

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 FULL Council

MINUTES APPROVED 27th June 2022; Part ONE version (Redacted).

Held in person on Monday 13th June 2022 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Farrow (JF) (Chair), Sedgewick (AS) (Vice-Chair), Birnie (SBi.), Bourne (ABo.), Brooker (A) (ABr.), Brooker (S) (SBr.), Holt (SH), Huskisson (AH), Leat (SL), Paice (EP), Spurway (MS), Steadman (BS) and Walden (JW) (*Meeting was quorate*).

Town Clerk, Paul Hayward (TC).

Council Administrator, Sarah Jackson (CA) (*also representing EDDC as Ward Member*).
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.

No public representations.

JW paid tribute to former Councillor, and Mayor of Axminster on two occasions, Michael Steer, who had passed away recently. JW acknowledged the debt of gratitude that the town owed Mr. Steer for both his civic contributions but also those in the wider community. JW asked that the Mayor send a letter of condolence to the family on Council's behalf which Chair confirmed she was happy to arrange. Chair closed the Public Forum session at 7.05pm

FC22/122

To note members of committee present:

Attendance at meeting shown above.

FC22/123

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

Cllr. Burrough. Absence noted and reason and apology approved (conflicting engagement).

Proposed by Chair, seconded by Vice-chair. Resolved unanimously.

FC22/124

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

Cllr. Mynard. Absent. Noted.

No other apologies received.

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FC22/125

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.

The dispensation afforded to Cllr. Farrow (14/02/2022) was noted.

FC22/126

i) To consider and, if thought fit, to approve the minutes of the Annual meeting of the FULL Council held on 9th May 2022 and to consider any matters arising from those minutes:

Approval of the minutes proposed by Chair, seconded by MS. Resolved unanimously.

Minutes signed by Chair as a true and faithful record of the business of that meeting.

ii) Matters arising from those minutes: None raised.

FC22/127

i) To consider and, if thought fit, to approve the minutes of the meeting of the FULL Council held on 16th May 2022 and to consider any matters arising from those minutes:

It was proposed from the Chair that the consideration of these minutes be deferred until the 27th June 2022, when an Extraordinary meeting of the Council was to take place. Resolved unanimously.

ii) Matters arising from those minutes: Similarly deferred to 27/06/2022.

FC22/128

To note the minutes of the committee meetings listed below and to consider any matters arising:

- a) Employment Committee meeting - 17th May 2022
- b) Planning Committee meeting - 30th May 2022
- c) Strategy and Finance Committee meeting - 30th May 2022
- d) Operations Committee meeting - 7th June 2022

It was proposed from the Chair that the consideration of these minutes be deferred until the 27th June 2022, when an Extraordinary meeting of the Council was to take place. Resolved unanimously.

Continued overleaf.

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FC22/129

To consider the recommendations from those committees (as per schedule circulated to members & published online) and, if thought fit, to approve these as Council policy (by way of resolution) *

** Only recommendations which fall outside of the relevant Committee terms of reference require FULL Council approval, unless the relevant Committee has formally deferred the decision to FULL Council, as specified within the minutes of that meeting.*

It was proposed from the Chair that the consideration of these minutes be deferred until the 27th June 2022, when an Extraordinary meeting of the Council was to take place. Resolved unanimously.

FC22/130

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. Items already scheduled for Part Two consideration (FC22/139 (IC) and 140 (IC) below, were noted).

FC22/131

To consider Council's financial matters:

a) To consider and, if thought fit, to approve payments for May 2022 (£25277.60)
Financial report circulated to members before meeting.

Chair proposed payment of accounts due for May. Seconded by JW. Resolved unanimously.

b) To receive, and note, Responsible Financial Officer's Report and financial pack for May 2022 in the new standardised format. Noted.

c) Questions to the RFO on these accounts/financial reports.

None raised.

d) To receive update on the ongoing review and audit of the FY21-22 accounts.

It was proposed from the Chair that the consideration of these minutes be deferred until the 27th June 2022, when an Extraordinary meeting of the Council was to take place. Resolved unanimously.

e) To consider proposal that an Extraordinary meeting of the FULL Council be held on Monday 27th June 2022 (prior to the scheduled Strategy & Finance Committee meeting) to consider and, if thought fit, approve Sections One and Two of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR3) and to receive the Internal Auditor's report for FY21-22.

Proposed from the Chair. Resolved unanimously.

Clerk: Please note and arrange meeting accordingly.

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FC22/131

To consider Council's financial matters (continued):

f) To consider any matters pertaining to the Town Council's ongoing Risk Management Assessments.

None raised. No further action at this time.

g) To note the outcome of the EDDC Cabinet meeting held 8th June 2022 with regard to the proposed funding arrangements for Axminster Skate-Park tranche 2.

It was noted that EDDC cabinet had voted unanimously to recommend to the FULL EDDC that £100,000 be used to fund the 2nd phase of the Axminster Skatepark (in conjunction with the Town Council's resolved £82,000 contribution). This matter would now be considered on 20th July 2022 at EDDC whereupon a final decision would be made.

Subsequently, it was proposed by Chair, seconded by BS, that the Town Council seek to draw down the £13,135 of S106 funding allocation for "OS Project" in order to cover the costs of the skatepark security and CCTV installation (with wi-fi connectivity) as recommended by both the local Police team and David Whelan (EDDC - Community Safety Coordinator). Resolved unanimously. Clerk was duly delegated to proceed on Council's behalf. Noted.

