

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Held at the Guildhall, on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at 7.30 p.m.

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

The Town Clerk (Miss H. Kirkcaldie) and the Deputy Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (Mrs. Z. Adamson-Drage).

In Attendance: Dist. Cllr. A.T. Moulding and Cty./Dist. Cllr. Hall.

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

2019/0037 APOLOGIES: Cllrs. S. E. Clarke, D.R.H. Hull and B.R. Watson.

2019/0038 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS:

CLLRS. ALDERSON, BOURNER, DOHERTY, HAYWARD, LEAT AND MOORE EACH 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. SHE ALSO DECLARED AN INTEREST AS BEING A MEMBER OF AXMINSTER TWINNING ASSOCIATION.

CLLR. WALDEN 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 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)

2019/0039 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 14<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2019: Cllr. Bourner,

seconded by Cllr. Young, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2019/0040 TOWN FORUM – ROAD CLOSURES ROUND GEORGE HOTEL: a member of the public said that he found the proposed diversion routes for the duration of proposed roadworks round the George Hotel somewhat confusing.

2019/0041 TOWN FORUM – COUNTY/DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS: a member of the public expressed the view that the present content of these reports was deficient and wished to know what was happening that would affect Axminster and its residents, in particular regarding the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan. Cllr. Moulding responded that his report gave a broad picture of what he did as a District Councillor and added that as Chairman of the Council he was not involved with the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan

2019/0042 TOWN FORUM – PLANNING APPLICATIONS 19/0108/MOUT AND 19/0150/MFUL: the following points were raised from the floor:-

- a) that no building should commence until the relief road was completed.
- b) that the plans appear to indicate that the two ends of the relief road will not be linked up.
- c) that assurance should be provided that the sewerage system would be able to cope with this additional load.
- d) that the increase from 75 to 104 houses on the southern parcel of land was not consistent with the promise that this was to be an area of low density housing.

2019/043 TOWN COUNCIL RESPONSE TO PLANNING APPLICATIONS

19/0108/MOUT AND 19/0150/MFUL: the observations prepared by the Chairman of the Planning Committee were read out. The Vice-chairman expanded on these comments by making the points as material planning considerations:

- a) that planning documents/discussions had referred to “forward delivery” of the relief road in order to reduce traffic on Stoney Lane – especially that associated with the development of the housing.
- b) that the lack of provision of roundabouts at junctions with the relief road was not satisfactory.
- c) that the lay-out of the junction of the relief road with Chard Road was illogical.
- d) that the lay-out of the junction of the relief road with Lyme Road was better but provision should be made for a lane for right hand turning vehicles.
- e) that the design of the road was not attractive to hauliers.
- f) that the lack of a link to the existing trading estate was regrettable.
- g) that the rejection of the Town Council’s recommendation that further traffic modelling would help highlight pinch points on the road was regrettable.
- h) that social housing should be dispersed and not concentrated in one area to ensure blind tenure.
- i) that the proposed density was not that of a rural market town.
- j) that the inadequacy of the parking provision would lead to replication of the problems experienced in previous recent large-scale developments in Axminster and that it was crucial that the correct solution was put in place.
- k) that the removal of the proposed primary school would result in an increase in traffic as parents would not be happy to walk the distance to the present primary school.

- l) that the level of employment land should not be reduced as a result of the removal of the primary school.
- m) that any closures of and works involving public rights of way should be done in an orderly and legal way.
- n) that arrangements for Sector Lane would cause problems for residents but he understood that an overbridge would be too expensive.

Cllr. Hayward concluded by stating that this was the most important application the Town Council had considered for several years and would result in a 60% increase in the size of the town. He requested a recorded vote.

Additional points raised by other members:

- o) that although Axminster Town Council had long felt that the need for the town to grow, this was too much too fast and all of Devon's allocation was being put at Axminster.
- p) that the number of houses will be pushed above the present 850 as time goes on.
- q) that developers are interested only in the houses and are doing the road under protest.
- r) that these two applications should be deferred until those from Crown Estate come forward so that the Strategic Masterplan site can be considered as a whole, although in fact one stakeholder will develop the land itself while the other will put its holding out to tender for development.
- s) that a meeting of the various delivery groups and stakeholders should be held to deal with matters such as signage.
- t) that blocks of flats should have sprinklers.
- u) that the proximity of the road would increase pollution.

Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Moore, proposed that the Town Council object to both applications on the above grounds. The motion was carried unanimously.

