

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Held at the Guildhall, on Monday 13th February 2017 at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Town Mayor: Cllr. P.G. Hayward
Councillors: C. A. Doherty, I.L. Hall, D.R.H. Hull (part),
H.J.A. Jeffery, Mrs. S.L.N. Leat A.T. Moulding ,
Mrs. S.R. Spiller, M.D. Symes, J.W. Walden, B.R. Watson
and A.L. Young.

The Town Clerk (Miss H. Kirkcaldie).
The Deputy Town Clerk (Mrs. Z. Adamson-Drage)

8 Members of the public. 1 representative of the Press.

2017/0037 APOLOGIES: Deputy Mayor L.A. Rowe and G.S. Godbeer,

2017/0038 TRIBUTES TO THE LATE CLLR. MRS. D..J. HULL: The Town Mayor invited all present to observe a minute's silence in memory of Cllr. Mrs. Hull whose death had occurred on 1st February.

Cllr. Mrs. Hull had joined the Town Council on 11th September 1978 and had served continuously since then as one of the representatives for Weycroft Ward. She was elected as Mayor for 1983-1984

The Town Mayor led the tributes to Cllr. Mrs. Hull and he, and all who spoke, mentioned her dedication to improving the lot of those who were most disadvantaged in life, whether in the field of education (of which she had great knowledge having been a head teacher for several years), healthcare or housing and was very supportive of her fellow Councillors and the Town Council staff. She had a love of all the arts and, as many Councillors recalled, a wonderful sense of humour.

2017/0039 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS:

CLLRS. DOHERTY, HAYWARD, MRS. SPILLER AND WATSON, ALL DECLARED PERSONAL INTERESTS AS BEING MEMBERS OF THE AXMINSTER GUILDHALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IN RESPECT OF ANY ITEMS RELATING TO THE GUILDHALL. CLLR. YOUNG, IN HER CAPACITY AS GUILDHALL MANAGER FOR WHICH SHE DECLARES A PECUNIARY INTEREST, HAS A DISPENSATION TO SPEAK ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE GUILDHALL PROVIDED THE PECUNIARY INTEREST IS NOT OF OVER-RIDING SIGNIFICANCE.

CLLRS. WALDEN AND WATSON EACH DECLARED PERSONAL INTERESTS AS BEING MEMBERS OF AXMINSTER COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE.

CLLR. HAYWARD DECLARED A PECUNIARY INTEREST AS CLERK TO ALL SAINTS PARISH COUNCIL AND CHARDSTOCK PARISH COUNCILS AND IN RESPECT OF HAVING A SPOUSE WORKING WITHIN THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE (IN RESPECT OF WHICH HE HAS A DISPENSATION TO SPEAK)

CLLR. MOULDING DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS BEING A MEMBER OF THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS:

ARC BEREAVEMENT, AXMINSTER AND DISTRICT HOSPISCARE, AXMINSTER HERITAGE LTD., AXMINSTER HOSPITAL LEAGUE OF FRIENDS, AXMINSTER MUSICAL THEATRE, AXMINSTER PATIENTS PARTICIPATION GROUP, AXMINSTER REGENERATION PROGRAMME BOARD, AXMINSTER TOWN CRICKET CLUB, CLOAKHAM LAWN SPORTS CENTRE, CLOAKHAM LAWN SPORTS CENTRE LTD., CLOWANCE CHARITABLE TRUST, FRIENDS OF AXMINSTER CHURCH, LYME REGIS GOLF CLUB, TONY COLES CHARITABLE TRUST, VIRTUE AND HONOUR LODGE NO 494, CONSERVATIVE PARTY, CONSERVATIVE CLUB, EAST DEVON CONSERVATIVE GROUP, DEVON COUNTY CONSERVATIVE GROUP, MEMBER OF THE CONSERVATIVE COUNCILLORS' ASSOCIATION.

HE ALSO DECLARED THAT AS THE PARENT OF A DISABLED ADULT SON HE HAD AN INTEREST IN MATTERS RELATING TO DISABLED ACCESS AND BENEFITS

CLLR. HALL DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS BEING A MEMBER OF THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS:

CLOAKHAM LAWN SPORTS CENTRE, CHAIRMAN AND TRUSTEE
MILLWEY RISE FOOTBALL CLUB
MILLWEY RISE COMMUNITY HALL USER GROUP - CHAIRMAN
LODGE VIRTUE AND HONOUR AXMINSTER NO. 494
AXMINSTER SKATE PARK TRUSTEE
TIVERTON AND HONITON CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION
GMB (GENERAL MUNICIPAL AND BOILER MEN'S) UNION
AXMINSTER COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE
AXMINSTER CONSERVATIVE CLUB

CLLR. MRS LEAT DECLARED A PECUNIARY INTEREST IN RELATION TO ANY MATTERS PERTAINING TO LAND OWNED BY BETTERMENT HOMES AS BEING IN LEGAL NEGOTIATION WITH THAT COMPANY.

