two multi-bay refuse bins.
15. OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS IN LIGHT OF SHORTAGE OF OUTDOOR STAFF: The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk had discussed priorities for works for the Handyman across the Cemetery, the Allotments and footpaths and would go over this with him the following day. There was discussion regarding the replacement of the gate at North Street Allotments as this is a Health and Safety defect because it is hard to lift off the latch. The Town Clerk reported on discussions with other authorities regarding the methods used to deal with weeds. Responses included use of hand tools, use of glyphosate sprays and use of contractors. Cllr. Walden suggested that weed burners might be considered. He cautioned overloading the Handyman at the moment, despite the decision of the Town Council taken

when the staffing situation was different. Cllr. Walden proposed that the Deputy Clerk be asked to investigate various options in terms of whether to do work in-house or use contractors and also to consider whether a dedicated Cemetery Caretaker was needed. Cllr. Farrow felt that it was an opportunity to rationalise the outdoor roles and said she would revoke the proposal made at the last Town Council meeting. The Town Clerk said that she and the Deputy Clerk would be happy to prioritise the outdoor work requirements. She added that consideration should be taken to make use of a jobbing garden. The Town Clerk said that any review needed to be undertaken so that recruitment could take place before the next season was under way.

16. OFFICE RECEPTION ARRANGEMENTS: It had been agreed that the existing arrangements remain in place.
17. CEMETERY MATTERS: these had been covered under a previous item.
18. MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE ALLOTMENTS:
 - a. Visibility Splay at Lower Gate at Woodbury Lane – there was nothing to report at the moment.
 - b. Tree Matters – the annual inspections had just been undertaken by the contractor and the report was awaited.
 - c. Gate at North Street – discussed under an earlier item
 - d. Poultry Welfare Arrangements – following the retirement of the volunteer who handled this, Cllr. Walden proposed that the Town Council employ the services of a local vet as and when necessary and that the Allotment Regulations be altered to reflect the fact that this would be recharged to any tenant when such a call out was needed. Cllr. Farrow seconded the proposal. Agreed.
 - e. Allotment Rent Collection and Tenants' meeting – this will take place on 5th October and details will be circulated to tenants shortly.
19. MATTERS PERTAINING TO BUILDING REPAIRS:
 - a. Guildhall – information regarding the automatic doors had been sent to Cllrs. Farrow and Sedgewick. Work on the Emergency Lights and Fire detection system had been done. Work will start shortly to bring items in the kitchen and bar into compliance with the EICR requirements. Cllr. Walden referred to the effect on the outer doors of failing to have both either open or closed at the same time as this causes differential weather of the paint.
 - b. Old Courthouse – work on the interior of the Arts Café had started. A possible solution to access to the rear chimney was subject to negotiation with adjacent residents. In response to a question from Cllr. Walden, the Town Clerk said that the Minster Room was still being used for storage pending a decision by the working party as to what the future use of the building so that a report can be put to the Town Council.
 - c. Cemetery Chapels – the main item of concern was the condition of one of the gate pillars. Advice will be sought from stone masons.
20. HEALTH AND SAFETY: the management of the cutting of the grass at the North Street Junction with Old North Street had been reviewed following recent incidents when cars had been damaged.
21. HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE: the rewording had yet to be done but will be done by the next meeting
22. MATTERS OF URGENCY: None.

THERE WERE NO MATTERS TO BE DEALT WITH IN COMMITTEE.

Signed Date

Approved by Town Council 13th September 2021 Min2021/0387

Sep-21	Email J.B. at E.D.D.C. re extra hours required for toilets.
	Arrange a time for a Cemetery site visit.
	Send Heads of Terms to solicitor for comment
	Email ATM re legal fees
	Contact JV re fp66 and surveys
	Arrangements for commemorative bench.
	Arrange local electrician to inspect Christmas lights
	Replace gate at North Street Allotment
	Add in recharge to poultry section on Allotment Regulations.
	Volunteers' policy
	Seek a firm date for return of property to tenants.
	Find minute regarding decision not to let Minster Room
	Reword Health and Safety Terms of Reference.