

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Held at the Guildhall, on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2018 at 7.30 p.m.

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

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

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

2018/0241 APOLOGIES: Cllrs. G. Alderson, D.J. Moore, A.J.E. Seward, Mrs. S.R. Spiller,  
B.R. Watson Cty./Dist. Cllr. Hall and Dist. Cllr. Moulding.

2018/0242 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS:

CLLRS. DOHERTY, HAYWARD, HULL AND LEAT 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. 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, AXMINSTER TWINNING  
ASSOCIATION 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.

2018/0243 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS: Cllr. Mrs. Leat and Cllr. Seward were suggested as additional members of the Employment Committee.

2018/0244 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 11<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2018: Cllr. Hull requested that at 2018/0206 it be indicated that it was he who had suggested that the public meeting be held. This addition having been made, Cllr. Walden and not Cllr. Hayward would make enquiries regarding the police cadets, Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Bourner, proposed that the minutes be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2018/0245 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 22<sup>ND</sup> JUNE 2018: Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Leat, proposed that the minutes be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2018/0246 REPORTS RECEIVED – POLICE: The Town Clerk said that the police website indicated that 55 crimes had been reported in May.

2018/0247 COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORT: Cllr. Hall urged residents to attend the North/South Relief Road consultation day at the Heritage centre later in the week. He also welcomed the Town Mayor’s indication that the Town Council seemed to be keen to take on Pippins from the County Council.

2018/0248 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS’ REPORTS: Cllr. Hall and Cllr. Moulding both said that they had responded to the three questions raised by Cllr. Hayward.

Cllr. Moulding’s list of activities as Chairman of East Devon District Council had been circulated.

Cllr. Hull said that he was awaiting information on National Housebuilders.

2018/0249 TOWN MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS: Councillors had been invited to the Care Service Annual General Meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> July.

2018/0250 TOWN MAYOR’S ENAGEMENTS: the Town Mayor had undertaken the following engagements:

Attended the opening of the refurbished North Street Playing Field.

Attended the raising of the glove and various events related to the Cherry Fayre.

Presented a birthday card to hospital staff to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the National Health Service.

2018/0251 TOWN FORUM – OUTCOME OF PLANNING APPLICATION 17/0984: A resident set out his objections to approval for the above application and enquired whether this application had been listed for discussion at the Development Management Committee meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> August. He was informed that that agenda had not been set yet. In response to a letter from the Town Clerk, the District Council Development Manager had said that the District Council’s position was that it was satisfied that it is no longer viable to provide 40% affordable housing (due to construction costs, lagging sales, bad build reputation) and it had gone back to Bovis stating that it believed that it would be viable to provide approximately 15% affordable housing plus £1m of other contributions - towards education, sports, sewer upgrade etc. A response from the developer is awaited. The Town Mayor said that neither the position of the developer nor the District Council was acceptable. It was

agreed that if the application were to be listed for 7<sup>th</sup> August meeting then either Cllr. Hayward or Cllr. Walden would attend and make representations on behalf of the Town Council. Cllr. Hayward felt that too much power was in the hands of officers and this did not reflect the mood of residents.

2018/0252 TOWN FORUM – NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN: a member of the public expressed disquiet that nothing appeared to have happened since last July and felt that Axminster Community Enterprise was not fit for purpose. He asked for a meeting to be held as a matter of urgency. It was explained that the Planning Consultant had been working through various drafts of the plan. The resident expressed concerns regarding future development unless the plan was completed and approved.

The Mayor said that the most recent draft had just been received with a request for further information. He stressed that the final document would be put out for public consultation with an executive summary being provided to each household. He said that it was more important to get the plan right than to do it quickly. The resident said that no information was available on the website.

2018/0253 TOWN FORUM – OLD COURTHOUSE: A resident regretted the lack of public attendance at Town Council meetings. She felt that communication could be improved and asked how staff working there are made aware of matters affecting them. The Town Mayor responded that there is a balance to be had between commercial use of property and community use. He said that it was up to tenants to advise staff about any matters they felt affected them.

In respect of communication, the Town Mayor regretted the decline of press presence at meetings but added that social media now played an important role in disseminating information of all kinds.

Cllr. Hull complimented the work of the volunteers who maintain the flowers in the town and welcomed the work done to the benches in the Old Courthouse Garden by the Handyman.

2018/0254 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2018 – 18/0206 PROPOSED MEETING REGARDING DRUG PROBLEMS: The Town Clerk said that she had had no response from the Member of Parliament and so had not progressed this matter. Cllr. Walden said that from his discussions with the Member of Parliament, the best format for a public meeting would involve the Member of Parliament, local District and County Councillors and the police inspector for the area. He said that he would raise the issue with the Police and Crime Commissioner.

2018/0255 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2018 – 18/0213: The Town Clerk had sent a letter to the District Councillor asking them to take appropriate legal action regarding the Jubilee Field. Cllr. Hayward said that he had asked a representative from the installer to visit the site and she had contacted the developer regarding the matter. Cllr. Hull felt that a different supplier should be contracted to replace the unsatisfactory play area but that would be a matter for the Section 106 Monitoring Officer and the legal officers at the District Council to determine.

2018/0256 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22<sup>ND</sup> JUNE 2018: none.

2018/0257 MATTERS OF URGENCY – PUBLIC BENCHES: Cllr. Walden said he had spoken to landowners along the Stop Line Way. Some were not happy to provide benches on their land but the Football Club had indicated a willingness to accommodate a bench on land nearby in their ownership. It was agreed that this go on the next agenda of the Buildings and Finance Committee.

