

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Held at the Guildhall, on Monday 10th April 2017 at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Town Mayor: Cllr. P.G. Hayward
Deputy Mayor Cllr. L.A. Rowe
Councillors: C. A. Doherty, G.S. Godbeer, I.L. Hall, D.R.H. Hull,
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).

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

2017/0134 APOLOGIES: The Deputy Town Clerk (Mrs. Z. Adamson-Drage)

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2017/0135 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS:

CLLRS. DOHERTY, GODBEER, HAYWARD, HULL, MRS. LEAT, 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. GODBEER, 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 COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE, 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.

CLLR. HULL DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS BEING A GOVERNOR OF ROYAL DEVON AND EXETER NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE FOUNDATION TRUST AND AS BEING A MEMBER OF THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS:

AXMINSTER DYSLEXIA TRUST
AXMINSTER HERITAGE LTD.
AXMINSTER HOSPITAL LEAGUE OF FRIENDS

2017/0136 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 13TH MARCH 2017:

Cllr. Moulding asked that minute 2017/0125 regarding the introduction of a protocol for Councillors for safeguarding vulnerable adults and children in the community be clarified to read "Several Councillors felt that all members should have a level 2 safe-guarding training and enhanced disclosure barring clearance check as the nature of their duties involved them in meeting minors. After discussion it was

resolved to await a report on the subject from East Devon District Council and follow its recommendations”.

It was resolved that these be approved and adopted as amended (proposed Cllr. Hayward, seconded Cllr. Young).

2017/0137 CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS AT AXMINSTER CARPETS: The Town Mayor welcomed Mr. David Knight, Managing Director of Axminster Carpets.

Mr. Knight explained that, following the difficulties which had faced the company some four years previously, the situation had now been stabilised and forward progress was being planned. He said that there had been great support from the retail trade and he was keen to update the pattern ranges. He praised the loyal and long-serving staff but wanted to improve the operational efficiency of the business and have greater involvement with the local community, for example through work experience and training initiatives.

Councillors welcomed the information given by Mr. Knight.

In response to questions raised, Mr. Knight said that there were no plans to close the factory shop at Abbey Gate but that he could not comment on plans for vacant land at the factory as Axminster Carpets did not have control of the land but had a long lease on the factory buildings.

2017/0138 POLICE REPORT: this was not available.

2017/0139 COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORT: Cllr. Moulding, in his final report as a County Councillor, expressed his pride in and thanks for the local arrangements for his recent Civic Service and said that it had been a privilege to serve as Chairman of the Council for the past year.

2017/0140 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS’ REPORTS:

Cllr. Hall said that he had nothing to report.

Cllr. Hull said that he was continuing his campaign for better regulation of new build housing and referred members to the minutes of the District Council Overview Committee on 28th March. Among the recommendations was that the District Council should establish a Local Housing Company to deliver more housing.

Cllr. Moulding said that work was due to start on the new District Council Headquarters in Honiton shortly.

2017/0141 TOWN MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS: the Town Mayor mentioned a road closure in Silver Street to enable work to a dangerous electrical cable.

An invitation had been received from the Women’s Section of the Royal British Legion

to a service and tea on 27th May. Councillors will let the Clerk know if they are free to attend.

Cllr. Hayward said that the defibrillator project had been approved and would result in 4 additional defibrillators in the area.

The Town Mayor concluded by telling members that the local librarian, Dr. Sarah Jones, would be leaving her post at the end of April.

2017/00142 TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS: the Town Mayor had attended the following events:

Cllr. Moulding's Civic Service as Chairman of Devon County Council.

The opening of a Community Orchard at Millwey.

The rededication of All Saints bell.

2017/0143 TOWN FORUM – UNTENDED ALLOTMENTS:

A member of the public asked whether there was a waiting list for allotment plots and was informed that there was not. He expressed concern that untended plots were a source of seeding weeds. The Town Mayor said that he would ensure that the availability of plots was advertised.

2017/0144 TOWN FORUM – LITTER AT JUBILEE FIELD PLAY AREA: A resident thanked Cllr. Walden for clearing up the litter recently.

2017/0145 TOWN FORUM – TESCO RELATED MATTERS: Cllr. Walden expressed concern about the regular malfunctioning of the lighting on this path and asked that the Town Mayor direct the Town Clerk to bring this matter to the attention of the company as a matter of public safety.

Cllr. Walden then said that he had raised his concerns with the company regarding the insecure state of the perimeter fence adjacent to the area where the sub-station used to be and asked that this be included in any letter that the Town Clerk wrote.

Another matter which will be included in the letter is a request to review the firms' policy regarding the availability of free wi-fi and the problems this has given rise to through its attractiveness to groups of teenagers and the inconvenience this causes to customers.

2017/0146 TOWN FORUM – PARKING AT MILLWEY RISE: Cllr. Mrs. Spiller asked that the Traffic Management Committee should consider parking problems in Millwey at its next meeting particularly in respect of those areas where inconsiderate parking had the potential to obstruct free movement of emergency

and public service vehicles such as refuse collection lorries. Several Councillors questioned the usage of the garage block areas and amenity land and wondered whether these would be more efficiently used if converted into residents car parks.

CLLR. HALL DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS HAVING AN AREA OF AMENITY LAND ADJACENT TO HIS HOUSE.

Cllr. Hall said that he would look into the matter as a District Councillor.

2017/0147 TOWN FORUM – TESCO WALKWAY: Cllr. Hull suggested that a sign be put on this walkway stating that that it was not the responsibility of any Council. It was pointed out that this applied to many features in the town.

2017/0148 TOWN FORUM – PROBLEMS ON LYME ROAD: a local resident had written to the Town Council regarding obstruction of the pavement outside Meadow Rue in Lyme Road by cars parked partially on the pavement and also about the fact that the pavement was littered with hedge clippings. Pedestrians were being forced to walk on a busy and dangerous road as a result of this.