2017/0040 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 9th JANUARY 2017: It was resolved that these be approved and adopted (proposed Cllr. Hayward, seconded Cllr. Walden).

2017/0041 POLICE REPORT: P.C.S.O. Mingo gave an update on the membership of the Neighbourhood Policing Team. He said that there had been 17 reported crimes in January 2017, six fewer than in January 2016. A member of the public expressed concern regarding speeding vehicles in North Street.

2017/0042 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: Cllr. Moulding gave details of events he had attended in his capacity as County Council Chairman. He said that he would be chairing a meeting on the County Council Budget shortly.

2017/0043 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS:

Cllr. Hall said that he had chaired the housing delivery task and finish forum in East Devon. He had been in contact with the developer regarding the fact that neither Cloakham Drive nor Footpath 80 were fully available yet for public use and said that this had been attributed to a legal dispute.

Cllr. Moulding said that he had attended meetings with Crown Estates and Persimmon Homes regarding land to the east of Axminster; the East Devon Housing Department and the Axminster liaison officer at Devon County Council. He had attended a meeting of RISE (Recovery and Integration Service) in Axminster;

He said that he felt that given the increase in occasions when Councillors engaged with minors, they should give serious consideration to obtaining Disclosure and Barring Service clearance.

Cllr. Walden cautioned that there may be some intricacies involved in Councillors undertaking D.B.S. checks.

2017/0044 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS: works had started on the replacement of paving slabs between South Street and Trinity Square which necessitated overnight closure of Victoria Place but would result in long term safety improvements.

2017/0045 TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS: the Town Mayor had attended the following events:

The opening of Costa Coffee.

2017/0046 TOWN FORUM – PROPOSED REMOVAL OF HEDGEROWS IN VICINITY OF BLACKHAKES FARM:

Several members of the public expressed an interest in this item.

Cllr. Watson proposed that agenda item 19 be brought forward in due course. Agreed.

2017/0047 TOWN FORUM – IMPACT OF ROAD CLOSURES: a member of the public spoke of the benefit to the town centre of having fewer 42 tonne lorries travelling

through the town centre during the recent road closure and suggested that a permanent ban should be sought. Cllr. Moulding responded that this was one of the matters which was being considered by the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group. The member of the public felt that this move needed to be made sooner rather than later. Cllr. Watson highlighted the fact that this would force west-bound vehicles to make a highly dangerous right turn onto the A35 at the top of Lyme Road which would be likely to result in fatalities. It was suggested that traffic be diverted away from Axminster at Chard, Honiton and Dorchester.

2017/0048 TOWN FORUM – INADEQUACIES OF SATELLITE NAVIGATION SYSTEMS IN MANY COMMERCIAL VEHICLES: several members of the public cited examples of heavy goods vehicles being mis-directed along minor roads in the town centre, particularly if they made use of non-commercial systems.

2017/0049 TOWN FORUM – APPARENT LACK OF PATROLING BY PARKING OFFICIALS: various incidences of long-term parking in restricted areas were given. Cllr. Moulding said that he would ask that these areas be given particular attention by officers.

2017/0050 TOWN FORUM – LIGHT UP AXMINSTER: two representatives of this group asked for the Town Council's support for their objectives in trying to improve the town in various ways throughout the year for the benefit of residents, for example through Christmas lighting. The launch event will be on 9th March.

THE TOWN MAYOR DECLARED AN INTEREST AS FORMER CHAIRMAN OF THE AXMINSTER CHRISTMAS LIGHTING ASSOCIATION WHICH HAD PASSED ITS FUNDS ACROSS TO THIS NEW GROUP.

The Town Mayor assured the group that they would have the encouragement and support of the Town Council for their objectives.

2017/0051 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9th JANUARY 2017: None.

2017/0052 MATTERS OF URGENCY – PARKING REQUEST: A request had been received via Devon County Council to use the Guildhall car park during the day for the next two Thursdays to park some of the equipment being used in the paving works as Trinity Square would not be available on market days. This request was approved.

