

# 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  
AXMINSTER  
DEVON  
EX13 5NX

Tel. 01297 32088

Email: [Clerk@axminstertowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:Clerk@axminstertowncouncil.gov.uk)

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

### **MINUTES APPROVED at Annual Meeting 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023; Part ONE version.**

Held in person on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023 at 7.00 p.m.

**Present:** Cllrs. Farrow (JF) (Chair), Sedgewick (AS) (Vice-Chair), Birnie (SB), Bourne (ABO.), Brooker (ABr.), Burrough (KB), Holt (SH), Huskisson (AH), Lippett (RL), Paice (EP), Spurway (MS), Steadman (BS) and Walden (JW).  
*(Meeting was deemed quorate).*

Also; Town Clerk, Paul Hayward (TC).  
Cllr. Sarah Jackson (SJ) (EDDC).  
Cllr. Andrew Moulding (AM) (EDDC).

Three members of the public.

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

### **Public Forum session.**

**Open Public Forum session (limited to 15 minutes or as otherwise agreed by Chair presiding).**

Public representations to Council from member of the public who wished to thank the members of Council who did not seek re-election for their service to the Council and the community. The Mayor thanked them for their contribution and kind words which she echoed.

Chair closed the Public Forum session at 7.05pm

### **FC23/050**

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

Councillors in attendance at meeting are shown above.

*Continued overleaf.*

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## FC23/051

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

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

Cllr. Mynard. Absence noted and reason and apology approved (unwell).

**Acceptance of reason for absence proposed by Chair, seconded by JW.**

**Resolved unanimously.**

## FC23/052

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

Cllr. Ian Hall (EDDC/DCC). Noted.

## FC23/053

**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. Burrough & Cllr. Farrow (27/06/2022) were noted.

The dispensation afforded to Cllr. Birnie (12/12/2022) was noted.

No other declarations of interest declared by members present.

## FC23/054

**i) To consider and, if thought fit, to approve the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the FULL Council held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and to consider any matters arising from those minutes:**

Cllr. Holt asked that the draft minutes be amended to reflect his absence as being unwell, rather than as a conflicting engagement. Noted and agreed.

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

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

**ii) Matters arising from those minutes:**

Chair asked that the letter to the County Councillor be prepared as a matter of urgency.

Noted. *Clerk to action accordingly.*

*Continued overleaf.*

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## FC23/055

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

- a) Employment Committee meeting held 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023 – presented by AS.  
*Minutes of meeting reviewed and noted by members.*

## FC23/056

To consider the recommendations from that committee (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.

None requiring Council's approval.

## FC23/057

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.

## FC23/058

To consider Council's financial matters:

Cllr. Burrough declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in this agenda item and left the room.

- a) To consider and, if thought fit, to approve payments for March 2023 (£29,445.54) Financial reports had been circulated to members before meeting and published online.

**Chair proposed payment of accounts due for March 2023. Seconded by JW.**

**Resolved unanimously.**

Cllr. Burrough returned to the room.

- b) To receive, and note, Responsible Financial Officer's Report and financial pack for March 2023. Plus, update on End-of-Year financial reports and AGAR. **Noted.**

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

**None raised.**

- d) To consider and, if thought fit, to approve Council's Internal Financial Control Review for FY22-23.

**Chair proposed approval. Seconded by BS. Resolved unanimously.**

*Continued overleaf.*

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## FC23/059

### 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. Applications presented by the Chair of the Planning Committee, SL.*

1) [23/0583/FUL](#) – Keppleway, King Edward Road, Axminster.  
Conversion of existing garage into an annexe, with single storey extension to rear of house. This application has come before Council due to the proximity of the dwelling to the public highway.  
**BS proposed that the Town Council support the application. Seconded by EP.  
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. Applications presented by the Chair of the Planning Committee, SL.*

Council's support for the six applications listed on the agenda for this meeting was ratified.

c) To consider any planning applications received after the agenda publication and currently awaiting consideration (and decision) – published on a supplementary agenda:  
*Hyperlinks to EDDC website can be found using the blue highlighted applications references. None received for consideration.*

d) To note planning correspondence received:  
*Councillors noted the pre-planning consultation report for the upgraded telecoms equipment at the Axminster Sorting Office. No further action required at this time.*

e) To note any matters relating to planning that have arisen as a result of EDDC Planning Committee or Strategic Planning Committee meetings since the last FULL meeting of Council.  
*None received as at time of agenda publication.*

*Continued overleaf.*

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## Standing Council Business to be considered:

### FC23/060

#### To receive an update on the ongoing development of the Axminster Neighbourhood Plan (ANHP).

Councillors received a report from AS on the ongoing work of the ANHP Steering group and the outcome of the NHP Steering group meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> April.

The NHP timetable had been amended slightly to liaise with EDDC to consider the draft “Aims and Objectives” from May to June, leading to a further public consultation over the summer months. This would hopefully enable another draft (v.3) of the NHP to be created in the early Autumn.

Two options had been put forward regarding the speed of progression of the draft NHP, bearing in mind the current impasse with the EDDC emerging Local Plan which was paused pending clarity on housing numbers from central government (DHLUC). A decision on what direction the Axminster NHP should take was deferred until more information was available.

