

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Held at the Guildhall, on Monday 14th May 2018 at 7.30 p.m.

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

The Town Clerk (Miss H. Kirkcaldie) and the Deputy Town Clerk (Mrs. Z. Adamson-Drage) was in attendance. Dist. Cllr. Moulding.

5 Members of the public. 0 representative of the Press. 0 representative of the Devon and Cornwall Police.

2018/0146 ELECTION OF MAYOR: The Deputy Mayor proposed Cllr. Walden as Mayor. Cllr. Mrs. Spiller seconded the proposal. There were no other nominations so Cllr. Walden was duly elected and signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

2018/0147 ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR: Cllr. Hull, seconded by Cllr. Moore, proposed Cllr. Young. There being no other nominations, Cllr. Young was duly elected.

The Town Mayor proposed that Agenda Item 17 be brought forward. Agreed.

2018/0148 UPDATE ON CASUAL VACANCIES: Notification had been received from the District Council that the election to fill these vacancies was not contested so the two candidates, Mr. A.J. Bourner and Mr. M. Mynard were duly elected.

Mr. Mynard duly signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took his seat on the Town Council.

2018/0149 APOLOGIES: Cllrs. A.J.E. Seward, B.R. Watson, Mr. Bourner and Cty. Cllr. I.L. Hall.

2018/0150 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS:

CLLRS. DOHERTY, HAYWARD, HULL, AND MOORE, ALL DECLARED PERSONAL INTERESTS AS BEING MEMBERS OF THE AXMINSTER GUILDHALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IN RESPECT OF ANY ITEMS RELATING TO THE GUILDHALL. CLLR. MRS. SPILLER IS NO LONGER A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE BUT REMAINS A CHEQUE SIGNATORY PENDING A PROPOSED CHANGE IN BANKING ARRANGEMENTS.

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. HULL AND WALDEN EACH DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS BEING A MEMBER OF AXMINSTER COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE.

CLLR. WALDEN DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS BEING CHAIRMAN OF THE GOVERNORS OF AXE VALLEY ACADEMY AS A MEMBER OF AXMINSTER SKATEPARK STEERING GROUP AND AS BEING SAFEGUARDING LEAD FOR AXMINSTER YOUTH CLUB.

CLLR. HAYWARD DECLARED A PECUNIARY INTEREST AS CLERK TO ALL SAINTS, CHARDSTOCK, TATWORTH 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 AN INTEREST AS BEING A GOVERNOR OF THE ROYAL DEVON AND EXETER HOSPITAL.

2018/0151 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS:

membership of Committees and outside organisations was decided, duly proposed and seconded.

2018/0152 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 9TH APRIL 2018: Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Doherty, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2018/0153 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 9TH APRIL 2018: the Town Clerk said that despite efforts by the Town Council problems at the District Council had prevented advertising of the call for recreation projects which would benefit from Section 106 moneys.

2018/0154 REPORTS RECEIVED – POLICE: there had been 25 crimes in the town centre and 20 in the surrounding residential areas.

2018/0155 COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORT: Cllr. Hall had had nothing to report.

2018/0156 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS’ REPORTS: Cllr. Moulding had attended several events as Chairman of the District Council, including the opening of a patients’ garden at Sidmouth Hospital, the Chairman’s Reception at Budleigh Salterton Town Council, two Civic Services and Charing a meeting of the District Council. Cllr. Hull had been dealing with individual problems raised by constituents.

2018/0157 TOWN MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS: the proposed closure of lower Boxfield Road to allow infrastructure repairs was considered unavoidable. Residents were urged to attend the local events being staged to celebrate the wedding of Prince Harry and Ms. Markle.

2018/0158 TOWN MAYOR’S ENAGEMENTS: the Town Mayor had undertaken the following engagements:

Attended the funeral of Mr. Peter Baulch, opened a new shop in the Chard Street and attended a parade in Exeter with the Mayor of Exeter.

2018/0159 TOWN FORUM – PUBLIC DRINKING FOUNTAINS: A request for provision of public drinking fountains will be referred to the Amenities Committee.

2018/0160 TOWN FORUM – BUS SHELTERS: a member of the public was informed that repairs to the bus shelters at Gamberlake were schedule for the next couple of weeks. The Town Clerk will ask a local contractor to remove the old bus shelter on Chard Road and get it repositioned in First Avenue.

2018/0161 TOWN FORUM – SIGNS AND BARRIERS BY SLIP ROAD LINKING A358 TO A35 AT ABBEYGATE: a member of the public expressed fears that the presence of these was more of a hazard than a help now that the winter was over. Councillors asked that confirmation be sought as to when these matters would be resolved as they had been outstanding for some time. Another problem was highlighted at the junction of First Avenue with the A358.