2019/0044 REPORTS RECEIVED – POLICE: The Town Clerk said that the police website indicated that 46 crimes had been reported in December.

2019/0045 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: Cllr. Hall had attended a meeting regarding Pippins on 25<sup>th</sup> January. Cllr. Hayward expressed his dissatisfaction that a pothole at the entrance to the Foot Ball Club on Chard Road had been repaired but had failed within 2 weeks. Cllr. Walden asked that problems with delays and prioritisation in response to emergency call outs by the South West Ambulance Trust be raised with the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee. Cllr. Seward suggested that South West Ambulance Trust be invited to discuss the matter with the Town Council.

2019/0046 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS: Cllr. Hall said that he had attended the Local Action Group Committee and added that it would be useful if a member of the Town Council was able to attend. He had been present at the Strategic Planning Committee meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> January. Cllr. Moulding had circulated a list of his engagements as Chairman of the District Council. He said that the last meeting had been held at Knowle. Future meetings would all be either at Honiton or Exmouth.

Cllr. Hayward asked why the District Council was not organising pre-election promotional events as had been done previously. He also questioned the delegation of power in respect of spending of the £20 million pound loan being taken out by the District

Council to fund purchase of properties to generate income. Cllr. Moulding said that he would look into these matters.

2019/0047 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS: the Town Clerk gave details of an imminent closures.

2019/0048 TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS: the Town Mayor had attended the Strategic Planning Committee meeting at East Devon District Council.

2019/0049 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2019: None.

2019/ 0050 MATTERS OF URGENCY:

2019/0051 MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2019: Cllr. Hayward, seconded by Cllr. Doherty, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2019/0052 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 14TH JANUARY 2019: None.

2019/0053 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PIPPINS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21ST JANUARY 2019: Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Young, proposed that these approved and adopted. Agreed.

2019/0054 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PIPPINS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY 2019: None.

2019/0055 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MEETING DATED 21<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY 2019: Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Leat, proposed that these minutes be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2019/0056 MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 28<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2019: Cllr. Doherty, seconded by Cllr. Bourner, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2019/0057 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 28TH JANUARY 2019: None.

2019/0058 MINUTES OF TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 28<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2019: Cllr. Young, being the only member of the Committee present at the meeting of the full Town Council, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2019/0059 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 28TH JANUARY 2019: None.

2019/0060 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUILDINGS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING DATED 28<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2019: Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Leat, proposed that these minutes be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2019/0061 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUILDINGS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 28TH JANUARY 2019:  
None.

2019/0062 MINUTES OF AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2019: Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Mynard, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2019/0063 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2019: Cllr. Walden said that the District Council had refused permission to move the redundant bus shelter from Chard Road to Millwey Avenue.

2019/0064 FINANCIAL MATTERS – JANUARY PAYMENTS TO BE APPROVED:

Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Doherty, proposed that the payments as listed by approved. Agreed.

2019/0065 FINANCIAL MATTERS – BANK RECONCILIATION FOR DECEMBER:  
agreed that this be signed.

2019/0066 FINANCIAL MATTERS - PAYMENTS AUTHORISED BY MAYOR OR COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN: None.

2019/0067 RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT: The Deputy Clerk reported that a further two signatories had been added to the bank account and that she was preparing for the annual audit.

2019/0068 FINANCIAL MATTERS – GRANT REQUEST: the Deputy Clerk said that she had not received any requests but had a related matter which she wished to refer into Committee. This was agreed.

2019/0069 FINANCIAL MATTERS – ADDITIONAL DEPOSIT ACCOUNT: Cllr. Walden proposed seconded by Cllr. Seward, proposed that an additional 32-day notice deposit account be opened in which to lodge all earmarked funds. Agreed.

2019/0070 REPORT ON MEETING DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES REGARDING PIPPINS: Cllr. Walden said that the Devon County Council had received a bid for Pippins from the Pippins User Groups, representatives of whom were at this meeting, along with a representative from Action East Devon. Cllr. Walden stated that as a venue, Pippins had the strongest case as a community bid. It had been intimated that if Axminster Town Council and the Pippins User Groups each put forward their respective proposals by early summer then Devon County Council would be able to give each an indication of the discount attributable to the level of community benefit shown by each bid.

He said that at present there were certain ambiguities arising from the fact that the Town Council was operating under a tenancy at will and these needed to be clarified with the tenants/users. He said that if, in the longer term, the user group should be the successful bidder then the Town Council could take a decision on how they could be supported through the grant process going forward.