There was general agreement that any further progress with the NHP should wait until a new Council administration was formed (after the 4<sup>th</sup> May elections) so that the new Councillors could take stock of what had been achieved to date and determine their new aims and objectives (if different to the previous administration).

Chair thanked all the Chair of the ANHPSG and all its members for their continued time and effort.

### FC23/061

#### To receive an update on the work of the Axminster Climate Action group.

Presentation from BS on recent ACAG activity including liaison with local schools, progress on the shared community allotment plot at Millwey, continuing eco-projects at Jubilee Field and more besides. Cllr. Steadman thanked all of her fellow ACAG members and the volunteers assisting them.

A discussion regarding the Old Courthouse Garden culminated in an agreement that the garden was an open community space for all the public to enjoy, that provided quiet, tranquil enjoyment but in a safe environment and, such, there was agreement that some maintenance work was inevitable to protect users from plant hazards, thorns etc

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There was also, however, an understanding that the wildlife in the garden should be nurtured and encouraged as this garden was a valuable town centre eco-habitat. It was also noted that the recent planting was beginning to grow through and members looked forward to seeing the garden in all its glory as the season progressed.

## **FC23/062**

**To receive a progress report/update on the work of the Axminster Regeneration Forum in conjunction with the EDDC/DCC Urban Renewal project.**

No report presented. Agenda item was deferred to a later meeting of the FULL Council.

## **Council Business to be considered:**

### **FC23/063**

**To receive updated report from Clerk on Local Council elections and to note that all three wards in the Axminster Town Council elections were uncontested (and thus, no elections for Town Council seats will be necessary on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023).**

Clerk advised that there were no elections scheduled for Town Council seats as all wards were uncontested, leaving one available vacant seat on each of the three wards (Town, Weycroft and Raymonds Hill). Five Councillors had not sought re-election (SH, AH, MM, AS and MS) but two new Councillors had been elected unopposed – Terence Langdon and David Willey. They would join the Council in May.

### **FC23/064**

**To receive report from Clerk on the preparation for the Council's Annual Meeting which will be held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at 7.00pm in the Guildhall.**

Chair asked all to attend if possible and encourage members to put their names forward for at least 2 of the standing committees and forums/groups so that the workload from these additional meetings would be more evenly spread across the Council membership (of 12). Furthermore, members were asked to volunteer to act as bank signatories given the departure of Cllrs. Holt and Sedgewick. Noted.

Clerk reminded all members that their new updated Register of Interest forms (ROI) would be due within 28 days from the start of the new election cycle, and that all members elected would also need to submit their expenses returns (even if £0) to EDDC by the 8<sup>th</sup> June.

*Continued overleaf.*



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## **FC23/065**

### **To consider arrangements for the induction and training of new Councillors and to consider the Councillor Training Day (event) to be held in June 2023.**

Clerk outlined the Councillor training opportunities available, both in person and online. Chair reminded members that a Councillor Training Event had been proposed for a Saturday in June and Clerk was asked to present to members on the NALC Quality Award programme to highlight the benefits and drawbacks to councillors (a resolution has already been made to progress with the award application, delegated to the Clerk to execute and submit).

## **FC23/066**

### **To consider matters pertaining to the Town Council's Social Media / Community Engagement protocol and to agree a collective "Council" position with regards to responding to social media activity in the evenings and at weekends/bank holidays etc.**

Chair acknowledged that a great deal of social media activity arose at weekends or in the evening when staff were not available to respond (although the Chair thanked the staff for dealing with some matters even when not on-duty). It was recognised that the Town Council was often singled out for criticism even when the topic was nothing to do with this authority, most often in terms of potholes, dog waste and road closures. The Chair politely reminded all members to be kind, factual and courteous when responding (even in their private capacities as individuals) and asked that the staff be supported in dealing with such matters. Forthcoming community engagement events were noted and members felt that these would help bridge the gap between the Council and the wider community.

KB asked that the Council Newsletter be re-shared as this contained a lot of useful material. Clerk asked that this direction be delayed until after the 4<sup>th</sup> May local elections to avoid any breach of "purdah". Agreed. Clerk/Officers to action accordingly.

## **FC23/067**

### **To consider matters pertaining to Town Bus Services (Cllr. Walden to speak on this subject).**

JW mentioned that certain bus services had been postponed or cancelled on carnival day despite the road closures not taking effect until later in the evening (in some cases, after the last bus was scheduled to operate). This had resulted in inconvenience and delays for many residents. It was agreed that the Council would write to the bus operators asking for their cooperation and seeking assurances that buses would run up until the road closures took effect as a service to users in the Axminster area. Clerk: please liaise with Admin assistant to contact operators accordingly. Noted.

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## FC23/068

**To consider any matters considered as urgent by the presiding Chair and to receive any announcements from the Chair of the Council.**

Chair noted the date of the Coronation Civic Service as Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2023 (at 11am) with further events both before and after that time/date. All Councillors were encouraged to attend the Civic event as Council representatives.

## FC23/069

**To confirm the date of the next scheduled FULL meeting of the Town Council - 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023** (this will be the Annual Meeting of the Town Council). *Noted.*

**With no further business to deal with, the Chair closed the meeting at 7.55pm.**

Signed ..... Date: 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023

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Held in person on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023 at 7.00 p.m.

**MINUTES APPROVED at Annual Meeting 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023; Part ONE version.**