2018/0162 MATTERS OF URGENCY: Cllr. Mrs. Spiller proposed that a matter relating to the Cemetery be referred into Committee. Agreed._

2018/0163 MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9th APRIL 2018: Cllr. Hayward seconded by Cllr. Doherty, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2018/0164 MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 30th APRIL 2018: Cllr. Alderson, seconded by Cllr. Moore, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2018/0165 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE DATED 30th APRIL 2018: Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Clarke, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2018/0166 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUILDINGS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE DATED 30th APRIL 2018: Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Young, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2018/0167 MINUTES OF THE BUILDINGS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 10th MAY 2018: Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Young, proposed that these minutes be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2018/0168 MINUTES OF THE RISK AND EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 5th FEBRUARY 2018: Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Clarke, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2018/0169 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 9TH APRIL 2018: None.

2018/0170 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 30TH APRIL 2018: None.

2018/0171 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 30th APRIL 2018: none.

2018/0172 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE BUILDINGS AND

FINANCE COMMITTEE DATED 30th APRIL 2018: None.

2018/0173 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE BUILDINGS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE DATED 10TH MAY 2018: Cllr. Mrs. Spiller proposed that the matter of provision of Bird Feeders be placed on the June agenda of the Town Council.

2018/0174 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE RISK MANAGEMENT AND EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5th FEBRUARY 2018: None.

2018/0175 FINANCIAL MATTERS – RE-PRESENTED MARCH PAYMENTS TO BE APPROVED:

This was the finalised list for March as not all payments had been included in the previous list.

CLLR. HAYWARD DECLARED A PECUNIARY INTEREST IN CHEQUE 6677 AS BEING THE RECIPIENT AND LEFT THE ROOM FOR THIS ITEM.

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

CLLR. HAYWARD RETURNED TO THE ROOM

2018/0176 FINANCIAL MATTERS – APRIL PAYMENTS TO BE APPROVED:

CLLR. YOUNG DECLARED A PECUNIARY INTEREST IN CHEQUE 6711 AS BEING THE RECIPIENT AND LEFT THE ROOM FOR THIS ITEM.

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

CLLR. YOUNG RETURNED TO THE ROOM.

2018/0177 FINANCIAL MATTERS – BANK RECONCILIATION FOR MARCH:

proposed Cllr. Young, seconded Cllr. Hayward that this be signed by the Town Mayor. Agreed.

2018/0178 FINANCIAL MATTERS – TO REPORT MATTERS APPROVED BY TOWN MAYOR OR COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN: the following actions were presented and approved: (proposed Cllr. Walden, seconded Cllr. Young)

a) Additional strimming at Cemetery – Cllr. Mrs. Spiller reported that following consultation with the Town Mayor, a local contractor had been engaged to assist in strimming at the cemetery to cover for staff absence.

2018/0179 FINANCIAL MATTERS - PARISHES TOGETHER FUNDING: Cllr. Hayward

proposed that the Mayor convene a meeting for surrounding Parishes to discuss possible projects. The Mayor said that he would be happy to do so and asked Councillors to put forward any suggestions they had. Cllr. Hayward suggested equipment for a police cadet group.

2018/0180 FINANCIAL MATTERS – NOTICE OF AUDIT: the Deputy Town Clerk said

that she would display the notice once the internal audit process was completed.

2018/0181 FINANCIAL MATTERS - RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S

REPORT: Mrs. Adamson-Drage said that she had completed the fourth quarter V.A.T. return, was continuing to work on the Annual Return. The process of switching banks would be started later in the week. Cllr. Walden proposed that the final quarterly budget report will be re-drafted in a summarised format and considered at the next meeting. Agreed.

2018/0182 OFFICE ACCOMMODATION: a suggested plan for re-arrangement of the existing office accommodation had been drawn up by the office staff and circulated to members along with a proposal from Cllr. Hull that the Town Council should adopt as a basis the proposals put forward by the office staff themselves and that a suitable professional be engaged to produce proper workable plans and draw up a specification which can be put out to tender.

Cllr. Mrs. Spiller felt that the present accommodation was too small as it was and any changes needed to be made in the context of the ever-increasing workload of the office and possible need for more staff than allowed for in this proposal. She suggested that a professional in office design should be consulted as she did not feel that the offices as they are could be adapted.

Cllr. Hayward said that the Council should take this opportunity to overhaul its way of working and move towards a paperless approach to its business conduct using digital technology. He said that the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations were an added consideration.

The Deputy Clerk pointed out that nearly all information was emailed out and that the hard copies were a supplementary provision.

Cllr. Hull said that he did not feel that it was appropriate for the staff to be dispersed about the town.

