

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

DRAFT MINUTES – YET TO BE APPROVED; Part ONE version (Redacted).

Held in person on Monday 11th July 2022 at 7.00 p.m.

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

Also; Town Clerk, Paul Hayward (TC).

Council Administrator, Sarah Jackson (CA) (*also representing EDDC as Ward Member*).
Vicky Whitworth representing Chardstock Eco-Group. Four members of the public.

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

Public Forum session.

- i) Representation received from a member of the public regarding anti-social behaviour to the rear of Phillips Court (off Lea Combe) on land in 3rd party ownership. Acting-Chair thanked the member of the public for bringing this matter to the Council's attention and directed Clerk to make enquiries as to land ownership and responsibility (especially regarding the leat where litter was being thrown into) and to liaise with local Police team re: increased Police presence and patrols in that area.
- ii) Presentation to Council from Ms. Vicky Whitworth, Chardstock Eco-Group on matters pertaining to the Axe catchment area and water quality. Acting-Chair thanked the speaker for attending and for the interesting information provided.
Acting-Chair closed the Public Forum session at 7.45pm

FC22/141

To note members of committee present:

Attendance at meeting shown above.

FC22/142

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

- Cllr. Brooker (A). Absence noted and reason and apology approved (work engagement).
Cllr. Burrough. Absence noted and reason and apology approved (conflicting engagement).
Cllr. Farrow. Absence noted and reason and apology approved (unwell).
Cllr. Mynard. Absence noted and reason and apology approved (unwell).

Proposed by Acting-Chair, seconded by JW. Resolved unanimously.

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FC22/143

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

None. All members of the Council either present or accounted for.

FC22/144

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.

The dispensations afforded to Cllr. Burrough & Cllr. Farrow (27/06/2022) were noted.

No other declarations of interest made by members of the Council.

FC22/145

i) To consider and, if thought fit, to approve the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the FULL Council held on 27th June 2022 and to consider any matters arising from those minutes:

Approval of the minutes proposed by Acting-Chair, seconded by SBr.

Resolved unanimously.

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

ii) Matters arising from those minutes: None raised.

FC22/146

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

a) Strategy and Finance Committee meeting - 27th June 2022

b) Operations Committee meeting - 5th July 2022

Noted. No matters arising from those minutes raised.

FC22/147

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.*

No recommendations for consideration from those minutes. No further action.

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FC22/148

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 (FC22/153 (IC) and 154 (IC) below, were noted).

FC22/149

To consider Council's financial matters:

a) To consider and, if thought fit, to approve payments for June 2022 (£33085.87) Financial report circulated to members before meeting.

Acting-Chair proposed payment of accounts due for June. Seconded by SH.
Resolved unanimously.

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

JW thanked RFO for the clarity and content of these reports.

c) Questions to the RFO on these accounts/financial reports.
None raised.

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

RFO confirmed that assessment of Council's risks was being compiled presently and would be presented to S&F Committee when they met again after the August recess.

Noted.

FC22/150

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 to be considered at the time of the agenda publication.

b) To ratify planning decisions made by way of delegated authority afforded to Chair of Planning Committee, Cllr. Leat, and the Council's Proper Officer.

Hyperlinks to EDDC website can be found using the blue highlighted applications references.

i) [22/1177/FUL](#) – 36 The Cricketers, Axminster. EX13 5RQ. Addition of conservatory (retrospective).

The Town Council supported this application.

ii) [22/1298/TRE](#) – Marrak. Crewkerne Road. EX13 5TE. Works to two trees; T1 and T2.

The Town Council objected to this application on the advice of the Council's Honorary Tree Warden.

Ratification of these decision proposed by JW, seconded by SH. Resolved unanimously.

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Council Business to be considered:

FC22/151

To note correspondence from parishioners re: anti-social behaviour in the Lyme Close / Foxhill area and to agree Town Council's actions in this respect.

Noted (see Public Forum session above).

Clerk to liaise with parishioner as information becomes available.

FC22/152

SH 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 JW. Resolved unanimously.

All members of the public were thanked for their attendance and participation by the Acting-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.

FC22/153 (IC)

To consider matters pertaining to the future governance, finances and operational status of the new Axminster Skatepark (where the Town Council is a primary funding partner). *This matter is deemed confidential due to the commercially sensitive nature of the business to be discussed particularly in respect of funding agreements between EDDC and the Town Council.*

After discussion, it was agreed that – for the time being – the Town Council was simply a funding partner and that the day-to-day governance, maintenance, insurance and overall responsibility rested with the Skatepark charity. It was also noted that EDDC were the landlord and had no operational involvement. The fundraising plans by the charity were noted and welcomed by members present. Until such time as the governance arrangements changed, the Town Council would assist where it can within the constraints of the financial support already resolved. Additionally, Council continues to work with EDDC in respect of further S106 funding for lighting and CCTV on the site. Noted.

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FC22/154 (IC)

To consider matters pertaining to the governance, maintenance and future operational capability of the Guildhall and the Council's relationship with the Guildhall Management Committee. *This matter is deemed confidential due to the commercially sensitive nature of the business to be discussed.*

Members considered the report from the RFO in conjunction with the Guildhall Manager (and Management Committee) in respect of the urgent remedial works highlighted to the front-of-stage and rear-stage fixings and the electrical wiring to-and-from and into the plant room. After debate, it was proposed by JW, seconded by SH, that the Town Council use up to £52,000 from its reserves for the A&B works outlined to ensure that the proposed works are completed in a timely fashion and in accordance with Risk Management and H&S obligations. Delegated authority to be afforded to Clerk/RFO to carry out the tasks approved in liaison with the Guildhall Manager and Contractors; with the oversight for the project to be provided by two members of the Council (who are neither trustees of the GMC nor have been involved in the past in that capacity). Any material deviations from the schedule of works to be discussed with the strategic leads for the overall project (Cllr. Sedgewick for the Town Council, and Mary Darlow, representing the GMC as the Chair). Resolved unanimously.

With regards to the Schedule C works highlighted in the report which were primarily building enhancements for the wider benefit of the GMC and the public, it was felt that there was merit in those works but also recognition that other projects had been deferred in the past to allow the formalisation of the Guildhall's governance and legal framework to be completed. General consensus was that such works were long overdue and would improve the usability and marketability of the building for the future but that more analysis was necessary to assess the cost vs benefit implications for Council and GMC alike. The possibility of amortising the costs over a long period via a long-term long (set against precept) was discussed and Clerk was ultimately directed to liaise with the Chair of the GMC (as the A&B works progressed) to ascertain costs and timing and to create a costed schedule of potential/proposed/feasible works to present to S&F Committee/Full Council later in the year. By that time, the outcome of the A&B works project would be known and the budget could be re-assessed and a financial solution formulated for members review.

The Acting-Chair thanked RFO for the time and effort put into preparing the report and welcomed the future improvements to the building which would ensure the Guildhall could be operated on a firm financial footing and thus (it was hoped) reduce their reliance on Town Council subsidy moving forwards.

Continued overleaf.

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With no further business to deal with, the Acting-Chair closed the meeting at 9.00pm.

Signed Date: 12th September 2022

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