

# 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  
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EX13 5NX

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

**DRAFT MINUTES – YET TO BE APPROVED; Part TWO version (unredacted)**

Held in person on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 7.00 p.m.

**Present:** Cllrs. Farrow (JF) (Chair), Walden (JW) (Vice-Chair), Bridge (PB), Bruce (DB), Dowdeswell (MD), Hurren (WH), Langdon (TL), Leat (SL), Steadman (BSt.) and Willey (DW).  
*(Meeting was deemed quorate with ten members present).*

Town Clerk, Paul Hayward (PH)

Cllr. Sarah Jackson (SJ) (EDDC)

3 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).**

No members of the public indicated that they wish to address Council.

Chair subsequently closed the Public Forum session of the meeting at 7.05pm

### FC24/024

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

Councillors in attendance at meeting are shown above.

### FC24/025

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

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

Cllr. Brooker. Absence noted and reason and apology approved (work commitment).

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

Cllr. Paice. Absence noted and reason and apology approved (family commitment).

**Acceptance of reasons for absence proposed by Chair, seconded by BSt. Resolved.**

### FC24/026

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

Apologies received from Cllr. Hall (DCC) and Cllr. Smith (EDDC). Noted.

*Continued overleaf.*

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## FC24/027

**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.*

None received.

## FC24/028

**To consider and, if thought fit, to approve the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the FULL Council held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and to consider any matters arising from those minutes:**

Approval of the minutes proposed by Chair, subject to one small typographic correction, seconded by JW. Resolved unanimously.

Signing of the minutes was deferred to allow for the correction to be made.

## FC24/029

**Matters arising from those minutes:**

Chair asked that the survey of the OCH building be expedited. Clerk: Action accordingly.

## FC24/030

**To note the minutes of the following Committee meetings held (as dated below) and to consider any matters arising from those minutes:** Noted.

- a) Guildhall Sub-Committee meeting – 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024. Noted.
- b) Employment Committee meeting – 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024. Noted

The minutes of the Operations Committee meeting held 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 were not yet available. Noted. Clerk to bring to next meeting of the FULL Council in March.

## FC24/031

**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.

*Continued overleaf.*

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## FC24/032

**To consider matters pertaining to the Casual Vacancy on the Town Ward seat** (Section 89; Local Government Act 1972) (The Local Elections (Parishes and Communities) (England and Wales) Rules 2006; Section 5)

Clerk confirmed that the Casual Vacancy process (CVP) had been initiated as per legislation and that the deadline for the petitioning of EDDC for a by-election would end on 23<sup>rd</sup> February. If no such petition was submitted, a CVP4 notice would be issued and the Council could then proceed to fill the vacancy by co-option. Chair thanked former Cllr. Lippett for her service to the Council and the town, and for supporting ACAG and other committees. Cllr. Hurren was also welcomed to the Town Council (having been co-opted in January).

It was the wish of the Council that the co-option of a new Councillor (if no election called) should be considered at the March meeting. **Clerk: Please note and action accordingly.**

## FC24/033

**To consider Council's financial matters:**

- a) To consider and, if thought fit, to approve and ratify payments for January 2024. **Payments for January 2024 proposed for approval by Chair, seconded by DW. Resolved.**
- b) To consider and, if thought fit, to approve the Bank Reconciliation for Jan. 2024. **Bank reconciliation for January 2024 proposed for approval by Chair, seconded by DW. Resolved.** Clerk: please arrange for this document to be signed by a non-bank signatory.
- c) To receive, and note, Responsible Financial Officer's report and financial pack for January 2024 in the approved format (also published online) incorporating the Guildhall Operational Financial Statement. **Chair proposed that review of the financial reports be deferred until March. Resolved. RFO: Please note and action accordingly.**
- d) Questions to the RFO on these accounts / financial reports from members.  
*In light of c) above, there were no questions to the RFO.*
- e) To consider a grant request from Pippins Community Centre (for an unspecified sum) towards the costs of replacing the building heating and hot water boiler – project costs £8000.  
**After debate, it was proposed by DB that no grant be awarded in support of the project. Seconded by DW. 5 votes for, 2 against, 3 abstentions. Resolved.**  
RFO: Please notify the applicant accordingly.
- f) To consider a grant request from Lyme Regis Sea School for £200 towards the costs of the organisation's annual open day on April 8th 2024.  
**Proposed by BSt. that no grant be awarded in support of the project. Seconded JW. Resolved unanimously.**

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**FC24/034**

## **Planning matters:**

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

None advised to Council.

