

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Held at the Guildhall, on Monday 11th March 2019 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, Mrs. S.R. Spiller and B.R. Watson.

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

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

2019/0085 APOLOGIES: Cllrs. G. Alderson, D.J. Moore and A.J.E. Seward, also Dist. Cllr. A.T. Moulding and Cty./Dist. Cllr. Hall.

2019/0086 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS:

CLLRS. BOURNER, DOHERTY, HAYWARD, HULL, LEAT AND WATSON 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.

CLLRS. HULL AND 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)

CLLR. HULL DECLARED AN INTEREST AS BEING A GOVERNOR OF THE ROYAL DEVON AND EXETER HOSPITAL

2019/0087 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 11th FEBRUARY 2019: Cllr. Walden referring to minute 2019/0071 said that this did not reflect his understanding of what had been decided. Cllrs. Spiller and Hayward both felt that it did and others echoed this view. Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Bourner, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2019/0088 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 18th FEBRUARY 2019: Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Bourner, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2019/0089 TOWN FORUM – TRIBUTE TO FORMER CLLR. SCOTT: The Town Mayor paid tribute to Mr. Christopher Scott who, with his wife, had, for many years, run the Archway Bookshop. He had joined the Town Council in May 1995 and had served on both the Cemetery and Planning Committees, being Chairman of the latter for over 12 years until he stood down from the Council in 2011 prior to moving to Stanford Village. All present stood to observe a minute's silence.

2019/0090 TOWN FORUM – TREE WORKS: two members of the public enquired about proposed tree works on the allotments. They were advised that for one tree the Town Council was awaiting a third quotation and for the other a report from a suitably qualified tree inspector before works could be done.

A different member of the public spoke of the need for public spaces in the Town where those without gardens could go and sit in the heat of summer which provided shade but were free from air pollution. Cllr. Hull said that there was a potential site in Lea Combe adjacent to the Fire Station. Cllr. Hayward said that in early April funding for micro-parks would be made available and might be suitable for such a project.

2019/0091 TOWN FORUM – COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS: a member of Light Up Axminster urged Councillors to attend the "Community Conversations" being organised by the group to enable members of the public to feel more engaged in the community. She said that she had been approached by Regeneration and Economic Development team at East Devon regarding the Future High Street Fund. She felt it would be beneficial for the Town Council to make use of information coming from the Community Conversations in any comments they made to the Development Management Committee. She asked for details as to how moneys raised from Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 agreements could be directed.

In response to a question from Cllr. Hayward, the Town Clerk said that she was not aware of any invitation from the Regeneration and Economic Development Team for representatives of the Town Council to attend any meetings.

2019/0092 TOWN FORUM – FLY TIPPING: a resident with information regarding and incidence of fly-tipping was advised that this should be reported to the District Council.

2019/0093 REPORTS RECEIVED – POLICE: The Town Clerk said that the police website giving the crime reports had not been updated since the December figure was published.

2019/0094 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: Cllr. Hall said that matters relating to resident's parking in Axminster would be raised at the Highways and Traffic Orders Committee to be held the following day. He said that the County Council Budget had been finalised.

2019/0095 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS: Cllr. Hull welcomed the fact that his motion at the District Council urging better regulation of building standards had received unanimous support. He said that he favoured a proactive stance from the District Council in preparing land to the rear of St. Andrews Drive as a future alternative allotment site to the present one on Millway Avenue so that that site can be used for building of houses by the District Council.

Cllr. Hall's report had referred to the finalising of the District Council budget and Cllr. Moulding had supplied a list of his engagements as Chairman, several of which related to the official opening of Blackdown House in Honiton as the new home for the District Council.

Cllr. Hayward regretted the absence of Cllrs. Moulding and Hall as he wished to question them on a District Council press release stating that the Government had now indicated that what had been announced as a ten million pound grant from the Housing Infrastructure Fund had now been re-classified as a loan and would have to be paid back. He said that this would have a serious impact on the Strategic Masterplan for Axminster and for the availability of the District Council's 5 year land supply.

The Town Mayor referred to the fact that the District Council had nominated Axminster as its candidate for funding for transformative town centre funding and urged his fellow Councillors to put forward suggestions as soon as possible.

2019/0096 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS: the Town Clerk gave details of current or imminent road closures. Several Councillors mentioned that, despite signage, heavy goods vehicles were still trying to navigate round the George Hotel. The Town Clerk will contact the appropriate authority.

2019/0097 TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS: the Town Mayor had nothing to report but he advised members of the presentation of a rose bush to the Town Council on Maundy Thursday.

2019/0098 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11th FEBRUARY 2019: referring to minute 2019/0046, Cllr. Hayward asked whether the Town Clerk had had any response from the District Council to the questions raised at the previous meeting regarding the pre-election events being staged by the Town Council and was told that an event would be held at Blackdown House but not in the same way as four years ago.

2019/ 0099 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18th FEBRUARY 2019: None.

2019/0100 MATTERS OF URGENCY: None.

2019/0101 MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11th FEBRUARY 2019: Cllr. Hayward, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Leat, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2019/0102 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 11TH FEBRUARY 2019: None.

2019/0103 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUILDINGS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25TH FEBRUARY 2019: Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Bourner, proposed that these approved and adopted. Agreed.

2019/0104 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUILDINGS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25TH FEBRUARY 2019: None.

2019/0105 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MEETING DATED 4TH MARCH 2019: Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Young, proposed that these minutes be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2019/0106 MINUTES OF THE CEMETERY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4TH MARCH 2019: Cllr. Mrs. Spiller, seconded by Cllr. Young, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2019/00107 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CEMETERY COMMITTEE HELD ON 4TH MARCH 2019: none.

