

Axminster Town Council

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

Mayor: Cllr Jill Farrow
Town Clerk: Paul Hayward

www.axminstertowncouncil.gov.uk



THE GUILDHALL
WEST STREET
AXMINSTER
DEVON
EX13 5NX

Tel. 01297 32088

Email: Clerk@axminstertowncouncil.gov.uk

Axminster Town Council:

Minutes of the meeting of the Strategy & Finance Committee.

MINUTES APPROVED on 25th April 2022; Part ONE Minutes (Redacted)

Held in person on Monday 28th March 2022 at 8.00 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Farrow (JF) (Chair), Sedgewick (AS) (Vice-Chair), Birnie (SBi.), Burrough (KB), Holt (SH), Leat (SL), Spurway (MS) and Walden (JW). (*Meeting was declared as quorate*).
Town Clerk, Paul Hayward.

Chair welcomed all in attendance.

Chair highlighted the building fire precautions and alerted those present to the fire exits.

Chair also reminded those present of their personal obligations in relation to the ongoing CV19 situation and health guidance in that regard.

Public Forum session.

No members of the public present. Chair closed the Public Forum session at 8.05pm

SF 22/030

To note members of committee present:

Attendance at meeting shown above.

SF 22/031

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

Cllr. Booker (A). Absence and reason (Work) noted and apology/reason approved.

Proposed by Chair, seconded by AS, that these apologies for absence be approved and absence noted. Resolved unanimously.

SF 22/032

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

None.

Continued overleaf.

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SF 22/033

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: *A declaration at this point does not preclude the need for members to declare any additional interests that may arise during this meeting.*

No interests declared.

At the FULL Council meeting held 14/02/2022, Cllr. Farrow was afforded a dispensation* to discuss and vote upon matters pertaining to parish allotments. This dispensation applies until May 2023 (unless rescinded prior to that date) and is afforded in respect of Cllr. Farrow's disclosable pecuniary interests as set out in the Register of Members Interests.

* *Localism Act 2011 (s.33)*

SF 22/034

To consider and, if thought fit, to approve the minutes of the S&FComm. meeting held on 28th February 2022 and to consider any matters arising from those minutes:

Two amendments requested by SH re: veracity of record re: those in attendance.

Approval of revised, substantive minutes proposed by Chair, seconded by JW. Resolved unanimously. *No matters arising.*

Chair to sign minutes once formal amendments made and paper copies available.

SF 22/035

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.

SF 22/036

To consider matters pertaining to Council's Risk Management and Assessment (RMA) procedure/protocol:

a) **To consider draft Risk Management and Assessment report for Axminster Town Council for the period 2021-2022; members to review and revise as necessary and, if thought fit, to recommend for approval by Full Council at next possible opportunity:**

Town Clerk reported that, despite best efforts, the final Risk Assessment had not been completed due to staff resourcing issues.

Continued overleaf.

SF 22/036

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To consider matters pertaining to Council's Risk Management and Assessment (RMA) procedure/protocol (continued):

Town Clerk suggested that the FULL Council consider this matter on the 11th April (in context of the forthcoming 21-22 AGAR submission) and accept that Council would be obliged to record a NO statement against the relevant AGAR assurance section but could offer some mitigation and show evidence that the Risk Assessment had been partially completed and significant progress made from what was accepted to be baseline position of non-compliance.

Proposed by Chair, seconded by JW, that this matter be deferred to the FULL Council meeting on the 11th April 2022. Resolved unanimously.

b) To consider and, if thought fit, to approve Council's draft (substantive) Risk Management Assessment Strategy (Policy) [This revised version incorporates the combined roles of Town Clerk and RFO as per recent Council decisions].

Chair thanked Town Clerk for bringing this revised and amended document together in time for the committee meeting. SH suggested that the final version (for approval) be termed the Risk Management Assessment Policy (rather than a Strategy).

It was subsequently proposed by Chair, seconded by SH, that the Committee approve the adoption of the Risk Management Assessment Policy incorporating the revisions as above. Resolved unanimously.

Town Clerk: Please note and ensure the document is published and catalogued accordingly.

SF22/037

To consider matters pertaining to Financial matters:

a) To consider update on the Council's Asset Register re-assessment and re-valuation project; RFO to present report.

Town Clerk had circulated a report to members prior to the meeting which was noted.

Chair thanked Town Clerk for his work in this respect.

It was proposed by Chair that part of the report (and recommendations therein) be considered as a Part Two agenda matter later this evening (see SF22/042(IC)). Agreed.

SF 22/038

To consider any matters considered as urgent by the presiding Chair:

None raised by Chair.

Continued overleaf.

SF 22/039

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AS 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. SL seconded the proposal. Resolved.

Part ONE recording was stopped at this point and the meeting moved into Part TWO (Confidential) session whereupon recording was resumed.

SF 22/040 (IC)

To consider matters pertaining to building tenancies and hires; to receive report from Town Clerk on ongoing tenancy matters and consider future leases/licences and revisions thereof in light of recent legal advice received by the Council:

Town Clerk provided a report to members following a recent meeting with the Council's legal representatives. Five proposals/recommendations were resolved (which are redacted due to the commercial and legal confidentiality of the subject matter) including one which is to be brought before FULL Council on 11th April 2022 (again, as a Part Two matter in closed session). **Proposed by Chair, seconded by JW. Resolved unanimously.**

SF 22/041 (IC)

To consider an application from an organisation seeking Grant Award/Financial assistance from the Town Council which would be outside of the approved Grant Award Policy:

Chair declared her personal interest as a governor to Axminster Community Primary Academy. Noted.

Town Clerk had circulated a grant funding request application from an organisation not operating within Axminster parish boundaries. After discussion on the merits of the application, **it was proposed by SH, seconded by JW, that the committee did NOT support the application given that the applicant was outside of Axminster Parish. Resolved unanimously.**

Town Clerk: Please convey committee's decision to the applicant and respectfully suggest that the organisation approach their local Parish Council / DCC for grant support.

Continued overleaf.

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SF 22/042 (IC)

To consider update on the Council's Asset Register re-assessment and re-valuation project; RFO to present report based on recent valuation advice received.

After reviewing the report from the RFO, and considering the implications outlined therein in terms of risk and financial exposure, **it was proposed by Chair, seconded by AS, that the Council should immediately seek to uplift their insured cover limit on the 3 public buildings owned by the Council (Guildhall, Old Courthouse and Cemetery chapel(s)) by 20% to mitigate against the potential risk of non-recoverable VAT in the event of an incurred "total-loss" requiring demolition and rebuild. The arrangements for the uplift to be delegated to the RFO to action. Resolved unanimously.**

Town Clerk: Please note and action accordingly and bring back to FULL Council on 11/4 as a Part Two S&FCOMM. recommendation for ratification when uplift premium figures known.

With no further business to attend to, the Chair closed the meeting at 9.20pm.

Signed Date 25th April 2022