

AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STRATEGY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Held at 7.00 p.m. on Monday, 23RD August 2021 at Axminster Guildhall.

1. **PRESENT:** Cllr. J.J. Farrow, (Mayor), Cllr. A.G. Sedgewick, (Deputy Mayor), Cllr. S.P. Holt, Cllr. Mrs. S.L.N. Leat, Cllr. M.D.G. Spurway, the Town Clerk, the Deputy Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer.
0 Member of the public, 0 representative of the press.

2. **APOLOGIES:** Cllr. J.W. Walden.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

CLLRS. FARROW, LEAT, SEDGEWICK AND SPURWAY EACH DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS BEING MEMBERS OF THE AXMINSTER GUILDHALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IN RESPECT OF ANY ITEMS RELATING TO THE GUILDHALL.

COUNCILLORS FARROW, HOLT AND SEDGEWICK, EACH DECLARED AN INTEREST AS BEING MEMBERS OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP.

CLLR. HOLT DECLARED AN INTEREST AS BEING LIAISON COUNCILLOR FOR TOTALLY LOCALLY, TREASURER OF AXMINSTER HOSPITAL LEAGUE OF FRIENDS, A MEMBER OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY AND THE NATIONAL TRUST.

CLLR. LEAT DECLARED AN INTEREST AS BEING SECRETARY OF AXMINSTER DRAMA CLUB

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

CLLR. SPURWAY DECLARED AN INTEREST AS A MEMBER OF CO-OP FOOD GROUP, AND OF THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS.

4. **MEETING BY ZOOM LINK WITH DISTRICT COUNCIL CLIMATE CHANGE OFFICER:** Ms. Causely said that the District Council had an action plan comprising 100 items. Cllr. Leat asked how to go about preparing a climate action plan. Ms. Causely stressed the need to be able to measure outputs to monitor how matters were progressing. She said it was very important to liaise with community groups. Concepts that were of concern to people included greenhouse gas emissions, electric vehicle charging, emergency flood plans, tree planting, habitat restoration and many others. She admitted that budgets for a big project were very limited. In due course training courses will be provided to support the work of Town and Parish Councils.

5. **ACTIONS AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD IN JULY 2021:**

a. Dist. Cllr. Hayward had been advised of the decision regarding the dog bin.

6. **PUBLIC FORUM:** None.

7.

8. **FINANCIAL MATTERS- INSURANCE:** The Town Clerk took members through various points relating to insurance values for the coming year. She said that the Council was on the brink of taking over various items which would have a significant impact on the Councils asset values. Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Holt proposed that the sum for fidelity insurance be set at the sum of £500,000. Agreed. Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Sedgewick that the adjusted premium of £3038.23 be paid and adjusted once changes are necessary. Agreed. The Deputy Clerk recommended that next summer competitive quotes be sought. The Town Clerk suggested that the properties are revalued next June so that they can be insured at accurate values

9. **FINANCIAL MATTERS- REPORT ON QUESTIONS FROM INTERNAL AUDITOR:** The Deputy Clerk had provided a suite of documents relating to internal audit and asked members to email her if they had any questions.

10. **FINANCIAL MATTERS- REPORT ON APPLICATION OF WELCOME BACK FUND:** following discussion, Cllr Farrow proposed that the Town Council apply for four benches and two divided litter bins. Cllr. Sedgewick seconded the proposal. Agreed

11. **REVIEW OF EMERGENCY PLAN:** The Town Clerk said that the basic structure of the plan was sound but certain elements needed revision. Cllr. Farrow was reluctant to do a line by line revision. The Town Clerk

suggested that advice be sought from Devon County Council as they had been inclined to require lists of local volunteers and sources of help in such documents. Cllr. Leat questioned the value of the plan if it was not used at the start of the pandemic. Cllr. Holt felt that a document listing key contacts as this would show the community that we are prepared. The Town Clerk will liaise with Cllr. Holt and look through the document and report back as to how it could be whittled down.

12. LIVE STREAMING OF MEETINGS AND PROJECTION OF DOCUMENTS: Cllr. Farrow proposed seconded by Cllr. Holt proposed that this be put on the back burner at the moment.

13. PROPERTY RELATED MATTERS – STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CEMETERY: Advice received from E.D.D.C. was that it would be less costly to do all the works needed at once, rather than piecemeal. A list of possible contractors had been supplied. Cllr. Sedgewick asked if there was a specification. The Town Clerk said that it was necessary to identify someone who could prepare a specification and action plan. The Deputy Clerk was asked to look into the matter.

14. PROPERTY RELATED MATTERS - OLD COURTHOUSE: The Town Clerk said that the damp proof specialist would start on 10th September. She is awaiting a response to the owner of a neighbouring property..

14. MATTERS OF URGENCY: None.

15. UPDATE ON OFFICE 365: the Deputy Clerk said that staff and Councillors were still getting to grips with this and would run the members' area and Teams side by side.pro tem.

Cllr. Sedgewick 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. Holt seconded the proposal. Agreed

16. QUOTES FOR PROPOSED WORKS – ELECTRICAL WORKS AT GUILDHALL: A quote had been received in the sum of £2395.28 to undertake works needed to bring the system into compliance. Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Holt, proposed that the quote be accepted. Agreed.

17. INSURANCE MATTERS: The Town Clerk reported on incidents in which damage has been suffered by or caused to vehicles

18. LEASE VALUATION: A meeting had been arranged with the solicitor regarding the lease valuation.

Signed Date