2017/0053 MATTERS OF URGENCY – REQUEST BY MANAGING DIRECTOR OF AXMINSTER CARPETS TO ADDRESS TOWN COUNCIL: resolved that Cllr. Moulding will make arrangements for this to take place on 13th March.

Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Watson, proposed that agenda item 18 be brought

forward. Agreed.

2017/0054 REPORT ON MEETING WITH ENVIRONMENT AGENCY: Cllr. Moulding said that the meeting had been with a representative from the Environment Agency and Natural England. The proposal was to remove some hedgerows to enable reduction of flow under Stoney Bridge to protect properties and business and prevent loss of life in that area. The proposals would need to be debated with affected landowners and compensation agreed.

Cllr. Hayward said that the Planning Committee had discussed the matter twice and had responded that there was insufficient detail given on which to make a sound response.

Cllr. Hayward proposed that Standing Orders be suspended to allow public comment. Agreed.

Members of the public whose lands were likely to be affected questioned why these fields had been selected and why there had been no prior consultation. The perception was that it was related to the developments at Cloakham Lawns.

Cllr. Moulding said that he did not think that was the case as the development had included sustainable drainage systems provision. He said that that part of Four Cross Hill had always been prone to flooding.

Some landowners felt that a better solution would be to raise the banks on the existing flood channel.

Affected members of the public were assured that they had the support of the Town Council.

Cllr. Walden felt that the Environment Agency should be made aware of the Town Council's disapproval at the lack of discussion with landowners prior to the submission of the planning application.

Standing Orders were re-instated at this point.

5 MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC LEFT THE MEETING

2017/0055 MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE: Dated 12th December 2016 – it was resolved that these be approved and adopted.

2017/0056 MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE: Dated 9th January 2017 – it was resolved that these be approved and adopted.

2017/0057 MINUTES OF PIPPINS COMMITTEE: Dated 28th September 2016 – it was

resolved that these be approved and adopted.

2017/0058 MINUTES OF TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE; Dated 30th January 2017 – it was resolved that these be approved and adopted.

2018/0059 MINUTES OF EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE; Dated 6TH February 2017 – it was resolved that these be approved and adopted.

2017/0060 MATTERS ARISING FROM COMMITTEE REPORTS: none.

2017/0061 FINANCIAL MATTERS – APPROVAL OF JANUARY EXPENDITURE: details had been circulated to all Councillors.

CLLR. HAYWARD DECLARED A PECUNIARY INTEREST IN CHEQUE 6207AS BEING THE RECIPIENT AND LEFT THE CHAMBER FOR THIS ITEM OF BUSINESS.

Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Watson, proposed that the payments be approved.
Agreed.

CLLRS. HAYWARD RETURNED TO THE CHAMBER.

2017/0062 FINANCIAL MATTERS – DECEMBER BANK RECONCILIATION: Resolved that this be approved.

2017/0063 FINANCIAL MATTERS – MATTERS APPROVED FOR EXPENDITURE BY TOWN MAYOR OR COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN – DRAINS AT OLD COURTHOUSE.: The Town Clerk said that she had had to request a call from a contractor following notification of blocked drains from a tenant. The fault had been on the main sewer not within Town Council premises. Noted.

2017/0064 FINANCIAL MATTERS – MATTERS APPROVED FOR EXPENDITURE BY TOWN MAYOR OR COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN – DEHUMIDIFIER FOR OLD COURTHOUSE: this was to control moisture levels in the former Museum premises pending the arrival of a new tenant. Noted.

2017/0065 FINANCIAL MATTERS – MATTERS APPROVED FOR EXPENDITURE BY TOWN MAYOR OR COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN – FLOOR COVERING FOR CONSTABLE'S ROOMS: this was in preparation for the arrival of a new tenant in April. Noted.

2017/0066 FINANCIAL MATTERS – MATTERS APPROVED FOR EXPENDITURE BY TOWN MAYOR OR COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN – FAULT ON SMOKE ALARM AT GUILDHALL: Noted.

2017/0067 FINANCIAL MATTERS – ITEMS APPROVED FOR EXPENDITURE BY

TOWN MAYOR OR COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN – ADDITIONAL EMERGENCY AND GENERAL LIGHTING ON STAGE: this was required to meet current regulations and in the interests of general safety. Noted.

