

# Axminster Town Council

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

Mayor: Cllr Jill Farrow  
Town Clerk: Paul Hayward

[www.axminstertowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.axminstertowncouncil.gov.uk)



THE GUILDHALL  
WEST STREET  
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Tel. 01297 32088

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## Axminster Town Council: Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the FULL Council

**APPROVED MINUTES – approved on 10<sup>th</sup> October; Part TWO version (Unredacted).**

Held in person on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Farrow (JF) (Chair), Sedgewick (AS) (Vice-Chair), Birnie (SB), Bourne (ABo.), Huskisson (AH), Leat (SL), Paice (EP), Spurway (MS), Steadman (BS) and Walden (JW) (*Meeting was quorate*).

Town Clerk, Paul Hayward (TC). Katie Edgell (ATC Admin. Assistant).  
Cllr. Sarah Jackson (EDDC).

Four members of the public present and one member of the press.

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

Chair led the persons hereby assembled in two minutes silence in memory of Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Chair then led those present to exclaim “God save the King”.

### **Public Forum session.**

No public speakers. Chair announced that she had attended the inaugural Junior Stop Line Way Park Run (with County Councillor Ian Hall) on Sunday 25/9. The Chair then closed the Public Forum session at 7.05pm

### **EFC22/056**

#### **To note members of committee present:**

Attendance at meeting shown above.

### **EFC22/057**

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

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

**Proposed by Chair, seconded by JW. Resolved unanimously.**

### **EFC22/058**

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

None.

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## EFC22/059

**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 dispensations afforded to Cllr. Farrow and Cllr. Leat were noted.

JW declared an interest as Chair of ARC (Charity) in respect of agenda items EFC22/71 and ECF22/76. Noted.

## EFC22/060

**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.**

## EFC22/061

**To note the recent resignation of Cllr. Sue Brooker and to receive update from the Clerk on the ongoing Casual Vacancy process for the Axminster Town Council – Town Ward.**

Clerk reported that no petition for an election had been made to EDDC and therefore, the Town Council was free to fill the vacancy via the process of co-option. Noted. Clerk was asked to advertise the casual vacancy accordingly and set a deadline of 4/10/2022 at 5pm for receipt of nominations for co-option to allow time for members to consider applications. The Chair asked that the business of co-option be added to the next FULL Council agenda for 10/10/2022. Noted.

## EFC22/062

**To note that there was no ordinary meeting of the FULL Council held in August 2022.** Noted.

## EFC22/063

**To note that the FULL meeting of the Council scheduled for the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2022 was adjourned as inquorate, having been previously postponed as a mark of respect upon the passing of Her late Majesty The Queen on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022.** Noted.

[Continued overleaf.](#)

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## Council Business to be considered:

**EFC22/064**

### To consider Council's financial matters:

a) To consider and, if thought fit, to approve and ratify payments for July and August 2022.

*Approval proposed by Chair, seconded by JW. Resolved unanimously.*

b) To receive, and note, Responsible Financial Officer's Report and financial pack for July and August 2022 in the new standardised format (published online).

*Received and noted.*

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

*None.*

d) Standing Agenda Item - to consider any matters pertaining to the Town Council's ongoing Risk Management Assessments.

*Clerk/RFO provided update on progress and timetable for completion as per S&FCOMM directions.*

e) To seek further agreement from Councillors to act as Bank mandate signatories.

*Cllrs. Birnie, Bourne and Steadman all kindly volunteered to act as bank signatories for the primary and secondary bank accounts. Proposed from the Chair. Resolved unanimously.*

*Clerk/RFO: Please note and liaise with members accordingly to arrange the necessary paperwork and mandate applications.*

f) To consider recommendation from RFO that this local authority participates in the FY2022-23 to FY2026-27 SAAA External Audit Appointment (Procurement) process and does NOT seek to opt-out of the central procurement and appointment scheme as per the statutory option which the SAAA is obliged to offer to participating local authorities. The RFO's briefing paper on this recommendation has been circulated to all members.