FC22/132

To consider planning matters:

a) To consider any planning applications awaiting consideration (and decision)
Hyperlinks to EDDC website can be found using the blue highlighted applications references. None at the time of the agenda publication.

b) To consider proposal from Cllr. Walden that this Council should seek the support of the three EDDC ward members for Axminster to request that EDDC initiate planning enforcement action under Section 215 of the Town and County Planning Act 1990 in respect of a number of properties in the town centre; Cllr. Walden to speak on this matter.
Representation by JW.

Chair proposed that Standing Orders be suspended to permit representation from EDDC Ward Member, Cllr. Sarah Jackson (SJ). Resolved unanimously.

SJ questioned whether there was an EDDC policy on S215 enforcement action or whether it was undertaken under an officer's delegated authority on a case-by-case basis.

Chair suggested that the 2005 legislation in relation to this subject determined that the LPA (Local Planning Authority) "must" act but that each LPA was permitted to decide the level of leniency or tolerance to such matters in its own area.

Continued overleaf.

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FC22/132

To consider planning matters (continued):

Subsequently, it was proposed by JW, seconded by SH, that the Town Council should write to the three ward members asking for their support in initiating S215 enforcement action on five properties in the town, namely:

Former Axe Vale Social Club, Chard Street
Co-operative retail shop, South Street
Former McColls retail shop, Trinity Square
Former Taxi office, Lyme Street
Former Santander office, West Street

on the grounds that their current appearance and condition was detrimental to the well-being and appearance of the town.

Furthermore, to seek clarification from the ward members as to what EDDC's POLICY was in this regard ie. is the decision delegated to an officer or to a committee of elected members and, if not the latter, whether this matter could be raised at a future meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) to determine whether a policy could be implemented; copy of the correspondence to be sent to the Chair of the SPC.

Resolved unanimously.

Clerk: Please action accordingly.

Council Business to be considered:

FC22/133

To consider whether Axminster Town Council wishes to adopt the recently-revised EDDC Model Code of Member Conduct.

This matter had been deferred from an earlier meeting of the FULL Council in order to assess the impact of recent amendments to the EDDC Code of Conduct model document.

It was proposed by Chair, seconded by JW, that the Town Council adopt this model Code of Conduct Policy (document) as being applicable to the Town Council. Resolved unanimously.

Clerk: Please circulate the duly amended policy document (annotated for the Town Council's use) and publish online as soon as possible.

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FC22/134

To consider appointment of Mr. Michael Davis (CMLI) as Honorary Tree Warden for Axminster Town Council.

It was proposed by JW, seconded by SH, that Mr. Davis be appointed as the Town Council's Honorary Tree Warden. Resolved unanimously.

Clerk: Please convey Council's decision to Mr. Davis and arrange an initial site meeting as soon as possible to discuss town tree matters. Noted.

FC22/135

To consider design, style and wording for Anti Dog Fouling signage in the town.

Members considered a design suggested by the Clerk which had proved effective in other parts of the UK. Whilst members did challenge the effectiveness of signage to combat the behaviour of certain dog owners, it was recognised that having NO signage could leave the Council exposed to criticism and insurance claims if issues were to arise with dog faeces. Members felt that signage with a humorous message - rather than simply a dressing-down - might be well received and, subsequently, *it was proposed by Chair, seconded by EP, to purchase 3 signs initially to gauge public reaction and determine effectiveness over a period of time – signs to be placed within Jubilee Field recreation area initially. Resolved unanimously. Clerk: please action accordingly.*

FC22/136

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

None raised.

FC22/137

To note the date of the next FULL meeting of the Town Council; 11th July 2022 and an additional Extraordinary meeting on 27th June 2022 (see above).

Noted.

FC22/138

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. Seconded by Chair. Resolved.

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All members of the public * were thanked for their attendance and participation by the Chair and the meeting moved into closed session (Part Two). Recording of meeting was stopped to ensure a full Part One recording was available. The Part Two session was also recorded.

Part TWO business to be considered.

FC22/139 (IC)

To consider matters pertaining to the governance and future operational capability of the Guildhall.

The deferral of this matter was proposed from the Chair as the necessary information was not yet available to allow members to consider the matter in the necessary detail.
Resolved unanimously.

FC22/140 (IC)

To consider any recommendations from Committees which are deemed to be confidential by way of the financial information to be discussed/considered:
SF22/076 (IC) Strategy and Finance Committee recommendation from Part Two 30/05/2022; Confidential matter pertaining to potential Levelling Up bid for Axminster and Axe Valley.

It was proposed by Chair, seconded by EP, that the Council support the Levelling Up Bid submission from EDDC subject to amendments relating to the Axminster Public Realm project element. Clerk and Chair to be delegated to create a suitable form of words to prepare a Letter of Support to EDDC for the bid submission document.
Resolved unanimously.

Clerk/Chair: Please action accordingly.

The approval of the four recommendations relating to the Employment Committee meeting of the 17th May 2022 (EC22/070 (IC) & 071 (IC) & 072 (IC) and 074 (IC)) - Confidential matters pertaining to employee remuneration and Town Council 'staff costs' budgetary impact for FY22-23 were deferred to a future meeting of the FULL Council by way of a proposal from the Chair which was resolved unanimously.

With no further business to deal with, the Chair closed the meeting at 7.40pm.

Signed Date: 27th June 2022

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