2017/0068 FINANCIAL MATTERS - REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE – IMPROVEMENTS TO AXMINSTER PRIMARY SCHOOL LIBRARY: Cllr. Hayward confirmed that as the Town Council had no power to fund this from Section 137 funds an alternative source of funding had been found.

2017/0069 FINANCIAL MATTERS - RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT: Mrs. Adamson-Drage said that she had been working on the Annual Return in preparation for a meeting with the internal auditor at the end of the month.

The external audit contracts had been reviewed but Axminster would not be affected as the same firm had been re-appointed.

Business customers will be able to choose their own suppliers in future.

The increase in the minimum wage in April will affect Council costs.

The report was noted.

2017/0070 RESPONSE TO DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ELECTORAL REVIEW OF EAST DEVON: it was resolved that the Town Council was happy with the proposals which will create a ward co-terminous with the parish boundary which will be represented by three members.

2017/0071 HIGHWAY MATTERS – WEST STREET CLOSURE UPDATE: The Mayor summed up discussion by stating that it had to be accepted that such works were necessary from time to time and inevitably caused frustration and inconvenience to the public and the business community.

2017/0072 HIGHWAY MATTERS- DRAINAGE CONCERNS AT WEST STREET OUTSIDE PETS AT HOME PREMISES: the Town Clerk said that she had approached various parties. South West Water had advised that they felt the problem lay with the Highway Authority.

2017/0073 HIGHWAY MATTERS – SIGNAGE AT FORMER RODNEY RENDELL SITE: no progress to report.

2017/0074 HIGHWAY MATTERS – PERMISSIVE PATH UPDATE: it is hoped that the legal process will be completed shortly.

2017/0075 HIGHWAY MATTERS – PAVEMENT REPAIRS: this work has just started and will be done using a night time road closure.

2017/0076 HIGHWAY MATTERS – NORTH STREET TRAFFIC: there was a general awareness that speeding was a problem in this area which has serves two play areas. It was suggested that a request be submitted for a 20 m.p.h. limit and/or chicanes to reduce speeding. Cllr. Moulding will make enquiries at the next Highways and Traffic Orders Committee and the matter will be put on the next agenda for the Traffic Management Committee.

2017/0077 HIGHWAY MATTERS – JUBILEE FOUNTAIN: Cllr. Walden asked that the Street Lighting department be approached as the lights had not worked for many years.

2017/0078 HIGHWAY MATTERS – HUNTERS LODGE: information received indicated that work would be starting in April. Highways England had sought to correct information in a recent press report. Councillors regretted that the scheme could not have been more comprehensive.

2017/0079 JUBILEE FIELD: nothing to report.

2017/0080 HEALTH SERVICE MATTERS: Cllr. Moulding will attend a meeting on 2nd March to discuss the proposed cessation of telephone ordering of prescriptions at the medical dispensary to save staff time. He was asked to convey Councillors strong objections to this proposal.

2017/0081 WEBSITE: This will go live on 17th February. The Deputy Town Clerk urged those Councillors who had not done so already to submit updated profiles.

2017/0082 REPORT ON JANUARY LOCAL ACTION GROUP: the Police Commissioner had indicated that the numbers of Police Community Support Officers would be reduced in order to allow police numbers to be increased. Cllr. Moulding will attend the meeting on 9th March.

2017/083 CORRESPONDENCE:

- a. Letters Received
- b. Meetings
- c. To note L.A.G. 9th March.
- d. Reports Received - the following reports are available for consultation in the office:

Cllr. Hall 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.

2017/0084 QUOTES FOR WORKS AT OLD COURTHOUSE – REMOVAL OF IVY AND WORKS TO MASONRY: It was resolved that the Town Handyman and a group of volunteer Councillors undertake this work and that further quotes for

works to the masonry be obtained later.

2017/0085 QUOTES FOR WORKS TO FIRE ALARM AT OLD COURTHOUSE: It was resolved that this work be undertaken by the firm which installed the original system.

2017/0086 QUOTES FOR LIGHTING WORKS AT THE GUILDHALL: it was resolved that the quote to upgrade the lighting in the Town Clerk's office be accepted.

2017/0087 QUOTES FOR FLOOR WASHER FOR GUILDHALL: after lengthy discussion it was resolved that two other options be investigated prior to a decision being taken.

2017/0088 LETTER TO TENANTS: the Deputy Town Clerk sought clarification as to the definition of what was required. This was deferred to the next meeting.

Signed Date.....