

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Held at the Guildhall, on Monday 9th January 2017 at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Town Mayor: Cllr. P.G. Hayward
Deputy Mayor: L.A.Rowe,
Councillors: C. A. Doherty, G.S. Godbeer, I.L.Hall, D.R.H.Hull,
H.J.A. Jeffery, A.T. Moulding , Mrs. S.R. Spiller,
J.W. Walden, B.R.Watson and A.L. Young.

The Town Clerk (Miss H. Kirkcaldie).
The Deputy Town Clerk (Mrs. Z. Adamson-Drage)

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

2017/0001 APOLOGIES: Cllr. Mrs. D.J. Hull, Mrs. S.L.N. Leat and Cllr. M.D.Symes,.

2017/0002 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS:

CLLRS. DOHERTY, HAYWARD, GODBEER, D.R.H. HULL, MRS. SPILLER AND WATSON, ALL DECLARED PERSONAL INTERESTS AS BEING MEMBERS OF THE AXMINSTER GUILDHALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IN RESPECT OF ANY ITEMS RELATING TO THE GUILDHALL. CLLR. YOUNG, IN HER CAPACITY AS GUILDHALL MANAGER FOR WHICH SHE DECLARES A PECUNIARY INTEREST, HAS A DISPENSATION TO SPEAK ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE GUILDHALL PROVIDED THE PECUNIARY INTEREST IS NOT OF OVER-RIDING SIGNIFICANCE.

CLLRS. D.R.H. HULL, GODBEER, WALDEN AND WATSON ALL DECLARED PERSONAL INTERESTS AS BEING MEMBERS OF AXMINSTER COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE.

CLLR. HAYWARD DECLARED A PECUNIARY INTEREST AS CLERK TO ALL SAINTS PARISH COUNCIL AND CHARDSTOCK PARISH COUNCILS AND IN RESPECT OF HAVING A SPOUSE WORKING WITHIN THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE (IN RESPECT OF WHICH HE HAS A DISPENSATION TO SPEAK)

CLLR. D.R.H HULL DECLARED AN INTEREST AS HAVING BEEN ELECTED AS A PUBLIC MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS OF THE ROYAL DEVON AND EXETER NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

CLLR. MOULDING DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS BEING A MEMBER OF THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS:

ARC BEREAVEMENT, AXMINSTER AND DISTRICT HOSPISCARE, AXMINSTER HERITAGE LTD., AXMINSTER HOSPITAL LEAGUE OF FRIENDS, AXMINSTER MUSICAL THEATRE, AXMINSTER PATIENTS PARTICIPATION GROUP, AXMINSTER REGENERATION PROGRAMME BOARD, AXMINSTER TOWN CRICKET CLUB, CLOAKHAM LAWN SPORTS CENTRE, CLOAKHAM LAWN SPORTS CENTRE LTD., CLOWANCE CHARITABLE TRUST, FRIENDS OF AXMINSTER CHURCH, LYME REGIS GOLF CLUB, TONY COLES CHARITABLE TRUST, VIRTUE AND HONOUR LODGE NO 494, CONSERVATIVE PARTY, CONSERVATIVE CLUB, EAST DEVON CONSERVATIVE GROUP, DEVON COUNTY CONSERVATIVE GROUP, MEMBER OF THE CONSERVATIVE COUNCILLORS' ASSOCIATION.

HE ALSO DECLARED THAT AS THE PARENT OF A DISABLED ADULT SON HE HAD AN INTEREST IN MATTERS RELATING TO DISABLED ACCESS AND BENEFITS

CLLR. HALL DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS BEING A MEMBER OF THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS:

CLOAKHAM LAWN SPORTS CENTRE, CHAIRMAN AND TRUSTEE
MILLWEY RISE FOOTBALL CLUB
MILLWEY RISE COMMUNITY HALL USER GROUP - CHAIRMAN
LODGE VIRTUE AND HONOUR AXMINSTER NO. 494
AXMINSTER SKATE PARK TRUSTEE
TIVERTON AND HONITON CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION
GMB (GENERAL MUNICIPAL AND BOILER MEN'S) UNION
AXMINSTER COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE
AXMINSTER CONSERVATIVE CLUB

CLLR. MRS LEAT DECLARED A PECUNIARY INTEREST IN RELATION TO ANY MATTERS PERTAINING TO LAND OWNED BY BETTERMENT HOMES AS BEING IN LEGAL NEGOTIATION WITH THAT COMPANY.

