

Axminster Town Council

Office Hours
Monday to Thursday
9am – 4pm

Mayor: Cllr Jack Price
Town Clerk: Paul Hayward

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Axminster Town Council:

**The Minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the Employment Committee
Held in person on Monday 20th July 2026 at 7.00pm.**

DRAFT MINUTES – NOT YET APPROVED

Committee members present:

Cllrs. Price (Chair) (JP), Dowdeswell (Vice-Chair) (MD), Farrow (JF), Hayward (AH), Hurren (WH), Leat (SL) and Walden (JW).

(Meeting was quorate with seven committee members present).

Also present:

The Clerk to the Council, Paul Hayward.

No members of the public in attendance.

The Chair welcomed all present. The Chair highlighted the building fire precautions and alerted those present to the fire exits.

Public Forum session.

No public speakers present.

The Chair closed the Public Forum session at 7.01pm

Agenda business.

EC26/056

To note members of the Employment Committee present at the meeting:

As shown above.

EC26/057

To receive and, if thought fit, to note the absence and to approve the reasons given for the absence: (LGA 1972 s.85(1))

Cllr. Paice had sent her apologies and reasons for absence. Noted.

Cllr. Willey had sent his apologies and reasons for absence. Noted.

It was proposed by the Chair, seconded by JW, that the apologies (and reasons therefore) be approved. Resolved unanimously.

Continued overleaf.

EC26/058

To note members of the committee who are neither present nor have given their apologies for absence:

All members of the committee were present or had offered apologies for absence.

EC26/059

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.

This does not preclude the need for members to declare any additional interests that may arise during the meeting. No declarations of interest offered by members in relation to the business on the agenda for consideration.

EC26/060

To consider and, if thought fit, approve the minutes of the Employment Committee meeting held 1st June 2026.

And to consider matters arising from those minutes not otherwise listed on this agenda.

It was proposed by the Chair, seconded by JW that the minutes of that meeting be approved. Resolved by majority (1 abstention). There were no matters arising from these minutes.

EC26/061

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 (see *below*).

No other matters to be considered in Part Two session other than that already listed on the agenda under agenda business items EC26/065 to 068 inclusive.

EC26/062

To consider any matters considered as urgent by the Chair for discussion.

The Chair asked that the topic for Councillor (Member) IT devices be added to the agenda of the proposed Extraordinary (LGR) Full Council meeting on the 10th August 2026.

Clerk: Please note and action accordingly.

EC26/063

To note the date of the next scheduled meeting of the committee.

The next scheduled meeting date of the committee was noted as 19th October 2026 unless any extraordinary meetings were required before that time.

EC26/064

Recommendation: that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act namely, the financial affairs or business affairs or employment affairs of the Town Council by virtue of the fact that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. Proposed by the Vice-Chair, seconded by the Chair. Resolved unanimously.

The public session of the meeting ended and the audio recording was stopped and a separate recording commenced for the closed session.

Agenda business in confidential closed session.

Matters which are considered as confidential as they relate to Council employment.

EC26/065(IC)

To consider any matters pertaining to Council employees, remuneration and Terms & Conditions of Employment which require the attention and decision of the employment committee; Clerk presented reports to committee members on the following matters:

i) Employee remuneration incl. allowances and stipends.

No business to be considered or discussed. Noted.

ii) Pension matters.

No business to be considered or discussed. Noted.

iii) Terms and Conditions of Employment.

Clerk advised that revised wording for the Town Council's model contract (Statement of Written Particulars) was being prepared in consultation with Peninsula HR and that this would be brought back to the committee at October's meeting for consideration prior to approval and adoption. Noted.

iv) Training / Continuing Professional Development

Clerk provided an updated summary of training progress and requirements across the ATC/GH team. Clerk also reminded members of the two forthcoming Councillor training sessions:

21/7 – EDDC (online) Code of Conduct Training

23/7 – DALC (in-person) Good Councillor Training.

The Chair urged all members to attend if they were available.

v) Appraisals / Performance Management Reviews (PMR)

Clerk provided members with an update on the appraisal cycle and recent performance management discussions with staff members and advised that 2026 PMRs needed to be completed prior to October in order for the out-turn results to be considered by EmployComm as part of their budget submission proposals for Full Council. Noted.

vi) Work experience / Apprenticeships.

No business to be considered or discussed. Noted

vii) Recruitment and resourcing.

Members received a report from the Chair and Clerk on proposals for additional recruitment / staff restructuring and related matters in order to tackle the ongoing issues of excessive workload and pressures on employees, and to consider the likely impact of LGR on the Town Council staff team. Members accepted that there was no further capacity within the team for additional workload but that LGR would inevitably result in more work and responsibility for the Town Council and that, as such, decisions would need to be made imminently to tackle the imbalance.

Continued overleaf.

Committee members considered the proposals put forward and the budgetary impact of adopting those (and the associated need for building adaptations for both workspace and security reasons). The contents of the report (and the outturn of the debate) were confidential and therefore cannot be minuted herewith but members agreed that public expectation and demand for services was increasing without pause and the Council had a duty to care to its employees to safeguard their health and wellbeing and do whatever it could to provide a reasonable work-life balance for all employees. Members also considered the need for re-training, upskilling and flexibility among the Council employee team in order to meet the future challenges of LGR and devolution.

At this point of the meeting, WH proposed that Standing Orders be suspended to allow the meeting to progress beyond the 2-hour limit. Seconded by the Chair. Resolved unanimously.

The decision of committee was to direct the Chair and Clerk to integrate all discussion topics from this meeting and revise the proposal accordingly and to then bring back the report as a recommendation to the FULL Council meeting scheduled for the 10th August 2026 for further debate and decision on recruitment, staffing levels, pay and re-training / job description revisions.

viii) Implications of Employment Rights Bill (effective from 1st April 2026)

No business to be considered or discussed other than to note that a further community information session was scheduled for October 2026 at the Community Waffle House.

ix) Any other employment matters requiring members consideration.

Nothing to be added under this agenda item.

EC26/066 (IC)

To receive a report from Clerk relating to Guildhall employee matters and to resolve any actions thereafter;

Clerk provided a report to members.

It was subsequently proposed by JF, seconded by the Chair, that the employee involved be paid for their leave as per the Council's statutory responsibilities and contractual obligations. Resolved unanimously.

Clerk: Please note and advise employee accordingly and arrange for the statutory payment to be made and reclaimed from HMRC.

EC26/067(IC)

To consider any matters pertaining to employee occupational health.

No business to be considered or discussed. Noted.

EC26/068 (IC)

To receive a summary update report on employee leave allocations and periods of leave remaining, including TOIL accrued, including a year-to-date sickness/absence report:

Continued overleaf.

- a) Clerk / Proper Officer
- b) All other ATC employees

Reports were noted. Clerk was asked to maintain progress on TOIL reduction and to report back to committee if workload pressures were adversely affecting that reported position.

With no further items to discuss, the Chair closed the meeting at 9.15pm.

Signed Date: 19th October 2026

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