Cllr. Mrs. Spiller proposed that Cllr. Hull's proposal be amended to read "that the Town Council should engage professional in office lay-out in to produce plans for an improved lay-out for the existing offices to accommodate an extra member of staff"

Cllr. Young seconded Cllr. Spiller's amendment, and Cllr. Hull stated that he too was happy with it. Carried.

2018/0183 AXE VALLEY HEALTH HUB: the Town Mayor said he had, under the auspices of the League of Friends of Axminster Hospital, had discussions with various people regarding possible negotiations with RDE on the creation of a virtual Axe Valley Health Hub where care can take place in different parts of the community according to needs. Patient needs would need to be determined and this is being done by survey.

A Committee has been formed to further this end and Cllr. Walden said that he had been invited to sit on the Committee and would be happy to do so but felt that a younger member of the Council might be more appropriate. He suggested that Cllr. Seward may be prepared to do this.

Cllr. Hayward said he had heard that both Seaton and Honiton Hospitals had been identified as being at risk under the estates strategy. He said that it was important that all local communities keep a united front in the face of such divisive proposals. He said that there had been a pattern of one thing being said in public but a different policy being pursued in private.

2018/0184 IMPACT OF GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS: The Town Clerk said that the staff had attended a training course regarding these changes in the law. She said that much of the data handled by the Town Council was in connection with its legitimate business but that careful monitoring and audit of current and historic data would be necessary. Privacy policies were necessary and consent forms were being prepared. Regulations apply to Councillors as well. Secure emails were necessary and care would have to be taken to ensure that when emails are forwarded to others that the permission of the sender is obtained or the person's identity and any personal data are withheld.

Cllr. Hayward added that an amendment to the bill is being put through Parliament to give Town and Parish Council's exemption from the requirement to appoint a Data Protection Officer. He suggested that a secure area on the website be created to upload information for members. Consideration will be given to using a contractor to shred out of date, redundant paper documents.

Cllr. Hayward, seconded by Cllr. Moore, proposed that individual emails accounts be put in place for all Councillors. Agreed, with Cllr. Mrs. Spiller voting against the motion.

Documents such as minutes are already in the public domain and should not require secure disposal.

2018/0185 REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS: Cllr. Hayward, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Leat, proposed that these be approved as circulated with no changes from the previous year. Agreed.

2018/0186 REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS: these had been circulated to all members with various changes highlighted in red. Cllr. Doherty, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Spiller, proposed that these be adopted as circulated. Agreed with Cllr. Young voting against.

2018/0187 REVIEW OF HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY: this had been circulated to all members with various changes highlighted. Cllr. Alderson questioned the brevity of the document. The Town Mayor said that it was important that the policy was clear and simple and added that it was backed up by underlying procedures and principles.

Cllr. Hayward, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Leat, proposed that the policy as presented be adopted. Carried.

2018/0188 REVIEW OF DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE POLICY: proposed Cllr. Hayward, seconded Cllr. Alderson that this be adopted unchanged. Carried, with Cllr. Young abstaining.

2018/0189 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE: there was nothing new to report.

2018/0190 CORRESPONDENCE:

- a. Letters Received
 - i. G. Barton – re lighting of trees on Minster Green During Cherry Fayre.
THE TOWN CLERK HAD HEARD NOTHING FROM THE CONTRACTOR REGARDING THE CONDITION OF THE LIGHTING.
 - ii. Dist. Cllr. Moulding – request for nomination for local champion of the arts.
THE TOWN CLERK WILL FORWARD THE NAMES OF TWO NOMINEES TO EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL
- b. Meetings – East Devon L.A.G. 7th June, Axminster
- c. Reports Received - the following reports are available for consultation in the office:
 - i. East Devon L.A.G. Minutes
 - ii. The Project newsletter
 - iii. Police Commissioner’s news letter

The 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.

2018/0191 CEMETERY MATTER: Cllr. Mrs. Spiller read out the options put forward by legal advisors regarding a dispute over the ownership of a grave plot. She proposed that the Town Council should stand by the information contained in its records and that a letter be sent to the complainant to that effect. Cllr. Hayward seconded the proposal which was carried. The Town Clerk will draft a suitable letter.

2018/0192 QUOTATIONS RECEIVED – KITCHEN DOOR AT GUILDHALL: resolved, proposed Cllr. Mrs. Spiller, seconded Cllr. Walden, that the quote from a local contractor to replace the present door, which is a poor state of repair, at a cost of £765, inclusive of value added tax, be accepted.

2018/0193 STAFFING MATTERS: resolved, proposed Cllr. Walden, seconded Cllr. Young, that the posts of Administrative Assistant and Cemetery Caretaker (job share) be advertised at the same time.

Signed Date.....

