

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 Annual Meeting of the FULL Council

MINUTES APPROVED at FULL Council meeting 13th June 2022

Held in person on Monday 9th May 2022 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Farrow (JF) (Chair), Sedgewick (AS) (Vice-Chair), Birnie (SBI.), Bourne (ABO.), Brooker (S) (SBr.), Burrough (KB), Holt (SH), Huskisson (AH), Leat (SL), Mynard (MM), Paice (EP), Spurway (MS), Steadman (BS) and Walden (JW) (*Meeting was quorate*).

Town Clerk, Paul Hayward (TC).

EDDC Councillors, Sarah Jackson and Andrew Moulding.

Victoria Robinson (EDDC Switch – guest speaker).

2 members of the public.

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.

Presentation from Victoria Robinson, EDDC SWITCH Team.

Questions from members.

Chair thanked Victoria for her time and for the information provided.

Chair closed the Public Forum at 7.15pm.

AM22/001

To elect the Chair (Mayor) of the Town Council

Vice-Chair, AS, took the Chair to bring this agenda item for consideration.

As "Father of the Council" JW spoke to thank Cllr. Farrow for her work in the role for the last 12 months over a period of upheaval, change and a great many challenges. JW proposed that JF be re-elected as Chair (Mayor) for the forthcoming Council year (until May 2023). Seconded by BS. Resolved 13 votes for, none against, 1 abstention (JF).

AM22/002

Signing of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office by the Chair (Mayor).

JF signed the declaration, duly witnessed by the Proper Officer.

Continued overleaf.

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AM22/003

Opening remarks to the Annual Meeting from the Chair (Mayor).

The Chair thanked members present (and the public) for their support and stressed that it was an honour to serve the Council and the wider community and that she would do so to the best of her ability. JF thanked all members for their hard work and enthusiasm, the Council's officers for their diligence and professionalism and the countless volunteers throughout the town who give up their time and energy willingly to make Axminster a better, happier and more vibrant place to live and work.

AM22/004

To elect the Vice-Chair (Deputy Mayor) of the Town Council

KB proposed that SH be elected as Vice-Chair (Deputy Mayor) for the forthcoming Council year (until May 2023). SH thanked KB for the kind nomination but declined to stand at this time. Subsequently, JW proposed that AS be re-elected as Vice-Chair (Deputy Mayor) for the forthcoming Council year (until May 2023).

Seconded by SBi. Resolved 13 votes for, none against, 1 abstention (AS).

Chair thanked AS for her support over the last 12 months.

AS thanked members for their vote of confidence and echoed JW's sentiments regarding the Mayor, Cllr. Farrow. AS reiterated her commitment to the town and residents.

AM22/005

To note members of committee present:

Attendance at meeting shown above.

AM22/006

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

Cllr. Brooker, A (ABr). Absence noted and reason and apology approved (work).

Proposed by Chair, seconded by JW. Resolved unanimously.

AM22/007

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

Cllr. Ian Hall (DCC/EDDC) and Hon. Footpath Warden, John Vanderwolfe had sent their apologies. Noted.

Continued overleaf.

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AM22/008

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.

None declared. Dispensation afforded to Cllr. Farrow (14/02/2022) was noted.

AM22/009

To review and note the minutes of the previous Annual Meeting of the Council held on Monday 24th May 2021, as published online and circulated to members, and to consider any matters arising from those minutes; these minutes having previously been approved on June 21st 2021.

Minutes were noted. No matters arising.

AM22/010

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.

AM22/011

To consider financial matters requiring urgent attention:

a) To appoint the Council's Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) for 2022-23.

Chair proposed that Paul Hayward be re-appointed as Council's RFO for the coming year. Seconded AS. Resolved unanimously.

b) To consider payment of Chair's (Mayor's) Allowance for 2022-23.

It was proposed by Chair, seconded by JW, that the budgeted allowance of £1000 be made available to the Mayor/Chair to be used in the execution of her civic duties. Resolved unan.

Chair stressed that any such expenditure would be occasional and in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and she wished to assure members of Council and the public that any such funding was audited and published for transparency.

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c) To consider payment of Councillor Allowances for FY 2022-23; RFO to outline legislation.

RFO highlighted the legislative basis for this allowance and the amounts potentially involved, which would come from the Council's annual expenditure budget. No such budget had been set for FY22-23. JF declared that she would not wish to claim such a personal allowance, a position shared by JW. It was noted that the inability of co-opted members to also claim the allowance appeared a little inequitable and might deter people from putting themselves forward to stand as a member of the Council.

Chair asked that this matter be brought before the Strategy & Finance Committee when they started to consider the FY23-24 budget and that a suitable sum be added to the Council's budget in anticipation of local council elections in 2023 (the maximum sum to be claimed being £4600 approx.).

d) To consider Council's Insurance matters for the forthcoming year; RFO to speak on this issue.

RFO highlighted current uncertainty and volatility in the Local Authority Insurance marketplace and the recent price increases seen in other authorities. SL echoed these concerns and offered to assist using her professional experience if that would assist Council. Chair thanked SL for her kind offer. RFO was asked to liaise with our current insurance and bring this matter forward to SFCOMM by July for review and assessment of renewal quotations.

e) To confirm Council's bank signatories and to revise/amend as deemed necessary and/or appropriate.

