

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Held at the Guildhall, on Monday 14th August 2017 at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Town Mayor: Cllr. J.W. Walden
Deputy Mayor Cllr. A.L. Young
Councillors: S. E. Clarke, C. A. Doherty, P.G. Hayward, D.R.H. Hull,
Mrs. S.L.N. Leat, L.A. Rowe,
Mrs. S.R. Spiller and M.D. Symes.

The Town Clerk (Miss H. Kirkcaldie) and the Deputy Town Clerk (Mrs. Z. Adamson-Drage).
Cty. Cllr. I.L. Hall was in attendance.

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

2017/0316 APOLOGIES: Cllrs. G.S. Godbeer, A.T. Moulding and B.R. Watson. No
representative from Devon and Cornwall Police.

2017/0317 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS:

CLLRS. DOHERTY, HAYWARD, HULL, MRS. LEAT, MRS. SPILLER AND YOUNG
ALL DECLARED PERSONAL INTERESTS AS BEING MEMBERS OF THE
AXMINSTER GUILDHALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IN RESPECT OF
ANY ITEMS RELATING TO THE GUILDHALL.

CLLRS. WALDEN DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS BEING A MEMBERS OF
AXMINSTER COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE.

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

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

2017/0318 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 10th JULY 2017: Cllr. Mrs. Spiller pointed
out her name should not have been included as being on the working party looking
into the employment of a youth worker. Cllr. Symes , seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Spiller ,
proposed that these be approved and adopted subject to that corrections. Agreed.

2017/0319 CO-OPTION OF NEW COUNCILLOR FOR RAYMONDS HILL WARD: only
one expression of interest in this Casual Vacancy had been received, so it was agreed
that Mr. David Moore be the new member for this ward.

2017/0320 CO-OPTION OF NEW COUNCILLOR FOR TOWN WARD: Three expressions of interest had been received in this Casual Vacancy. Since the closing date for such expressions Mr. Pursey had decided to withdraw his application. In a paper vote between Ms. Birnie and Ms. Seward the latter was the successful candidate and it was agreed that she be co-opted as the new member for this ward and she duly signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

2017/0321 POLICE REPORT: None.

2017/0322 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: Cllr. Hall reported on the outcome of the meeting of the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee held on 26th July at which, by one vote, the Committee had decided not to refer to the Secretary of State for Health the decision by North, East and West Devon Clinical Commissioning Group to close most of the remaining community hospitals in East Devon. He said that he disagreed strongly with the decision but would direct his energies towards ensuring that the Axminster Hospital site remains a hub for health and social care related provision.

Cllr. Hayward deplored the failure of the County Councillor mandated to represent the various District Councils in the County to vote in support of a referral to the Secretary of State. He felt that this was a betrayal of Axe Valley residents.

2017/0323 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS:

Cllr. Hull said that he had been dealing with confidential personal matters raised with him by individuals. He endorsed the comments made by Cllr. Hayward and said that it was likely that there may be an extra-ordinary meeting of the District Council regarding the decision taken at County Level.

Cllr. Hall said that he had been involved with matters pertaining to Axminster Regeneration and said that grant funding may be available towards the cost of the relief road but the submission had to be made by 26th August. Concerns were expressed by several Town Councillors that Cllr. Hull had not been included in meetings about Axminster Regeneration.

It was agreed that a representative be invited to the September Town Council meeting to talk about the Rent Plus Housing scheme.

2017/0324 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS: None.

2017/0325 TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS: the Town Mayor had attended the following events:

A fund-raising concert held at the Guildhall in support of those affected by terrorism in the United Kingdom.

The Annual General Meeting of Axminster Care Service.