*Chair proposed that the Town Council does not opt out of the centralised external audit agreement. Seconded by SB. Resolved unanimously. RFO: Please note.*

*Continued overleaf.*

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## EFC22/065

### To consider planning matters:

a) To consider any planning applications received prior to the agenda publication and currently awaiting consideration (and decision):

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

[22/1560/VAR](#) – Application to vary condition 2 (approved plans) of reserved matters approval [14/0774/MRES](#) pursuant to outline application [10/0816/MOUT](#); Land at Cloakham Lawns

**It was proposed by SL, seconded by BS, that the Town Council abstain from any additional comment on this application. Resolved unanimously.**

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.*

[22/1814/TCA](#) – St Marys Church (The Minster) Axminster.

Works on 11 trees around the Minster Green site on aesthetic and safety grounds and to remove deadwood that may pose a risk to users of the Minster Green and Church and building curtilage.

**This application was supported by the Planning Committee, following a consensus agreement of support and the decision (by way of delegated powers afforded to the Chair and Clerk).**

**It was proposed by SL, seconded by BS, that the Town Council ratify the support for this application. Resolved unanimously.**

c) To consider any planning applications received after the agenda publication and currently awaiting consideration (and decision) – published on a supplementary agenda (if applicable):

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

None to be considered.

Continued overleaf.

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## EFC22/066

**To receive update on the ongoing road closure and associated works in Castle Street (relating to the safety issue pertaining to the masonry wall adjacent to the former WC); to note correspondence from residents and businesses in the adjacent area relating to this matter.**

Chair spoke to thank the local residents for their representations and petition. The Chair acknowledged the inconvenience for local business and residents thereabout but explained that the Town Council had no powers to act as the land in question was not owned by the Town Council nor had the Town Council any claim upon it.

**Chair proposed that Standing Orders be suspended to permit a public representation. Resolved unanimously.**

*Representation received from a resident living adjacent to the section of wall under consideration. Noted.*

**Chair proposed that Standing Orders be resumed. Resolved unanimously.**

It was agreed that the Council would write again to EDDC and DCC reiterating the frustrations and concerns of local business and residents and asking the ward/division members to assist as far as they can in bring this matter to a swift and mutually satisfactory conclusion. Noted. Clerk: please note and action accordingly.

## EFC22/067

**To consider the proposal that this Council becomes a signatory to the SLCC/NALC Civility and Respect pledge.**

**It was proposed by JW, seconded by AS, that the Town Council support this pledge programme and become a signatory accordingly. Resolved unanimously.**

Clerk: please action and arrange for Chair's signature on the pledge document.

## EFC22/068

**To receive update on the previous announcement that the Lloyds Bank branch in Axminster was due for closure in November 2022, the subsequent campaign by the Town Council & Chamber of Commerce to reverse that decision and the recent announcement that Axminster has been chosen as one of thirteen national Banking Hub trial locations.**

Update received and noted. Councillors are awaiting further details as to location, hours of operations, service etc. A query was raised by JW regarding the feasibility of installing a new ATM within the South Street Co-op premises and the question of whether a previous planning application for such an amenity had ever been submitted. Clerk was asked to investigate and report back to members. Noted.

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## EFC22/069

**To consider the arrangements for the promotion of, and receipt of nominations for, the annual Axminster Citizen of the Year award (The Robin Cross Award).**

Chair outlined the details of this annual award and thanked Axminster Nub News for their continued sponsorship of the prize fund. It was suggested that the Town Council start seeking nominations/applications in early November, with a deadline for nominations of mid-December. The award ceremony would be in January 2023 as always.

Clerk: please note and action accordingly.

## EFC22/070

**To receive update on the recent announcements regarding the future of the Flamingo Pool and to consider whether this Council wishes to offer any financial support to that organisation** (by virtue of the Local Government (Misc. Provisions) Act 1976 s.19)

Chair noted that there had been a Town Meeting on the 22/9 which had attracted more than 200 attendees all keen to secure the long-term future and vitality of this much-loved community asset. It was noted that their current running costs were outpacing their income by over £100,000 per annum which would result in their reserves being depleted within 3 years.