2017/0003 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 12th DECEMBER 2016: It was resolved that these be approved and adopted subject to inclusion of Cllr. Moulding's interest and the inclusion of Cllr. Watson in the list of members of the Guildhall Management Committee.

2017/0004 POLICE REPORT: no report was available.

2017/0005 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: Cllr. Moulding said that the contract to provide fibre broadband to local businesses had been awarded to Gigaclear. He said that the first (upstream) phase of the flood improvement scheme had been completed and that £490,000 additional funding had been made available for the downstream works.

CLLRS. HALL AND MOULDING REITERATED THEIR INTERESTS AS MEMBERS OF CLOAKHAM LAWN SPORTS CENTRE WHICH HAD BEEN FLOODED PREVIOUSLY.

2017/0006 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS: Cllr. D.R.H. Hull said that the District Council had sent a more strongly worded letter to Mr. Colville M.P. regarding the inadequacies of the National House Building Council as a regulatory body. He urged members of the public who had been affected by substandard building to write to Mr. Colville and to the local Member of Parliament.

Cllr. Hall said that he had been researching housing delivery in East Devon.

A member of the public enquired about the collection of moneys due to the District Council from Developers. Cllr. Moulding said that there would be a big difference when Community Infrastructure Levy came into play as this would be collected prior to construction. Cllr. Godbeer replied that the system had been operated manually until recently but was now computerised and an additional officer was available to assist with improving the collection. The Mayor asked District Councillors to establish what sums were due to be spent in Axminster.

Cllr. Hall said that once such collection became the subject of legal dispute then processes could be long-drawn out.

Cllr. Hayward wondered how the collection rate at the District Council compared with other District Councils.

2017/0007 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS: the town centre had been noticeably quiet as a result of the start of the works on the substation adjacent to West Street as many people were put off by the diversion required for eastbound travellers. Residents in the Foxhill area were experiencing increased traffic as a consequence. It was hoped that the works would be finished earlier than the requested end date of 3rd February.

2017/0008 TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS: the Town Mayor had attended the following events:

The Rotary Christmas Lunch.

Meeting at East Devon to discuss Tough Choices regarding the trickle down effect on small authorities of funding cuts at County and District levels.

2017/0009 TOWN FORUM – APPEAL FOR FUNDS TO SPONSOR A DOCTOR IN SYRIA:

A member of the public thanked the local community for supporting this appeal which

had raised £10525.

2017/0010 TOWN FORUM – CHRISTMAS LUNCH FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS: Cllr. D.R.H. Hull proposed that a letter be sent to the organiser to thank her for her magnificent efforts.

2017/0011 TOWN FORUM – POOR QUALITY HOUSING: A resident said that members of the public questioned how developers whose houses were of substandard quality were permitted to continue building without a moratorium being placed on further applications until the existing new houses had been brought up to standard.

Cllr. Mrs. Young said that an approach should be made to Parliament to put legislation in place preventing such develop. Cllr. Walden said that the problem was nationwide. He said that self-certification by National House Builders' Council was not fit for purpose as it was self-regulated. Cllr. Hall said that a leaflet should be sent out to prospective purchasers assisting them in doing searches. The District Council was looking at whether it would be better if housing were built by them rather than developers.

Cllr. Moulding said that the standard of building was not a matter for the Planning Authority. Thereafter it as down to the contract between the builder and the purchaser. He said that the report from the All Party Parliamentary Group, led by Mr.Colville M.P. had made ten recommendations and he said that these were all very sensible.

Cllr. Godbeer questioned the role of mortgage lenders and felt that they should take a stronger view. Cllr. Hayward suggested that this aspect should be included in the report being repaired by the All Party Parliamentary Group recommendations.