2017/0326 TOWN FORUM – IMPACT OF NEW ACCESS TO NORTH STREET PLAYING FIELD ON LOCAL RESIDENTS: A representative of residents from xxx

at the west end of Wilhayes Park said that the works undertaken by the District Council were unacceptable to local residents and had not only been carried out without seeking permission to pass over private land to reach the gate but had also resulted in loss of amenity for the residents by virtue of individuals climbing the gate and using it as a short cut. Cllr. Walden said that the matter was a civil disagreement between landowners, one of which was the District Council and that the Town Council could not get involved.

A member of the public reported that an elderly resident had stumbled going down the steps from the Green towards West Street in the dusk. The Town Clerk will bring the matter to the attention of the Parochial Church Council and to the District Council.

2017/0327 TOWN FORUM – OBSTRUCTIONS TO PATHS, PAVEMENTS AND

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY: A local resident expressed his concerns that pedestrians were put at risk when they were forced to walk on the roads in places where the narrow pavements were obstructed by refuse receptacles. He said that this was a particular problem on collection days but added that some residents left their bins on the pavements throughout the week. Where public rights of way are obstructed this should be reported to the County Council in the first instance.

2017/0328 TOWN FORUM – FAILURE OF CONTRACTORS AT DUKES WAY TO

OBSERVER CONDITIONS REGARDING WORKING HOURS: a resident made forceful representations regarding the loss of amenity suffered by residents of Dukes Way because the contractors developing the land at the east end of the road were ignoring conditions attached to the planning consent to protect the existing residents. The matter will be referred to the planning enforcement officer.

2017/0329 TOWN FORUM – PAINT SPILLAGE IN SOUTH STREET:

a member of the public said that the failure to clean up the mess in South Street which had resulted from the spillage, and subsequent spread by footfall, of a pot of white paint gave visitors to the town a very bad impression. He was informed that the District Council had tried to clear up the mess with the means at its disposal but had not been successful.

2017/0330 TOWN FORUM – CUTTING OF AMENITY GRASS AND ELIMINATION OF

WEEDS: A member of the public said that the cutting of amenity grass and treatment of weeds in the town left much to be desired. After discussion, it was agreed that there needed to be greater co-ordination between what was being done by the Town Council and what was being done by the County and District Councils. The Mayor added that the town Handyman already had a heavy workload and there was only so much that could be done. He added that the austerity cutbacks by higher level authorities had resulted in similar problems on the brook at Gamberlake which had formerly been cleared by Devon County Council but which was now choked with weeds. Responsibility for clearing such areas lies with riparian owners but these are often hard to identify.

2017/0331 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON

10th JULY 2017 – MINUTE 2017/0293 PARISH PATHS PARTNERSHIP: The Town Clerk reported that Colyton Parish Council had voted against a proposed project for joint purchase of Christmas Lights.

The Mayor confirmed that the night landing site for the Air Ambulance will be at Axminster Football Club.

2017/0332 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12TH JULY – MINUTE 2017/0290 AIR POLLUTION LEVELS IN AXMINSTER TOWN CENTRE: records for the past seven years were available and a link would be put on the website. Apart from one instance a few years ago, all data for Axminster was below the National trigger levels.

2017/0333 MATTERS OF URGENCY: a request for funding to cover the cost of adding two further names to the War Memorial had been received. It was resolved that this be considered with other requests for funding.

2017/0334 MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING: Dated 10th July 2017. Cllr. Hayward, seconded by Cllr. Rowe, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2017/0335 MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING: Dated 31st July 2017. Cllr. Hayward, seconded by Cllr. Mrs Spiller, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2017/0336 MINUTES OF CEMETERY COMMITTEE MEETING: Dated 31st July 2017. Cllr. Mrs. Spiller, seconded by Cllr. Hull, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2017/0337 MINUTES OF BUILDINGS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING: Dated 7th July 2017: Cllr. Watson, seconded by Cllr. Hull, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2017/0338 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING: Dated 10th July 2017 – None.

2017/0339 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETINGS : Dated 31st July 2017 - None.

