

## AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING OF THE OLD COURTHOUSE COMMITTEE

HELD AT THE GUILDHALL ON MONDAY, 21<sup>ST</sup> MAY 2018 AT 4.00 P.M.

1. PRESENT: Cllr. P.G. Hayward (Vice-chairman), Cllr. D.R.H. Hull, Cllr. M. Mynard, Cllr. Walden and Cllr. A.L. Young, the Town Clerk No members of the press and 3 members of the public.

2. APOLOGIES : A.J.E. Seward and the Deputy Town Clerk (Mrs. Z. Adamson-Drage).

3. PUBLIC FORUM: the following matters were raised:-

- i) The clinical feel of the Senior Citizens Centre furnishing. It was explained that the furnishing of premises is a matter for the tenants.
- ii) The importance of the garden being protected for use by the public and the need to publicise its presence more.
- iii) That the notice regarding use of the garden should be worded in a more welcoming fashion and was small in comparison with other signage on the gate.
- iv) Clarification as to what seating should be where in the public part of the garden. The Town Clerk explained that originally the only seating in any part of the garden had been the benches, many donated specifically for the garden by members of the public, but that over the years Axminster Arts had introduced various seating and tables of its own which had resulted in some benches being displaced. She added that the Town Council owned benches were being removed on a rotational basis for refurbishment. Cllr. Hayward had held a meeting with the tenants, a report of which had been considered at the last Town Council meeting, to discuss how compromise could be reached regarding any conflict between cafe staff serving food outwith the licensed part of the garden. It had been agreed that this would be permitted provided the tenant took out insurance against any mishap arising from staff activity outside the licensed area and that the tenant would also be responsible for keeping the whole of the garden free from litter and non-customers to use seating in the licensed area without obligation to purchase from the cafe if that was the only available seating.
- v) Provision of notices – Cllr. Walden said that there were two notice boards on the wall one of which could be used by tenants and one by the Town Council to help declutter the gates. Cllr. Walden suggested that a free-standing sign advertising the garden be placed on the Minster Green. Cllr. Young cautioned about proliferation of signage and the hazards they may present to various groups of people.
- vi) Availability of toilets – it was explained that these were for the use of staff and cafe patrons only.

4. GARDEN MATTERS:

- i. Resolved that the grass be cut fortnightly at least and weekly if weather dictates.
- ii. Resolved that the offer from a local contractor to prune the Magnolia tree at no cost to the Town Council be accepted.
- iii. Pruning of shrubs near benches will be monitored to ensure that growth does not impede their use.
- iv. Resolved that a letter be sent to the Heritage Centre to establish when the Dyers Garden will be moved and whether any plants will be taken in the process. Resolved that permission be sought for the elder bush to be removed immediately to prevent damage to the building foundations. Resolved that professional advice be sought as to how that bed might be replanted. The Town Clerk will get three sets of suggestions for this bed for September.

5. MAINTENANCE WORKS:

- i. Roof and Guttering – the Town Clerk will request a progress update from the contractors.
- ii. Other Exterior Works – Cllr. Walden proposed that a free-standing sign be bought to

place on the Minster Green directing the public to the garden. This was agreed.  
Cllr. Hayward will speak to the Rector to seek his agreement.

- iii. Senior Citizens' Centre – nothing to report.
- iv. Arts Cafe – there had been water ingress into the former Devon County Council office. A contractor will be asked to advise.
- v. Former Tourist Information Office – resolved that adaptations be made in line with the requirements of any in-coming tenant.
- vi. Former Museum Premises – as for v above.

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. Cllr. Hull seconded the proposal. Agreed.

6. FUTURE USE OF VACANT AREAS WITHIN OLD COURTHOUSE: This will be pursued on the basis of the discussions at the Buildings and Finance meeting of May 10<sup>th</sup>. Cllr. Walden proposed that if any not for profit or charitable group were to accept tenancy terms then it was always open to that organisation to apply for a grant from the Town Council to cover rental costs.

7. REVIEW OF LEASES: Cllr. Hayward will look into the individual leases with the Town Clerk and consider any changes that the Town Council may wish to implement so that these can be discussed with the Town Council's legal advisors and with tenants.

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