Cllr. Young said that it would hit the developers where it hurt if they were debarred from developing land until the houses constructed had been deemed to be of an acceptable standard.

2017/0012 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12th DECEMBER 2017: None.

2017/0013 MATTERS OF URGENCY – HEALTH AND SAFETY MATTER: The Town Mayor proposed that a sum of up to £500 be approved for works to improve the lighting over the rear stage staircases and in the wings for use in the normal comings and goings of staff and contractors as the existing set up is geared at use during stage performances. It is intended that the work be done at the same time as the work on the main hall lights is under way. Cllr. Jeffery seconded the proposal. Carried.

2017/0014 MATTERS OF URGENCY – GARDEN PARTY NOMINATION: it was

resolved that the names of Cllrs. Mesdames Doherty, Spiller and Young and Messrs. Hayward and Watson be put in a hat and that the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk should pick a name from the hat the following day.

2017/0015 COMMITTEE REPORTS: These were not available as a result of staff ill-health and annual leave. It was resolved that the matter be deferred to the next meeting.

2017/0016 MATTERS ARISING FROM COMMITTEE REPORTS: Resolved that this be deferred to the next meeting.

2017/0017 FINANCIAL MATTERS – APPROVAL OF DECEMBER EXPENDITURE: details had been circulated to all Councillors.

CLLR. HAYWARD DECLARED A PECUNIARY INTEREST IN CHEQUE 6165 AS BEING THE RECIPIENT.

CLLR. JEFFERY DECLARED A PECUNIARY INTEREST IN CHEQUE 6173 AS BEING THE RECIPIENT. BOTH COUNCILLORS LEFT THE CHAMBER FOR THIS ITEM OF BUSINESS.

Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Watson, proposed that the payments be approved.
Agreed.

CLLRS. HAYWARD AND JEFFERY RETURNED TO THE CHAMBER.

2017/0018 FINANCIAL MATTERS – NOVEMBER BANK RECONCILIATION:
Resolved that this be approved.

2017/0019 FINANCIAL MATTERS – MATTERS APPROVED FOR EXPENDITURE BY TOWN MAYOR OR COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN – REPAIRS TO SMOKE ALARM.: The Town Clerk said that she had had to request a call from the engineers for the following morning as there had been a fault on the system.
Noted.

2017/0020 FINANCIAL MATTERS – MATTERS APPROVED FOR EXPENDITURE BY TOWN MAYOR OR COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN – REPAIRS TO C.C.T.V.:

Cllrs. Hayward said that this had involved the replacement of a failed battery. Noted.

2017/0021 FINANCIAL MATTERS – MATTERS APPROVED FOR EXPENDITURE BY TOWN MAYOR OR COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN – MEMBERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL BODIES: Cllr. Hayward proposed payment of subscriptions to various professional bodies at a cost of £171 in the name of the Deputy Town Clerk. Agreed.

2017/0022 FINANCIAL MATTERS - REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE – IMPROVEMENTS TO AXMINSTER PRIMARY SCHOOL LIBRARY: Cllr. Hayward, seconded by Cllr. Rowe, proposed that a contribution of £175 be made towards this project. Agreed, subject to the Town Clerk obtaining confirmation of the appropriate power for this expenditure. Cllrs. D.R.H. Hull, Jeffery, Mrs. Spiller opposed the motion. Cllr. Hall abstained.

2017/0023 FINANCIAL MATTERS - PARISHES TOGETHER FUND REPORT – PROVISION OF DEFIBRILLATOR IN PUBLIC SPACES: following due discussion it was resolved that Axminster work in partnership with All Saints and Chardstock to install such equipment and provide appropriate training across the three parishes. Cllr. Mrs. Spiller proposed that this project be supported. Cllr. Walden seconded the proposal. Agreed. All Saints Parish Council will submit the application.

CLLR. HAYWARD ABSTAINED ON ACCOUNT OF HIS POSITION AS CLERK TO ALL SAINTS AND CHARDSTOCK PARISH COUNCILS.