As proposed that the signatories remain as currently mandated. Seconded by Chair. Resolved unanimously.

RFO highlighted that three additional signatories were authorised at an earlier meeting of the Council and that these were currently being processed. Noted.

f) To consider and, if thought fit, to approve the Council's membership of NALC/DALC for 2023.

It was proposed by Chair, seconded by JW, that Council renew its membership of the Joint County and National Association for the 22/23 period. Resolved unanimously.

Chair noted that the membership fee was always due for payment prior to the Annual Meeting and asked the Proper Officer to record the usage and contacts with the Association to ascertain whether Council obtained good value for the costs expended. JW stated that the membership fee was akin to an insurance policy premium. Noted.

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AM22/012

To consider planning matters:

a) To consider any planning applications requiring urgent attention:

22/0611/FUL – Pinneywood Farm, Axminster, EX13 5RT

Demolition of existing agricultural building and erection of a single dwelling.

It was proposed by SL, seconded by EP, that Council supported this application but was mindful of the recent Natural England ruling on planning development in the Axe Valley catchment area and that, as such, Council wished to seek guidance from the LPA (EDDC) as to the manner in which this application would be determined. Resolved unanimously.

220838/FUL – 57 Woodbury Way, Axminster, EX13 5QY

It was noted that this application had subsequently been withdrawn.

b) To consider whether the Town Council wishes to respond to the request for a licensing application for the Axminster Showground for Yarty Party (in an adjacent parish).

KB declared a personal (but non-pecuniary) interest in this matter as a non-remunerated director of Yarty Party organisation.

Chair proposed that the Council raise no objections to the licence and support the event as much as possible within the constraints of the powers available to the Council in light of the significant tourism and economic benefits the event brings to the town. Seconded by EP. Resolved 13 votes for, none against and one abstention (KB).

Chair asked KB to convey the Council's support to the organisers and their appreciation for the time and effort that goes into arranging and running this annual event.

c) To consider whether the Town Council wishes to respond to the DCC Planning Application for Axminster Library (HB/DCC/4296/2022) for the replacement of the existing felt roof with identical with additional/upgraded insulation material; replacement of asbestos roof with a composite roof; replacement of asbestos wall cladding with composite wall cladding to match roof.

Chair proposed that the Council wholeheartedly support this application to improve the library and remove any dangerous materials from the building fabric. Seconded by JW. Resolved unanimously.

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AM22/013

To receive annual reports from the Chairs of Council's Committees as below * :

- i) Employment Committee
- ii) Operations Committee
- iii) Planning Committee
- iv) Strategy & Finance Committee

* Presentation of these reports was held over from the Annual Parish Meeting held on 4th April 2022 at the direction of the Chair of the Town Council, Cllr. J farrow.

The Chair explained why this matter had been brought back to Council (having previously been addressed at the Annual Parish Meeting in April) and asked the Clerk to create a hyperlink to the relevant section of the website. Noted (see below)

http://www.axminstertowncouncil.gov.uk/Annual_Parish_Meeting_19720.aspx

AM22/014

To consider membership of Council committees and working parties.

Chair suggested that every member of the Council serve on at least 2 committee or working party groups to ease the burden on those members that currently sat on far more. Members were asked to contact the Clerk to volunteer for those committees that were of interest to them. Clerk was asked to add the new Sustainability WP to the committee matrix. Noted.

AM22/015

To consider nominations for Axminster Town Council's Hon. Footpath (P3) warden.

Clerk confirmed that incumbent HFW, John Vanderwolfe (JV), had kindly agreed to continue in the role for another year. **JW proposed that JV be appointed for a further 12 months. Seconded by SH. Resolved unanimously.**

Chair asked Clerk to convey Council's thanks to JV for his time and energy in this role. Noted.

AM22/016

To consider whether the Town Council wishes to appoint an Hon. Tree warden for the parish to monitor & assess Council's tree stock and to offer advice and guidance for future tree planting and to offer advice to the Council on any tree works that are deemed necessary for amenity, public safety or to mitigate risk.

It was agreed by members of the Council that this would be a positive step for the Council given its landholdings and the number of trees in its care. Clerk was asked to make urgent enquiries to identify any candidates for the role and bring this matter to FULL Council on the 13th June. Noted.

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AM22/017

To consider the review and, if thought fit, the re-adoption of the Town Council's Code of Member Conduct policy.

In light of recent changes to the EDDC Code of Conduct policy and protocol, the Chair proposed that this matter be deferred until a later meeting of the FULL Council whereupon the Clerk could provide a summary briefing for the proposed changes that would affect members of the Town Council. Thereafter, Councillors could decide whether to adopt the model Code of Conduct Policy as was recommended by the District Council (who act as the Standards Body for all authorities in East Devon). Agreed. Noted.

Clerk: Please add this matter to the next agenda for the FULL Council.

AM22/018

To consider any matters of urgency for noting/Chair's announcements:

None raised.

AM22/019

To note the date of the next ANNUAL meeting of the Town Council; 15th May 2023 * unless circumstances necessitate a different date. Noted.

** This takes in account the likelihood of the Town Council elections being held on 4th May 2023.*

With no further business to deal with, the Chair closed the meeting at 20.15pm.

Signed Date; 13th June 2022

Axminster Town Council: Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the FULL Council 9/5/2022

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