

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL
Held on Monday 24th May 2021 at 8.00 p.m. at Axminster Guildhall.

Present:

Town Mayor Cllr. Ms. J.J. Farrow
Deputy Town Mayor: Cllr. Mrs. A. G. Sedgewick,
Councillors: C.A. Doherty, S.P. Holt, Mrs. S.L.N. Leat, S. Sleigh,
 M.D.G. Spurway, O.S. Tucker and J.W. Walden (~~for part of meeting~~).

The Town Clerk (Miss H. Kirkcaldie) and the Deputy Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer,
(Mrs. Z. Adamson-Drage).

In attendance: Dist. Cllrs. Jackson and Moulding.

20 Members of the public. 0 1 representative of the Press.

2021/0195 ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR: The Deputy Mayor called for nominations.
Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Holt, proposed that Cllr. Farrow be re-elected. There
were no other nominations. Carried.

2021/0196 SIGNING OF DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE: Cllr. Farrow
signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

2021/0197 ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR: Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Walden,
proposed that Cllr. Sedgewick be re-elected. There were no other nominations
Carried.

2021/0198 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Cllr. Mynard and Cty/Dist. Cllr. Hall. Cllr.
Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Sedgewick, proposed that the absence of Cllr. Mynard on
grounds of ill health be approved for a further three months. Agreed.

2021/0199 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.

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

CLLR. DOHERTY DECLARED AN INTEREST AS BEING A MEMBER OF THE
LABOUR PARTY

CLLR. FARROW DECLARED AN INTEREST 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

Approved 21st June 2021, Min 2021/0248

TRUST AND AS A JOINT TENANT OF A TOWN COUNCIL ALLOTMENT AT
WOODBURY PARK ALLOTMENTS

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

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

CLLR. SLEIGH DECLARED AN INTEREST AS BEING REGISTERED WITH SOCIAL WORK ENGLAND.

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

CLLR. TUCKER DECLARED AN INTEREST AS BEING A MEMBER OF LYME REGIS SEA SCHOOL, LYME REGIS SAILING CLUB, THE CO-OP, A TRUSTEE OF AXMINSTER SKATEPARK STEERING CHARITY, THE LABOUR PARTY, THE CO-OPERATIVE PARTY, THE GENERAL, MUNICIPAL AND BOILER MEN'S UNION, UNITE THE UNION, THE LEAGUE AGAINST CRUEL SPORTS AND UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON STUDENT'S UNION.

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

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, AXMINSTER JOB CLUB THE LABOUR PARTY, COMMUNITY UNION, NATIONAL TRUST AND AS BEING SAFEGUARDING LEAD FOR AXMINSTER YOUTH CLUB.

2021/0200 TOWN FORUM – DECISIONS IN AXMINSTER: A member of the public, having congratulated the Town Mayor on her re-election, expressed concerns that groups such as Action in Axminster were taking decisions regarding matters which he felt should be referred to the Town or District Council for approval.

2021/0201 TOWN FORUM - NEWSLETTER: A member of the public welcomed the issue of a newsletter and suggested that it be done twice a year. He urged the provision of Councillors' telephone numbers. He suggested that Councillors talk to those who wanted to volunteer as many did not wish to be pinned down but were keen to help.

2021/0202 FINANCIAL MATTERS – APPROVAL OF APRIL PAYMENTS: Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Holt, proposed that these be approved. Agreed.

2021/0203 FINANCIAL MATTERS – ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND

ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN: The Deputy Clerk had circulated a report setting out the assertions on the Return along with the evidence to support them and her suggested response. She said that it was up to Councillors to decide on what they felt was the appropriate response, based on the evidence. She said the Return had to be submitted by end of June. She asked Councillors to let her have any comments by the end of the week. She explained that only the Assertions and the response would go to the external auditor who would then seek further information if felt necessary.