2019/0108 FINANCIAL MATTERS – FEBRUARY PAYMENTS TO BE APPROVED:

Cllr. Young, seconded by Cllr. Bourner, proposed that the payments as listed by approved. Agreed.

2019/0109 FINANCIAL MATTERS – BANK RECONCILIATION FOR JANUARY 2019: agreed that this be signed.

2019/0110 FINANCIAL MATTERS - PAYMENTS AUTHORISED BY MAYOR OR COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN: None.

2019/0111 RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT: The Deputy Clerk reported that the new savings account had been opened. She said that she had worked on supplying supporting financial information for various committees and also undertaken some preparatory work for the Annual Return, such as updating the asset register.

2019/0112 FINANCIAL MATTERS – GRANT REQUESTS: None.

2019/0113 CIVIC REGALIA: a briefing note had been circulated to Councillors setting out various options. Following discussion, Cllr. Mrs. Spiller, seconded by Cllr. Hull, proposed that the chain be updated and refurbished for the sum of £2374.29. Agreed.

2019/0114 HONOURS BOARDS: Cllr. Hayward proposed that the honours boards in the Churchill Room be brought up to date. It emerged during discussions that Councillors preference was for the new boards to be in wood. The Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Spiller made a formal proposal that this matter be progressed in the first instance via the Buildings and Finance Committee. Agreed. The Deputy Clerk will

speak to the Handyman as he may be able to make the boards.

2019/0115 REPORT FROM GOVERNANCE WORKING PARTY: this had been introduced at the February meeting. Cllr. Hayward said that it tried to reflect the need for a re-think on how the Town Council administration could respond to the changing demands of society and the increase in services being devolved from or withdrawn by higher authorities.

Cllr. Young agreed that changes were needed but pointed out that the proposals appeared to increase the workload on staff rather than decrease it. She felt that it would be helpful to issue Councillor Availability Sheets so that staff could try to arrange meetings at times when there was a better chance of a good attendance by Councillors. The Deputy Clerk suggested that Forward Planning be a standing item on each Committee's agenda. Following the discussions, Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Spiller proposed that the matter be referred back to the Working Party for further consideration. Agreed.

2019/0116 ARRANGEMENTS FOR ANNUAL PARISH MEETING: the Town Clerk confirmed that a speaker had been arranged to talk about the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan.

2019/0117 PROPOSED LITTER BIN FOR LAY-BY AT BOW BRIDGE: Cllr. Hayward, who declared an interest as being a dog owner, said that bags of plastic wrapped dog faeces were being deposited on the adjacent farmland which was harmful to livestock. He proposed that a standard District Council style litter bin be installed at the lay-by to the east of Bow Bridge using funding from the Community Benefit Fund. Cllr. Hull seconded the proposal. Carried.

2019/0118 TO NOMINATE A REPRESENTATIVE TO ATTEND ANY DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING CONVENED BY EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL AT WHICH PLANNING APPLICATIONS RELATING TO LAND EAST OF AXMINSTER ARE DISCUSSED: the Town Clerk reminded Councillors of the requirement for purdah during the imminent election period and said that because of the controversial nature of the proposals for the land east of Axminster that Councillors standing for election should not make representations on behalf of the Town Council should a meeting of the Development Management Committee be convened to discuss that matter during the purdah period. Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Spiller proposed that either an officer or a Councillor not seeking election should make such representations. Agreed.

2019/0119 DISPOSAL OF GUILDHALL PIANOS: the Town Clerk said that the potential purchaser of the grand piano was waiting for a report on the piano from her agent.

2019/0120 DEFIBRILLATOR CABINET FOR MILLWEY RISE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE: following discussion, Cllr. Hayward, seconded by Cllr. Walden, proposed that the Town Council should fund the £470 cost of a cabinet to house defibrillator equipment paid for by local firms. Agreed.

2019/0121 UPDATE ON SECTION 106 PROJECTS: the Town Clerk explained that staff at East Devon District Council were still gathering information from those who had put

forward the various suggestions. As soon as the requisite details were in place, all schemes would be presented to the public and a vote would take place.

2019/0122 CORRESPONDENCE :

- a. Letters Received
 - i. D.C.C. – review of the re-use credit scheme.
 - ii. E.D.D.C. – re changes in electoral boundaries.
- b. Meetings
 - i. L.A.G. meeting 7th March
- c. Reports Received - the following reports are available for consultation in the office:
 - i. 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. Cllr. Watson seconded the proposal. Agreed.

2019/0123 STAFFING MATTERS – LENGTHSMAN POST: following discussion, Cllr.

Mrs. Spiller, seconded by Cllr. Walden, proposed that the post be advertised over a wider catchment area. Agreed. Cllr. Young asked about the financial implications of increasing the post from part-time to full time. The Deputy Town Clerk gave the figures.

2019/0124 STAFFING MATTERS – PAY LEVELS: Cllr. Mrs. Spiller, seconded by Cllr.

Walden, proposed that, where appropriate, staff pay be increased to the national living wage rate with appropriate differentials for more skilled staff and that this be back-dated to the time when this change was introduced.

2019/0125 QUOTATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION: None.

2019/0126 TENANCY MATTERS: it was confirmed that the new tenant had moved into the premises formerly occupied by the Tourist Information Office. Other matters will be progressed once the Town Clerk has spoken to the Chairman of the Old Courthouse Committee.

Signed Date.....