**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 in consultation with the members of the Council's Committee.**

i) 23/2772/FUL – Cloakham House, Cloakham , Axminster, EX13 5RP

Erection of wooden summerhouse on existing concrete base within garden area 90m from listed building.

*Support recommended from Planning Committee as per their delegated authority powers.*

ii) 24/0026/AGR – Quercus Fields, Cooks Lane, Axminster

Prior approval for erection of an agricultural barn.

*Support recommended from Planning Committee as per their delegated authority powers.*

**Ratification of the delegated decisions proposed by SL, seconded by BSt. Resolved.**

**c) To consider any tree related planning applications received prior to the agenda publication and currently awaiting consideration (and decision):**

None advised to Council.

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

An application had been received that members felt could not be dealt with at this late stage. It was therefore suggested by the Chair of Planning Committee (SL) that an extraordinary planning meeting be held on 19<sup>th</sup> February to consider that application. Agreed by members.  
*Clerk: Please convene the meeting accordingly, immediately prior to the scheduled Strategy & Finance Committee meeting on the same evening.*

**e) To consider any planning correspondence received:**

Correspondence from DEFRA re: Axe Valley SAC designation noted.

*Continued overleaf.*

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## Council Business to be considered:

### FC24/035

To receive an update report on the work of the Axminster Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group from the Chair of the Steering Group, Cllr. Bernie Steadman.  
Noted.

### FC24/036

To receive and note the Legal Topic Note no. 30 on Defamation which Council reviews each year as part of its Risk Assessment and Management Review.  
Noted. Cllr. Dowdeswell offered to assist any members with advice on this subject as he has professional experience in this respect.

### FC24/037

To consider matters pertaining to the ongoing proposals for a Devon and Torbay devolution deal which will affect Axminster parish.

After a lengthy debate, during which members expressed concerns about the proposed deal with regards to democratic representation and financial benefit to the Town Council, it was proposed by Chair, seconded by JW, that a short letter be sent to John Hart (DCC) [copied to DLUHC, DALC and EDDC] setting out those concerns and seeking reassurance and comment. Resolved unanimously. Clerk: please action accordingly.

### FC24/038

To consider a proposal to re-schedule Council and committee meetings as per a report to be presented to members by the Council's Proper Officer.

It was proposed by Chair, seconded by JW, that the revised calendar of Council and committee meetings be adopted with immediate effect. Schedule to be publicised via all available channels. Resolved unanimously. Clerk: please action accordingly.

### FC24/039

To note the date of the Annual Parish meeting on 4th March 2024; to note that a representative of both EDDC and The Environment Agency have agreed to attend at Council's invitation to discuss flood management, mitigation and resilience in the Axe Valley.

Noted. Chair suggested that Committee Chair reports be removed from Agenda given the additional business to be considered at that meeting (EA/EDDC/Budget Statement). Agreed.

*Continued overleaf.*

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## FC24/040

**To consider responses to Council's recent correspondence to DLUHC, DCC (Highways) and South Western Railways concerning matters of interest and concern to the Town Council; Clerk to provide update report.**

Chair noted with regret that no response had been received from DLUHC, DCC or SWR.

## FC24/041

**To note the recent resolution of EDDC Cabinet in relation to Safeguarding Policy and to consider what measures/actions the Town Council should take in this regard (if deemed appropriate and/or relevant); Chair of the Council, Cllr. Farrow, to speak on this subject.**

Chair introduced this subject with an opening statement of current Council policy.