2018/0258 MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2018: Cllr. Hayward seconded by Cllr. Clarke, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2018/0259 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 11<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2018: None.

2018/0260 MINUTES OF AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2018: Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Hayward, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2018/0261 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE HELD ON 18<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2018: None.

2018/0262 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BUILDINGS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE DATED 24<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2018: Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Bourner, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2018/0263 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE OLD COURTHOUSE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2018: Minutes 5a, 12 and 14 were referred into committee.

2018/0264 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT NOON ON 2<sup>ND</sup> JULY 2018: Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Hull, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2018/0265 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE ABOVE EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MEETING: None.

2018/0266 MINUTES OF THE EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 2<sup>ND</sup> JULY AT 2.15 P.M. 2018: Cllr. Young, seconded by Cllr. Hull, proposed that these minutes be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2018/0267 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE ABOVE EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MEETING: None.

2018/0268 FINANCIAL MATTERS – JUNE PAYMENTS TO BE APPROVED:

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

Cllr. Hayward asked that in future the sum total of the payments approved be included in the minutes which could be shown to tally up with the detailed list circulated to Councillors. The Responsible Financial Officer said that the minute reference was put on the detailed list signed at the meeting by the Mayor.

2018/0269 FINANCIAL MATTERS – BANK RECONCILIATION FOR MAY: agreed that this be signed.

2018/0270 FINANCIAL MATTERS – TO REPORT MATTERS APPROVED BY TOWN MAYOR OR COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN: None.

2018/0271 FINANCIAL MATTERS - PARISHES TOGETHER FUNDING: Nothing to report.

2018/0272 FINANCIAL MATTERS – PROGRESS AGAINST BUDGET FOR LAST FINANCIAL YEAR: the Town Mayor questioned why these figures appeared to indicate that expenditure had exceeded budget by such a large figure. The Responsible Financial Officer explained that it was partly because the figures could include grants applied for and spent after the budget had been set and because the system included bank transfers, even although these do not represent income.

2018/0273 FINANCIAL MATTERS - PROGRESS AGAINST BUDGET FOR FIRST QUARTER OF PRESENT FINANCIAL YEAR: the Responsible Financial Officer said that the figures were not hugely meaningful at this stage in the year as it depended how expenditure/receipt of income was distributed across the year. She said that the concerns she had related to utility bills.

2018/0274 FINANCIAL MATTERS - RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT: Mrs. Adamson-Drage said that one of the bonds was due for renewal in August and she had obtained options for both one and two year re-investment with the same organisation, the latter attracting a slightly better rate of interest. She would undertake further investigations so that the matter could be considered by the Buildings and Finance Committee. Negotiations to transfer to a new bank are still ongoing.

2018/0275 ATTENDANCE AT COMMITTEE MEETINGS: The Deputy Mayor urged Councillors to let the Town Clerk have some indication as to their times of availability as she was having to attend many committee meetings to make sure that they were quorate, even in instances where she was not directly a member.

2018/0276 WORKING PARTY ON PROCEDURES: Cllr. Walden said that this was to do with how the Council could work more efficiently. He suggested that a working party decide how the Council wanted to work in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and then decide how best to resource it. It may be necessary to alter the committee structure. Cllr. Hayward observed that lessons could be learned from other Councils who have gone through this process already. It was resolved that Cllr. Hayward head the working party and that other members be Cllrs. Maynard, Bourner, Moore and Young.

2018/0277 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING REPORT: covered under Town Forum.

2018/0278 MASTER PLAN FOR AXMINSTER: Cllr. Walden urged residents and Councillors to attend the public consultation the following Wednesday.

2018/0279 BIRD FEEDERS AT THE OLD COURTHOUSE: Cllr. Hayward stated that he was aware that there were valid points on both sides of this argument but he felt that overall it was more positive arguments outweighed the negative. Cllr. Hayward, seconded by Cllr. Walden, proposed that the feeders be permitted and the situation monitored. Agreed.

2018/0280 CORRESPONDENCE:

- a. Letters Received
  - i. Axminster Job Club – letter of thanks.
- b. Meetings
  - i. East Devon L.A.G. 19<sup>th</sup> July, Colyton
  - ii. Axminster Hospital League of Friends A.G.M. 24<sup>th</sup> July
- 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.

2018/0281 UPDATE ON STAFFING MATTERS: Cllr. Young proposed that the Deputy Town Clerk be compensated for costs incurred as a result of agreeing to a request that she work on a particular Friday, a day she does not work normally. Cllr. Hayward seconded the motion. Agreed.

2018/0282 QUOTATIONS RECEIVED – MOTOR INSURANCE: resolved, proposed Cllr. Walden, seconded Cllr. Young, that the quote from a broker for motor vehicle insurance in the sum of £384.08 be accepted. Agreed.

2018/0283 QUOTATIONS RECEIVED – BOILER REPAIRS:

Proposed Cllr. Walden, seconded Cllr. Hull, that standing orders be suspended to permit reconsideration of this matter within a six month period. Agreed.

Cllr. Walden proposed that in view of the fact that it had emerged that the contractor who had quoted the lowest price had not quoted as per the specification and that the next cheapest contractor had not made a site visit, that the Town Council request that the contractor who had quoted £1058 be asked to undertake the work. Cllr. Young seconded the proposal. Agreed

2018/0285 TENANCY MATTERS: Cllr. Hayward informed his fellow Councillors that it appeared that the agreement he had reached with the tenants was being breached. Several Councillors expressed their concerns, adding that they had received comments from the public, and felt that a letter from the Solicitors to remind tenants of their responsibilities would be in order.

Signed ..... Date.....