

AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OLD COURTHOUSE COMMITTEE HELD AT THE GUILDHALL ON MONDAY, 29TH JANUARY 2018 AT 4.00 P.M.

1. PRESENT: Cllrs. G.S. Godbeer (Chairman), D.R.H. Hull, A.E.J. Seward and J.W. Walden and the Town Clerk. No members of the press and 3 members of the public.

2. APOLOGIES : P.G. Hayward (Vice-chairman), A.T. Moulding, The Deputy Town Clerk (Mrs. Z. Adamson-Drage).

3. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN: this was not necessary as the Chairman had been able to attend.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: these were signed by the Chairman.

5. PUBLIC FORUM: the following matters were raised from the floor:

- a) Disapproval of works done to the garden by unauthorised individuals which has changed the character of the garden.
- b) That there would be conflict between any commercial use of the garden by the cafe and its importance as an accessible, tranquil, green space for those with no gardens.
- c) That the greenery in the garden provides a haven for wildlife and to encourage birds.

The Chairman replied that the new tenants had been reminded that care for the garden was the responsibility of the Town Council's appointed gardeners but added that any garden benefited from having deadwood cut back to re-invigorate it. He said that it was not appropriate for food of any kind to be put out for the birds in the garden because of the potential to attract vermin.

A sign will be put on the gate making it clear that the garden is open to members of the public irrespective of whether they are visiting the Arts Cafe.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS: none that would not be raised in the course of the present meeting.

7. GARDEN MATTERS:

- a) Letters from Members of the Public – this had been covered under Public Forum.
- b) Programme of Works – Cllr. Hull asked that the elder bush in the Dyer's Garden be cut back to avoid damage to drains or foundations and that vegetation be kept back from the benches. The Chairman said that he would discuss this with the gardener. A local landscape gardener will be asked to advise on what plants would be suitable for the Dyer's Garden area once the plants there get transferred to the Heritage Centre Garden when it has been developed.
- c) Ivy – the Town Clerk will check that the ivy on the rear wall has not re-grown and said that she feared there may be some ingress of ivy from adjacent properties which would need to be cut back.

8. MAINTENANCE MATTERS:

- a) Roof and Guttering – Cllr. Godbeer confirmed that the reference to serious roof problems in a report from a contractor did not refer to any part of the Old Courthouse Roof.
- b) Other exterior works – the Town Clerk will obtain quotes for works to the shed roof as the handyman has not the capacity to do the work required. In response to the Chairman, the Town Clerk said that contractor hoped to be able to survey the drains later in the week, depending on the weather.
- c) Senior Citizens' Centre – the Town Clerk had asked whether the floor in the main room had been inspected but had not yet received a reply. She will follow this up.
- d) Arts Cafe – discussion of the licensable area was referred into committee.
- e) Tourist Information Centre – the dehumidifier will be moved there to check the level of the humidity.

- e) Former Museum Area – the Town Clerk had not yet received back the key from the temporary tenant of the Courtroom..
- f) Recommendations from Consultant Surveyor – these were awaited.

9. FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT: Cllr. Walden will update this in conjunction with the new tenants.

10. MATTERS OF URGENCY: None.

Cllr. Walden 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.

11. TO CONSIDER ANY FURTHER PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE USE OF MUSEUM AREA AND TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICE: the Town Clerk will contact those from whom expressions have been received and invite them to a meeting.

12. TO DISCUSS LEASE TERMS: - the meeting was suspended at this point as the next Committee meeting was scheduled to start.

Signed Date