2017/0024 FINANCIAL MATTERS - RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT: Mrs. Adamson-Drage said that she had been working on the budget and precept for the coming year. After a meeting she and the Mayor had had with the Internal Auditor that morning she said she would be moving on to deal with matters relating to the financial year end and preparation of a draft year end return.

The Responsible Financial Officer then referred to the report showing progress against budget for the third quarter of the year. She highlighted the various areas where expenditure exceeded the budget, particularly in respect of cemetery machinery repairs and servicing. There was a debate as to whether a separate cost centre for all machinery be created rather than it being apportioned to, say Risk or Cemetery. This will be considered for the next financial year. Cllr. Walden suggested that it be an equipment cost centre rather than machinery.

Other areas mentioned as having overspend were the Guildhall and Pippins – the latter being skewed by an inaccurate utility bill.

The report was noted.

2017/0025 RESPONSE TO DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION ON PUBLIC SPACE: Cllr Walden proposed that the following response be submitted:

That the list of Dog Exclusion Areas be accepted, subject to the addition of the upper part of the proposed Jubilee Field which will include the part with the Play Area.

That the lower part of the proposed Jubilee Field be a dogs-off lead area.

That the path at the edge of the proposed Jubilee Field linking Boxfield Road with Dukes Way be a dog on lead area.

That all other public access parts of the town be dog on lead areas.

It was noted that separate regulations govern Public Rights of Way.

FOUR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC LEFT AT THIS POINT

2017/0026 RESPONSE TO DISTRICT COUNCIL INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN REVIEW: it was resolved that Cllr. Moulding would respond to this document on behalf of the Town Council after consultation with the Neighbourhood Plan steering group.

2017/0027 HIGHWAY MATTERS – WEST STREET CLOSURE UPDATE: see minute 2017/0007 above.

2017/0028 HIGHWAY MATTERS- DRAINAGE CONCERNS AT WEST STREET OUTSIDE PETS AT HOME PREMISES: Cllr. Moulding reported that the drains had been jetted and the problem lay within the Pets at Home Premises and was their responsibility. A letter will be sent to them requesting that they take appropriate action to resolve the problem as it affects both the pavement and the road.

2017/0029 HIGHWAY MATTERS – SIGNAGE AT FORMER RODNEY RENDELL SITE: the delay in re-instating this signage lies with South West Highways.

2017/0030 HIGHWAY MATTERS – PERMISSIVE PATH UPDATE: the project cannot be started until the legal agreement has been signed which has been a protracted process.

2017/0031 JUBILEE FIELD: nothing to report.

2017/0032 DATES FOR COMMITTEE MEETINGS: resolved to defer this item until February meeting.

2017/0033 REPORT ON DECEMBER EAST DEVON LOCAL ACTION GROUP MEETING: the minutes from this meeting had been circulated to members and Cllr. Moulding gave a more detailed report on those aspects of the meeting which were relevant to Axminster, such as the work of the housing group, R.I.S.E., the Job Club and The Project. Other topics included vandalism and speeding in Lyme Road.

2017/0034 SETTING BUDGET AND PRECEPT: the Town Mayor and Responsible Financial Officer had prepared a draft budget for precept which had been

circulated to all members. This was discussed and it was resolved that the Precept be set at £195,934. A working party will consider options for other budgetary items and any expenditure related to this will be taken from reserves and the recommendations with likely costings put to full Council for approval.

2017/035 CORRESPONDENCE:

- a. Letters Received
- b. Meetings
 - i. To note L.A.G. 26th January at Colyton. CLLR. HAYWARD WILL ATTEND.
- c. Reports Received - the following reports are available for consultation in the office:

The Deputy Mayor 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.

2017/0036 SETTING BUDGET AND PRECEPT – EMPLOYMENT ASPECTS: There was discussion regarding the best way to take forward various projects in management terms whether by taking on additional staff on a short term contract or by using an outside contractor or whether Councillors themselves should be responsible.

It was resolved to prepare a forward plan for the various projects and prioritise them and this would be considered at a special meeting.

Cllr. Hayward reported on a meeting he and the Clerk and the Responsible Financial Officer had had with the internal auditor.

Signed Date.....