Cllr. Mrs. Spiller expressed her reservations regarding the fact that Pippins and the Guildhall were in competition.

Cllr. Walden recommended that the dialogue between the two groups be kept open and developments awaited.

2019/0071 PROPOSAL THAT, FOLLOWING THE ABOVE MEETING AND IN THE LIGHT OF THE VOTE TAKEN AT THE JANUARY MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL, A STAGE HAS BEEN REACHED WHERE AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL COULD AND SHOULD RELINQUISH ITS BID TO TAKE ON PIPPINS COMMUNITY CENTRE:

Cllr. Young set out her case for the above proposal. She said that the Town Council should take pride in having stepped in when there was a real threat to the continuation of the building being available for community use. But she said that in the light of the work needed on the building and the greater capacity of the user groups to pull in funding and the commitments on which the Town Council was embarking in the new financial year, it was more logical to let the Pippins User Groups pursue their bid and to support them through the Grant System. The proposal was seconded by Cllr. Seward.

Cllr. Walden said that he felt Cllr. Young's proposal was precipitate and did not address what would happen in the interim if the Town Council ceased its involvement now. He opposed the proposition.

Cllr. Hayward proposed that the motion be amended to continue that "said decision to be effective from the point at which an alternative bid is made". Cllr. Young said that she would accept that amendment.

Cllr. Mrs. Spiller said that the amendment did not put a specific date to the cessation of the Town Council's involvement.

Cllr. Young said that Devon County Council had given assurances to Pippins User Group that they would support them should the Town Council withdraw from Pippins. She said that a hand-over period would be needed which would involve liaison between Devon County Council and the Pippins User Groups with as little disruption to user groups as possible.

Cllr. Hayward said that he understood Cllr. Mrs. Spiller's reservations regarding the open-endedness of the Town Council's continuing involvement with Pippins and after discussion it was agreed that the additional wording of the amended proposal be "and that this Town Council resolves to continue with its current responsibilities as Tenant at Will until 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019".

The motion, as amended, was put to the vote and was carried by ten votes to two.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Cllr. Walden said that he felt obliged to resign a member of the Pippins Committee and which would therefore need to elect a new chairman.

2019/0072 REPORT FROM GOVERNANCE WORKING PARTY: Cllr. Hayward referred to the various documents which had been circulated with the agenda and explained the thought processes followed by the members of the working party. He proposed

that the matter be referred to the March meeting to enable a more detailed consideration of the information distributed. Cllr. Young seconded the proposal, which was carried.

2019/0073 ARRANGEMENTS FOR ANNUAL PARISH MEETING: It was agreed that the Chief Executive of East Devon District Council be invited to address the meeting to promote candidacy for the forthcoming District and Parish Council elections. Consideration will also be given to inviting a speaker on the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan.

2019/0074 PROPOSED LEASE OF BUILDING FOR ADDITIONAL STORAGE: The Town Clerk had circulated details of a possible storage building. Resolved that this matter be referred into Committee.

2019/0075 DISPOSAL OF GUILDHALL PIANOS: the Town Clerk reported that she had contacted the former Chairman of Friends of the Guildhall, who had procured the grand piano for the Guildhall and he had indicated that he had given his support for the piano to be disposed of to someone who would use it on a regular basis. The Town Clerk will contact the interested party and find out what price would be offered and make it clear that the cost of removal would fall to any purchaser. She will consult with Councillors by email once she has established this information.

2019/0076 CORRESPONDENCE :

- a. Letters Received
  - i. Election Timetable
  - ii. N. Parish – re building standards.
- b. Meetings
- c. Reports Received - the following reports are available for consultation in the office:
  - i. Healthwatch Voices.
  - ii. L.A.G. Minutes.

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.

2019/0077 STAFFING MATTERS: the advertisement for the new post of lengthsman would be placed later in the week.

2019/0078 QUOTATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION: Details to provide additional shuttering for the workshop windows had been circulated. Cllr. Mrs. Spiller said that as the most immediate problem had been resolved she proposed that no further action be taken at this stage. Cllr. Hayward seconded the proposal. Carried.

2019/0079 TENANCY MATTERS: Cllr. Walden proposed, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Spiller, that on the basis of the information available it would not be prudent to proceed. Agreed. The Town Clerk will inform the prospective lessor.

2019/0080 GRANT RELATED MATTER: Following a report from the Deputy Town Clerk it was agreed that an organisation to which a grant had been made for a stipulated purpose but for which all the funding had not been used be asked to repay the unused

portion to the Town Council.

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