Issues raised/points of concern:

*Loss of pool amenity would be a devastating blow to Axminster and surrounding parishes.*

*A large capital investment was required to upgrade their pool heating systems and other forms of renewable energy were being considered.*

*It was noted that EDDC and DCC were unlikely to have any funds to put forward given their current financial constraints and burdens.*

*A suggestion was mooted that the Town Council might wish to raise its precept by approx. £35pa. to raise the additional £100,000pa. required subject to certain conditions being met by the trustees.*

*This suggestion was supported by some members but challenged by others in light of the current "cost of living" crisis.*

*A public consultation on such a hike in the precept (30%+) would be inevitable and necessary and members felt that the outcome was almost a foregone conclusion; it was noted that such a consultation in itself would be a drain on the Council's reserves.*

*It was felt that the trustees needed to demonstrate that they were considering every possible source of external funding before any requests for funding or grant assistance could be considered by Council.*

It was subsequently agreed that the Town Council would invite a panel of Flamingo Pool representatives to attend the November FULL Council meeting having previously furnished the Town Council with as much financial data as they were able to provide and were willing to share (given that some might be confidential data/financial information). Clerk: Noted.



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## EFC22/071

**To receive update on the possible need for Winter resilience measures in light of the ongoing energy cost pressures on Axminster households and to consider whether this Council wishes to participate in the proposed “Warm Spaces” scheme as outlined in a recent NALC research paper (by virtue of Section 137 of the Local Government Act).**

Chair noted that a meeting of the Axminster VCSE (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises) group had been convened recently at the Guildhall to consider various matters but also the subject under consideration.

Issues raised/points of concern:

*It was felt unnecessary to re-convene the ACER (Axminster Community Emergency Response) panel as there were a number of organisations already undertaking such work in the town and replication/duplication of labour was felt to be counter-productive.*

*Clerk outlined the position taken by NALC/DALC and what demands were being put upon small local authorities by Westminster.*

*It was noted that Nourish (a local community food group) was extending its free weekly lunch events to include an additional weekly drop-in session offering hot drinks, soup and rolls. (SEE BELOW).*

*Other “warm spaces” across the town were being considered and put forward by local community groups so that those in need would have a variety of options to choose from if they so wished.*

**It was subsequently proposed that the Town Council set aside £5000 from its existing Grant Award Reserves to assist towards the costs incurred by community groups helping those most in need in the Axminster parish area. Authorisation for payments from this fund was delegated to the RFO and the Chair and Vice-Chair to consider and approve; details of all such payments to be reported back to FULL Council within the monthly financial report hereafter. Proposed by Chair, seconded by AS. Resolved unanimously.**

Clerk/RFO was directed to create a shortened version of the Small Grants form for use by organisations seeking financial assistance for their winter resilience projects to encourage draw-down and reduce bureaucracy. Noted.

**It was subsequently proposed that a sum of £720 be awarded to Nourish to cover the costs of their additional hire charges for a 16 week period (as per their application request). proposed by AS, seconded by JW. Resolved “nem con” with Chair abstaining.**

*Clerk: Please process grant award accordingly.*

Continued overleaf.

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## EFC22/072

**To consider a proposal to use a dedicated section of the Town Council website (and/or Council's Social Media channels) to host a directory of local support services and community organisations as a means of signposting those in need within the Axminster Community to the best support service.**

There was a general agreement that the Town Council should allow a section of our local authority website to be used for the promotion and benefit of local community organisations.

Chair proposed suspension of standing orders to permit representation from Cllr. Sarah Jackson (EDDC). Resolved unanimously.

*Cllr. Jackson outlined the recent outcomes from the VCSE event and the subsequent circulation of an attendee/delegate list which was not designed to be a point of reference for the public (compared to the Axminster Care Service (ACS) Directory).*

It was agreed that Clerk and Council Administrator would liaise with Waffle House to determine what could be shared via our website. It was also felt appropriate to publish the ACS Directory in full together with a suitably worded disclaimer to protect the Council's position and comply with GDPR regulations. Noted.

Chair proposed resumption of standing orders. Resolved unanimously.

## EFC22/073

**To consider the proposal that this Council prohibits the launching (or ignition) of fireworks from Council owned land, together with the use of Chinese "Fire" Lanterns and disposable barbeques (and similar devices which could cause a fire hazard).**

After a short debate, it was proposed by Chair, seconded by SB, that such a prohibition be applied to all Council owned amenity land including the Jubilee Field, the Cemetery, the Allotments (albeit the issue of bonfires on the allotments was to be discussed by OPSCOMM on 27/9/2022) and the Old Courthouse Garden. Resolved unanimously.

