

Axminster Town Council

Office Hours
Monday, Wednesday, Thursday
10am – 12 noon

Mayor: Cllr Jill Farrow
Locum Clerk: Paul Hayward

www.axminstertowncouncil.gov.uk



THE GUILDHALL
WEST STREET
AXMINSTER
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Tel. 01297 32088

Email: Clerk@axminstertowncouncil.gov.uk

Axminster Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Employment Committee meeting.

APPROVED at the Employment Committee meeting held 04/02/2022.

Held on Thursday 27th January 2022 at 7.00 pm in Axminster Guildhall, Churchill Room.

Present: Cllrs. Sedgewick (AS) (Chair), Birnie (SBi), Farrow (JF), Paice (EP) and Walden (JW). Locum Town Clerk, Paul Hayward (PH).

Part One (Open) session of this meeting was audio recorded and this recording will be available for one year from the date of the meeting upon request.

No members of the public were in attendance.

Public Forum session.

No members of the public present. Chair closed the Public Forum session at 7.05pm

EC 22/001

To note members of committee present:

Attendance at meeting shown above.

EC 22/002

To note and, if thought fit, to approve apologies for absence:

Cllr. Holt (SH). Work engagement.

Cllr. Mynard (MM). Pre-existing health condition.

Cllr. Spurway (MS). Conflicting personal engagement.

Absences noted and approval of reasons proposed from the Chair. Resolved unanimously.

EC 22/003

To note members of committee not otherwise present and to receive any other apologies for absence:

None.

EC 22/004

To receive any declarations of interest from members of the committee in relation to items of business on this agenda and to note any dispensations previously afforded:

This does not preclude the need for members to declare any additional interests that may arise during this meeting.

None declared.

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EC 22/005

To note the minutes of the Employment Committee meeting held on 16th November 2021 (as approved by FULL Council on 13th December 2021) and to consider any matters arising from those minutes:

Noted. No matters arising.

EC 22/006

To consider any matters listed on this agenda that Councillors consider should be dealt with as confidential business as per the provisions of The Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960:

None raised by committee members.

EC 22/007

To note resignation of the Administration Assistant and to consider proposals for recruitment of a replacement member of staff.

Chair noted and received resignation with sadness but accepted why the member of staff was leaving. Chair wished to express thanks from everyone at Axminster Town Council for the employee's service to the Council and community and wished them well in their future plans. Chair proposed that consideration of the recruitment of a replacement member of staff be deferred until the Local Council Consultant's report on staffing structure had been received, reviewed and considered. A proposal was made in relation to the Administration Assistant's remuneration but this was deferred by the Chair until the next meeting of the FULL Council on 14/2/2022 to be considered in Part Two (Confidential Session). Noted.

JF proposed, seconded by Chair, that the motion was agreeable "in principle" but asked the RFO to prepare a report for FULL Council to facilitate further discussion. Resolved.

EC 22/008

To consider proposal to prohibit smoking (incl. e-cigarettes) by Axminster Town Council employees at the front of the Guildhall building (southern elevation); to further consider proposal for creation of alternative amenity/facility elsewhere on the site to accommodate the smoking activity.

PH had sought advice from NALC as to the legality of such a proposal and had been advised that the Council, as the owner of the building, could decide what activity took place on its own premises without contravening employment law or disadvantaging its employees (if it provided amenity elsewhere). **It was therefore proposed by Chair, seconded by JF, that smoking by Council employees be prohibited at the front of the Guildhall building but that this activity would be permitted elsewhere on site at a location to be determined. Resolved unanimously. It was further proposed, and seconded, that the decision on alternative amenity should be deferred to the Operations Committee for consideration and resolution.**

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EC 22/009

To consider proposed expenditure for Play Area Inspection training and certification for Council employees at a cost of £200 to £410 per participant.

It was felt that this training should be made available to all outdoor/grounds staff in the future as a matter of principle given Council's new obligations and duties in this regard. However, for the immediate needs of the Council, it was proposed by JF and seconded by Chair, that the Council should authorise expenditure upto £410 to allow the Locum Clerk (PH) to attend this training and obtain the relevant certifications, on the condition that - were PH to leave the Council's employment before 31st July 2022 - these training costs would be reimbursed to the Town Council by PH or his other Council employer(s). resolved unanimously.

EC 22/010

To consider proposed variation of Contract of Employment for Locum Deputy Clerk to recognise additional responsibilities of role as Locum Town Clerk and to consider variation in proposed (weekly) hours of employment within that role.

It was proposed by Chair, seconded by JF, that Contract of Employment (PH) be varied to recognise additional duties and responsibilities and that weekly hours be increased from 24 to 37 within this contract of employment, backdated to the 17th December. Matters pertaining to remuneration were deferred to a future meeting of this committee once the Employee Structure (Benchmarking) Report had been received and reviewed. Resolved unanimously.

EC 22/011

To receive update from Locum Clerk as to ongoing recruitment exercise for Outdoor Groundskeeper roles (x2) and to consider (and agree upon) next steps (noting previous recommendations of the Operations Committee regarding provision of 3rd party contracted services to manage grounds maintenance workload).

It was proposed by Chair that this agenda item be moved into Part Two (Confidential) session due to the nature of the business to be considered. Seconded by JF. Resolved.

EC 22/012

To consider any matters considered as urgent by presiding Chair for discussion only.

Committee noted the regrettable delay in receiving the Benchmarking/Council Structure Report but recognised that there were mitigating factors behind that delay which had been conveyed to members and officers by the commissioned consultant.

JF 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. JW seconded the proposal. Resolved.

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Part One audio recording was stopped. Meeting moved into Part Two session.

EC 22/013 (IC)

To consider matter pertaining to former employee of the Town Council:

This matter was considered in Part Two session and the matter was subsequently deferred to a future meeting of the Employment committee by resolution.

EC 22/014 (IC)

To consider report from Local Council Consultant, James Corrigan, who was commissioned to undertake a review and assessment of the Council's employment needs, and structure, and to make recommendations to Council as to improvements.

This matter was considered in Part Two session and the matter was subsequently deferred to a future meeting of the Employment committee by resolution.

EC 22/015 (IC)

To consider report from Locum Clerk on recent employee performance reviews (appraisals) and to consider revision to weekly hours of work for one employee at their request; this matter also to include possible revisions to that employee's annual leave entitlement calendar period.

Report provided by Locum Clerk.

This matter was considered in Part Two session and recommendations proposed, seconded and resolved relating to employees of the Town Council; details of which are considered confidential and thus are not outlined or reported within these minutes.

Locum Clerk: Please note and action accordingly.

EC 22/011 (IC) (brought forward into Part Two from Part One)

To receive update from Locum Clerk as to ongoing recruitment exercise for Outdoor Groundskeeper roles (x2) and to consider (and agree upon) next steps (noting previous recommendations of the Operations Committee regarding provision of 3rd party contracted services to manage grounds maintenance workload).

The Chair proposed that this matter be further deferred until the Staffing Report (as above) had been received and reviewed, whereupon a further consideration of this matter could be undertaken with all relevant facts and figures to hand, especially with regard to the management of grounds staff in any revised Council employment structure. Agreed. Consultation to continue between EmployComm and OPSComm. regarding the delivery of grounds maintenance on Council's land-holdings and building assets.

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With no further business to attend to, the Chair closed the meeting at 9.00pm.

Signed Date