Summary of debate:

*Acceptance that the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is important.*

*Recognition of the terrible affects of abuse on the victims.*

*Agreement that any Safeguarding Policy needs to be succinct and concise to ensure compliance and understanding.*

*Acknowledgement that staff (and member) training will be necessary in the future.*

*Confirmation that future discussion of this topic should remain with FULL Council rather than being deferred to a committee (such as EmployComm.).*

*Clerk to liaise with EDDC Safeguarding Lead to establish whether a model policy for smaller authorities is available for review and integration into Town Council's Policy Framework.*

*Agreement that Cllr. Hurren should be nominated to act as ATC's Safeguarding "Lead".*

*Agreement that there was no legal basis to insist upon DBS checks for staff and Councillors as they did not meet the criteria for such checks in their day-to-day employed/elected roles.*

**It was subsequently proposed by WH, seconded by JF, that the Council should proceed to obtain advice from EDDC (and DALC) on the creation of a suitable Safeguarding Policy/Protocol and to obtain costs for relevant and appropriate safeguarding training.**

**Resolved unanimously.** Clerk: please action accordingly in liaison with WH, and the administration team.

## FC24/042

**To receive an update report on the work of the Axminster Chamber of Commerce from the Town Council's representative to that organisation, Cllr. Mark Dowdeswell.**

Noted. Chair thanked MD for the comprehensive and detailed report provided. Chair also thanked the creators (and administrators) of the new "WhatsInAxminster" website for their efforts. There was a request that Town Council meetings be added to their event calendar.

Clerk: please action accordingly in liaison with website admin. team.



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## FC24/043

**To consider recent correspondence from DALC seeking nominations from the Town Council for attendance at the Royal Garden Party 2024 on Tuesday 21st May.**

No nominations proposed. No further action required.

## FC24/044

**To consider recent correspondence from EDDC regarding a proposed Street Trading Licence for “The Brunch Box” on Millway Industrial Estate (the annual renewal of a pre-existing licence).**

No comment proposed. No objections raised.

## FC24/045

**To consider arrangements for a meeting with the organisers of the 2024 Gate-To-Plate event (scheduled for Bank Holiday Monday 27th May 2024) in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce representatives. Meeting has been suggested to discuss publicity, event management and local trader inclusion & participation following feedback from last year’s event.**

It was suggested that MD discuss with the Axminster Chamber of Commerce how they wished to engage with the G2P organisers in terms of event space needed, liaison with the Town Council to present a unified front for visitors and residents, and to discuss any matters relating to retailer engagement and interaction.

Chair indicated that she would be happy to meet with the organisers, with MD, and the Town Clerk on a date to be agreed.

Clerk: please liaise with MD and G2P team to organise a date/time for the meeting.

## FC24/046

**To receive an update report on the work of the Axminster Climate Action Group (ACAG) from the Chair of the Action Group, Cllr. Bernie Steadman.**

Noted. Chair thanked BSt. For her continued efforts to promote ACAG and to deliver events and projects for the town. Cllr. Steadman welcomed other members to join ACAG as the membership had been depleted recently with the loss of former Councillors Birnie & Lippett.

## FC24/047

**To receive an update report on the progress of the Axminster Urban Renewal / Town Regeneration project;**

Chair proposed that Standing Orders be suspended to allow Cllr. Hayward to address Council in his elected role (rather than as Clerk). Resolved.

Report from Cllr. Hayward noted with thanks from Chair.

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## FC24/048

### To consider any matters considered as urgent by the presiding Chair

Chair confirmed that they had attended the EDDC Peer Challenge Review on behalf of the Town Council and in conjunction with other Town Council Chairs across the district. The problems and challenges facing ATC as a small local authority were not unique and these were conveyed to the Peer Challenge team for inclusion in their report to EDDC. Noted.

## FC24/049

### To confirm the date of the next scheduled FULL meeting of the Town Council and other Council committee meetings (subject to resolutions under agenda item FC24/038 above).

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024 – 7pm at The Guildhall. Next meeting thereafter would be the Annual Meeting of Council (and election of The Chair) on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024. There would be no scheduled Ordinary FULL Town Council meeting held in April

**With no further business to deal with, the Chair closed the meeting at 8.50pm.**

Signed ..... Date: 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024

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

**DRAFT MINUTES – YET TO BE APPROVED; Part TWO version (unredacted)**

Held in person on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 7.00 p.m.