Clerk: Please note and arrange suitable signage clarifying this policy decision. Noted

## EFC22/074

**To consider the proposal that this Council should participate in a joint funding venture to provide E-Bike facilities at Axminster Railway station (on land known as The Green wedge) via community funding (CCIF) project in partnership with SWR; if approved, for Council to then decide upon the level of match funding to contribute towards the larger funding package.**

In the absence of Cllr. Holt who was due to present this item of business to the Council, the Chair proposed that the matter be deferred until the next FULL meeting of the Council.

Agreed. Clerk: Please add to next FULL meeting agenda accordingly.



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## EFC22/075

In accordance with a previous recommendation of the Operations Committee, to consider the proposal that this Council should replace the two existing noticeboards outside the Guildhall with larger units (for greater public engagement) in a recycled plastic material, and to integrate this installation with the replacement of the existing wooden planters with new planters, also manufactured from recycled plastic for longevity and to minimise future maintenance costs to the Council. Project cost estimated at £10,000 plus VAT.

Final decision on design, style and expenditure to be delegated to Chair of Council, and the Proper officer to ensure expediency in the procurement process given the escalating costs of such street furniture.

It was proposed by Chair, seconded by JW, that the Town Council approve the recommendation of the Operations Committee to proceed with the purchase of the assets as described above as quickly as possible. Delegated power to agree designs and expend the sums approved was afforded to the Clerk in conjunction with either the Chair of Council or the Chair of Operations Committee. *Clerk: please note and action accordingly.*

## EFC22/076

To consider proposal that Axminster Town Council facilitate a December “charity fayre” at the Guildhall to enable local voluntary and charitable organisations to promote their activities and fundraise.

Chair suggested that - with all the ongoing works and disruption at the Guildhall – an additional event in December would be difficult to organise and resource. An alternative suggestion was for an Easter 2023 event. Chair suggested that this matter be brought back before the Town Council in December for further debate and agreement on arrangements; it was felt that this event could be linked in with the Annual Parish Meeting. Noted and agreed. *Clerk: please liaise with Guildhall Manager to ascertain dates and availability for venue hire and also with the member of the public who put forward the idea for the festive event. Noted.*

## EFC22/077

*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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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.

### EFC22/078 (IC)

To consider matters pertaining to the ongoing operational status and extension 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.***

Chair outlined the current situation re: project progression and additional spending demands put forward by various parties to the project. It was felt that the Skatepark Charity needed to be more demonstrative in evidencing efforts to fundraise externally. There was general consensus that the Town Council's CIL allocation should not be utilised on improvements to lighting and CCTV at the skatepark site. Whilst the option to spend the S106 "open space" funds of circa £13k was still open for discussion, members wished to convey their position that there were other open spaces where such spend would be equally well-received and beneficial and thus it should not be taken as read that these funds would be forthcoming to the skatepark project. It was hoped that the Council's previous financial contributions of nearly £84000 would be recognised and accepted as proof that the Town Council supported the amenity and was 100% behind the charity in their efforts to make it a roaring success.

*Clerk: Please seek clarification from EDDC S106 officer as to spend conditions for the OS funding and also determine whether any time limits existing for the spend. Please report back to Council accordingly once answers received. Noted.*

### EFC22/079 (IC)

To consider matters pertaining to the ongoing Guildhall maintenance works previously approved; to consider a request for additional project funding up to £10,000 for further works to improve the Guildhall amenity. To also receive an update on the current works from the Council's Proper Officer.

***This matter is deemed confidential due to the commercially sensitive nature of the business to be discussed.***

After a report was received from the Clerk, and comment made by members that the additional roof works were not a new issue but had been raised some years ago, **it was proposed by SL, seconded by BS, that a further £10,000 be allocated from Council's reserves to allow for the timely completion of the additional "AB+" Guildhall works backstage. Resolved unanimously.** Chair expressed thanks to all involved in this ongoing project.

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

Signed ..... Date: 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022

**Axminster Town Council: Minutes of the meeting of the FULL Council**

**APPROVED MINUTES – approved on 10<sup>th</sup> October; Part TWO version (Unredacted).**