Cllr. Moulding said that Devon County Council had written to central government requesting that legislation against parking on pavements but had not received a supportive response.

2017/0149 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13th MARCH 2017: None.

2017/0150 MATTERS OF URGENCY – JUBILEE FIELD: Cllr. Walden said that numerous reports had been received regarding litter problems. He proposed that, notwithstanding the fact that the field was not due to be transferred to the Town Council until later this year and was, at present the responsibility of Betterment Homes, the Town Council should purchase a litter bin better-suited to the requirements of the site and pay for it to be emptied by the District Council. Cllr. Mrs. Spiller seconded the proposal.

CLLR. MRS. LEAT RE-ITERATED HER INTEREST AND TOOK NOT PART IN THE VOTE.

The vote was carried.

2017/0151 MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING: Dated 13th March 2017 – it was resolved that these be approved and adopted.

2017/0152 MINUTES OF EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MEETING: Dated 23rd March 2017 – these were not available.

2017/0153 MINUTES OF CEMETERY COMMITTEE MEETING: Dated 3rd April 2017 – it was resolved that these be approved and adopted.

2017/0154 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING: referring to the withdrawal of application 17/0236, Councillors welcomed the fact that the Highway Authority observations had supported many of the comments made by the Town Council.

2017/0155 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF CEMETERY COMMITTEE MEETING: none.

2017/0156 FINANCIAL MATTERS – APPROVAL OF MARCH EXPENDITURE: deferred until May on account of staff leave.

2017/0157 FINANCIAL MATTERS – FEBRUARY BANK RECONCILIATION: Resolved that this be approved.

2017/0158 FINANCIAL MATTERS – MATTERS APPROVED FOR EXPENDITURE BY TOWN MAYOR OR COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN: None.

2017/0159 FINANCIAL MATTERS – REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL HELP: a request had been received from a Charity called Upstream. It was agreed that a representative from this group be invited to speak to the Council at a later date.

2017/0160 FINANCIAL MATTERS - RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT:

On behalf of the Responsible Financial Officer, the Town Clerk reported that alternative banking arrangements were being considered. The Audit Notice had been received and an intermediate audit was needed because of the Council's expenditure level. V.A.T. return from April to December had been submitted. One of the aspects raised for Internal Audit was Risk Assessment and a meeting for this must be scheduled.

The report was noted.

2017/0161 PHOTOGRAPHS OF FORMER MAYORS: It was resolved that these photographs, which had hung previously in the former Museum, now be displayed in the Churchill Suite. It was agreed that an event be held to mark this and at the same time to present badges to former Mayors or their surviving relatives.

2017/0162 HIGHWAY MATTERS – HUNTERS LODGE: Cllr. Walden said that preparatory work had started. Where necessary night time closures would be used to ensure safety of personnel.

2017/0163 HIGHWAY MATTERS – PERMISSIVE PATH: this has been welcomed by many people. The situation regarding the dropped kerbs had still to be resolved.

2017/0164 HIGHWAY MATTERS – TOWN SIGN AT MILLWEY: it is hoped that this will be re-instated following a change in the Highway Authority contractor.

2017/0165 HIGHWAY MATTERS – CLOSURE OF HIGHWAY OFFICER’S SURGERY: The Town Mayor reported that this had been closed as it was not cost effective to run it due to low usage by the public.

2017/0166 GRUMBLE WALK REPORT: this was noted.

2017/0167 INTRODUCTION A PROTOCOL FOR COUNCILLORS FOR SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN IN THE COMMUNITY: Several Councillors felt that all members should have a level 2 clearance as the nature of their duties involved them in meeting minors. After discussion it was resolved to await a report on the subject from East Devon District Council and follow its recommendations.

2017/0168 CORRESPONDENCE:

- a. Letters Received
 - i. South West Trains – re termination of their franchise.
- b. Meetings
 - i. East Devon Local Action Group – 20th April, Axminster
- c. Reports Received - the following reports are available for consultation in the office:
 - i. East Devon Local Action Group minutes.

Cllr. Rowe 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. Agreed.

2017/0169 QUOTES FOR WORKS AT GUILDHALL – ACOUSTIC CLOUDS: there were concerns that these had succumbed to the deprecations of clothes moths. The Guildhall Manager had obtained a price from the original firm to provide replacements. After discussion it was resolved that further details be obtained regarding the effectiveness of any treatment on replacement clouds and alternative synthetic materials be considered. Cllr. Walden felt that some urgency was needed in this matter.

2017/0170 QUOTES FOR WORKS AT GUILDHALL – WORKS IN ROOF SPACE: It was agreed that the Town Clerk should go back to the consultants and ask for their advice given the variation in the quotations received and the lack of clarity regarding the extent of the work to be done. Deferred until further information is obtained.

2017/0171 QUOTES FOR WORKS AT THE GUILDHALL – ACCESS CONTROL: various contractors have looked at the problem and the solution may be expensive

given the size of the doors. However, there is still a need for such control and the general opinion is that some form of maglock is what is needed. The consensus of opinion was that the costs involved were probably necessary. Cllr. Young said that she had correspondence

2017/0172 QUOTES FOR WORKS AT THE GUILDHALL – CENTRAL HEATING

SYSTEM: It was agreed that an independent advisor be asked to comment on the proposals prior to the work being done and the matter be handed to the insurers for suitable action.

2017/0173 STAFFING MATTER: the amount of back pension due to a former employee was agreed following advice and it was agreed that this be paid via a solicitor's account. The Town Clerk will draft a suitable letter.

2017/0174 LETTER TO TENANTS: this matter was deferred.

Signed Date.....