2017/0340 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF BUILDINGS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE: Dated 31st July 2017 – Cllr. Walden explained to Cllr. Mrs. Spiller the arrangements relating to vulnerable users at Pippins and added that this did not apply to parts of the premises such as the garage and that exceptions had to be made where urgent indoor works were needed.

2017/0341 REQUEST FOR IN-FILLING OF SMALL POTHoles: a letter had been received from the Lord of the Manor raising concerns about the trip hazard created by small potholes and loose paving slabs and kerbs, on behalf of stall holders and visitors to the market. After discussion which reflected the fact that the infilling of small potholes in rural areas was an infinite problem, it was resolved that an offer from Chardstock Parish Council to gift some of its supply of tar be accepted and that, on a one-off basis, the potholes would be filled in. A letter will be sent to the Lord of the Manor and a copy to the local Highway Superintendent.

2017/0342 FINANCIAL MATTERS – PAYMENTS TO BE APPROVED: Cllr. Hayward, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Leat proposed that the schedule of payments for July be approved. Agreed.

2017/0343 FINANCIAL MATTERS – BANK RECONCILIATIONS FOR MAY AND JUNE: It was resolved that these be noted.

2017/0344 FINANCIAL MATTERS – TO REPORT MATTERS APPROVED BY TOWN MAYOR OR COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN: None.

2017/0345 FINANCIAL MATTERS – TO CONSIDER REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OR GRANTS – R.I.S.E.: following discussion, it was proposed that this request for a financial contribution towards the costs of running this confidential and sensitive service, which is based in Pippins, be discussed in Committee. Agreed.

2017/0346 FINANCIAL MATTERS – TO CONSIDER REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OR GRANTS – AXMINSTER CHURCHES TOGETHER AND AXMINSTER NEW YOUTH CLUB: The Deputy Mayor proposed that discussion of these applications be deferred. Agreed.

2017/0347 FINANCIAL MATTERS – TO CONSIDER REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OR GRANTS – TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE:

CLLR. HULL DECLARED AN INTEREST AS BEING A MEMBER OF AXMINSTER HERITAGE CENTRE

It was resolved that as the Tourist Information Centre had been disbanded and now formed part of Axminster Heritage Centre and was no longer based at the Old Courthouse, then any request for funding should come from Axminster Heritage.

2017/0348 FINANCIAL MATTERS – TO CONSIDER REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OR GRANTS – AXE VALLEY RING AND RIDE: It was resolved, proposed Cllr. Symes and seconded Cllr. Hayward, that an award of £500 be made. Cllr. Hull said that Axe Valley Ring and Ride would welcome a representative of the Town Council on its committee.

2017/0349 FINANCIAL MATTERS – TO CONSIDER REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OR GRANTS – ROYAL BRITISH LEGION: a request had been received from the Royal British Legion for funding towards the addition of two names to the list of those who died in the First World War. It was resolved that Axminster Town Council should pay for this directly, as it has the power to do so, and the Town Clerk will seek competitive quotations. Enquiries will be made as to whether these names have been inscribed on any other War Memorial.

Cllr. Walden proposed that Standing Orders be suspended to enable a representative from the Women's Section of the Royal British Legion to respond to a question as to whether any female residents who had served during that war had died in the service of their country. The response received was that this was not a matter which had been investigated.

Standing Orders were re-instated.

2017/0350 FINANCIAL MATTERS – PARISHES TOGETHER FUND – CHRISTMAS LIGHTS FUND AND DEVON AIR AMBULANCE TRUST NIGHT LANDING

PROJECT: The Town Clerk had been informed that Colyton Parish Council had not supported a joint Christmas Lights project with Axminster. Cllr. Hayward, as Clerk to All Saints and Chardstock Parish Councils, had devised a scheme whereby those two parishes would “partner” Axminster in contributing £200 each for that project in return for Axminster “partnering” All Saints and Chardstock Parish Councils in their project to create night landing sites for the Devon Air Ambulances in each parish by contributing £558.80 to Chardstock and £855.80 to All Saints. The Axminster Site will be at Axminster Football Club Ground. This would leave Axminster some funds in hand for a further project. Cllr. Hayward, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Spiller proposed that this be approved. Agreed.