2021/0204 FINANCIAL MATTERS – FUNDING FOR GUILDHALL REDECORATION:

In view of the wide-range in the quotes for redecoration of the Guildhall, it had been suggested that the cost might be met by viring the money which had been allocated for improving the doors to the inner foyer towards the decoration instead. Cllr. Walden said that he was not supportive of such action. He felt that the door project was important in its own right and that it would be preferable to take the money needed for the redecoration from reserves. Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Holt proposed that the situation regarding the foyer doors be revisited. T

2021/0205 FINANCIAL MATTERS – RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER’S

REPORT: The Deputy Clerk said that she had been concentrating on preparing the Annual Return.

2021/0206 FINANCIAL MATTERS – SMALL GRANT REQUEST FROM ROYAL BRITISH LEGION:

CLLR. FARROW DECLARED AN INTEREST AS A MEMBER OF THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION AND LEFT THE CHAMBER FOR THIS ITEM.

Following discussion, Cllr. Tucker, seconded by Cllr. Holt, proposed that the grant of £700, as requested, be approved. Agreed.

CLLR. FARROW RETURNED TO THE CHAMBER.

2021/0207 UPDATING OF COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS: Cllr. Leat said that because of the proposed change in the day on which the meeting of the Finance and Strategy meeting was to be held, she would have to stand down from that Committee.

2021/0208 REVISION OF SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS: The Town Clerk explained that in order to enable the retention of Cllr. Leat’s expertise on the Planning Committee it had been necessary to change the schedule of meetings. Cllr. Farrow asked Councillors to check that they put the new dates in their diaries.

2021/0209 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP REPORT: Cllr. Sedgewick told members that there had been two Zoom meetings which had looked at which policies needed to be refreshed. She had attended training arranged by the District Council on the structure and delivery of the Local Plan. Plans were being put in place for public consultations. Thanks were paid the Mr. Knapman for his guidance.

2021/0210 MATTERS OF URGENCY: None.

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2021/0211 REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS: The Town Clerk said that the only change she felt needed consideration was to insert a clause to enable delegation of powers to the Town Clerk to enable continuity of business in an emergency. Events in the last fourteen months had highlighted the benefit in this. Cllr. Farrow said that she felt that this needed deeper research and proposed that the matter be deferred. Cllr. Sedgewick seconded the proposal. Agreed.

2021/0212 REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS: The Deputy Clerk said that she had no changes to put forward at present.

2021/0213 UPDATE ON SECTION 106 MATTERS: Dist. Cllr. Jackson said that she thought Jubilee Field was now in the ownership of the District Council. It will come to the Town Council once heads of terms have been agreed between the two Councils.

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. Walden seconded the proposal. Carried.

2021/0214 STAFFING MATTERS – RECRUITMENT TO CEMETERY GROUNDSKEEPER

POST: The Chairman of the Employment Committee reported that it had not been possible to appoint to the post based on the applications received. Options to consider were to advertise more widely, in line with the original recommendation of the Deputy Clerk, and to have a salary range rather than a fixed salary point. The Deputy Clerk said that she would research the necessary information by contacting other authorities. Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Holt, proposed that power to act be delegated to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. Agreed.

2021/0215 RAYMONDS HILL PLAY AREA: Cllr. Sleigh said that he had attended a site meeting with the landowners to consider alternative plots of land within the same general area. His preference was for the site as discussed originally by Cllr. Adamson-Drage. Following discussion, Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Walden, proposed that the Town Clerk contact the owners re-iterating the Town Council's preference and asking that they confirm their agreement to this and their willingness to grant a ten-year lease. Agreed.

2021/0216 QUOTE FOR GUILDHALL DECORATION: The Guildhall Management Committee had obtained three very different quotes and recommended that the lowest, in the sum of £10,285 be accepted. Cllr. Walden said that he would like to see all the quotes, and these will be circulated.

Cllr. Farrow proposed that the quote recommended by the Guildhall Management Committee be accepted, subject to insurance being verified, and that the funds be taken from reserves. Cllr. Walden seconded the proposal. Agreed.

2021/0217 QUOTE FOR BUILDING CONDITION SURVEYS: The Town Clerk said that the sum of £300 she had quoted at a previous meeting related to a different survey. She had since had an email quoting the price of £2000 to undertake the survey at the Guildhall and £1500 to do the survey at the Old Courthouse both excluding tax. Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Walden proposed that these quotes be accepted. Agreed.

Signature Date.....

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