2017/0351 FINANCIAL MATTERS – TO CONSIDER PURCHASE OF A BATTERY OPERATED STRIMMER FOR THE TOWN HANDYMAN:

The handyman had tried out a Stiga strimmer and found it satisfactory to use. Cllr. Mrs. Spiller, seconded by Cllr. Young, proposed that one be obtained from the supplier who had quoted the lowest price. Agreed.

2017/0352 FINANCIAL MATTERS – INTERNET TRANSMISSION AND SECURITY:

The Deputy Town Clerk said that there were considerable problems with drop off in signal between the office and other parts of the building. The signal was strong but the transmission was poor. She said that she had sought advice from a local contractor and a quote had been provided. Following discussion, Cllr. Mrs. Spiller, seconded by Cllr. Young proposed that the quote be accepted subject to a guarantee that the signal could be switched off over-night and at times when the building was not in use. Agreed.

2017/0353 FINANCIAL MATTERS – TO DISCUSS INSURANCE RENEWAL: This was deferred.

2017/0354 FINANCIAL MATTERS - RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER’S

REPORT: Mrs. Adamson-Drage reported that the audit had been completed, the re-investment of the bond money was in hand and V.A.T. rebate had been reclaimed.

2017/0355 FINANCIAL MATTERS – BUSINESS WATER SUPPLY: Cllr. Walden,

seconded by Cllr. Hayward, proposed that Standing Orders be suspended to enable reconsideration of this matter in the light of revised information supplied. Agreed.

Following discussion, it was resolved that the decision to remain with the present supplier be confirmed but that the situation be reviewed in 12 month’s time once the situation regarding Pippins had been clarified.

Standing Orders were re-instated.

2017/0356 FINANCIAL MATTERS – BANKING ARRANGEMENTS: Following the recommendations in the report of the Working Party, it was resolved, proposed Cllr. Hayward, seconded Cllr. Mrs. Rowe, that the Town Council move its Current Account from the present supplier to Lloyds as the charges for online banking were cheaper.

2017/0357 TO DISCUSS OPTIONS FOR PIPPINS – MOTION 1: Cllr. Hull proposed that this Axminster Town Council should convert its tenancy at will into a lease, the duration to be either two or three years.

In the course of discussion it was clear that Councillors felt that they needed more detailed information regarding the income and expenditure situation and possible future liabilities in terms of maintenance. Cllr. Hull said that he was happy to leave his proposal on the table.

2017/0358 TO DISCUSS OPTIONS FOR PIPPINS – MOTION 2: Cllr. Hull proposed that, as the first stage in assessing whether this Town Council should take on ownership of Pippins, an independent structural survey is commissioned to identify any major work which may be needed so that we are clear about any liabilities we would be taking on.

Cllr. Walden, put forward an amended motion, to instruct the Town Clerk to get 3 quotes for such a survey. Cllr. Hull said that he would withdraw his motion and support Cllr. Walden's proposal. Agreed.

2017/0359 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING UPDATE: This item was deferred.

2017/0360 CORRESPONDENCE:

- a. Letters Received
- b. Meetings
 - i. E.D.D.C. – Communities working together – Knowle, 29th September 9.30-2.00 p.m.
- c. Reports Received - the following reports are available for consultation in the office:
 - i. East Devon L.A.G. Minutes
 - ii. Healthwatch Devon.

Cllr. Symes left the meeting at this point.

Deputy Mayor 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.

Cllr. Mrs. Spiller proposed that as Standing Orders state that no meeting should exceed three hours that the meeting now cease. Agreed. It was further agreed that the remaining business be considered at an extra-ordinary meeting to be held the following Monday.

Signed Date.....

