

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Held at the Guildhall, on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Town Mayor: Cllr. J.W. Walden  
Councillors: A.E. Bourner, Ms. J. Farrow, D.R.H. Hull,  
Mrs. S.L.N. Leat, D.J. Moore, M. Mynard,  
and A.L. Young

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

9 Members of the public. 1 representative of the Press. Dist. Cllr. S. L. Jackson.

2019/0175 SIGNING OF DECLARATIONS OF OFFICE: each Councillor completed a declaration of acceptance of office form.

2019/0176 ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR: Cllr. Hull, seconded by Cllr. Bourner proposed Cllr. Young. There were no other nominations so Cllr. Young was duly elected and signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Town Mayor.

2019/0177 ELECTION OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR: Cllr. Young, seconded by Cllr. Walden proposed Cllr. Moore. There were no other nominations so Cllr. Moore was duly elected.

2019/0178 CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLORS TO FILL VACANCIES: two applications had been received by the deadline on 7<sup>th</sup> May. Cllr. Young, seconded by Cllr. Moore, proposed that both applicants be co-opted. Mrs. Doherty was present and signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took her place at the table as a Councillor for the Town Ward. The Town Clerk will contact Mr. Featherstone to advise him that he was co-opted for Weycroft Ward and will arrange for him to complete the necessary paperwork.

At this point the Town Mayor welcomed her fellow Councillors to a new term and distributed a Councillor's pack to each.

2019/0179 APOLOGIES: Dist. Cllr. A.T. Moulding and Cty./Dist. Cllr. Hall.

2019/0180 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS: the Town Clerk had prepared a briefing suggesting an interim way forward for the Town Council to operate pending a full complement of Councillors being in place. This would consist of the monthly Town Council meeting on the second Monday of each month and Buildings and Finance Committee on the last available Monday of each month along with a new Planning with Traffic Management Committee. Working parties would conduct matters relating to the Cemetery and Amenities as necessary and report back to the Buildings and Finance Committee.

Cllr. Young, seconded by Cllr. Spurway, proposed that the recommendations in the Town Clerk's briefing note be adopted. Agreed.

Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Hull, proposed that in order to ensure that meetings would be quorate that all members stand on all Committees apart from Employment which will consist of Cllrs. Young, Moore, Hull, Spurway and Walden. Agreed.

Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Bourner, proposed that Cllr. Spurway have special responsibility for Cemetery matters. Agreed.

Cllr. Young, seconded by Cllr. Doherty, proposed that Cllr. Walden have special responsibility for Amenity matters. Agreed.

The following will represent the Town Council on outside committees:

Axminster United Charities – Mr. H.J.A. Jeffery.  
Millwey Rise Community Hall – Weycroft Ward Councillors.  
Citizens’ Advice Bureau – Cllr. Walden.  
East Devon Local Action Group – Cllr Bourner.  
Sustrans – Mr. B.R. Watson.  
Hon. Footpath Warden – Mr. J.F. Vanderwolfe.  
Job Club – Cllr. Walden.  
Youth Matters – Cllr. Spurway.  
Axminster Twinning Association – Cllrs. Walden and Bourner.  
Axminster Youth Club – Cllr. Walden.  
D.A.C.F. – Cllr. Hall.  
Jurassic Coast – Mr. B.R. Watson.

Cllr. Walden offered to act as a co-ordinator of volunteers as he felt that the Town Council needed to work more closely with this group. The Town Mayor said that she was minded to have thrice annual meetings with them. This will be on the agenda for the next meeting. This offer was accepted.

2019/0181 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 29<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2019: having ascertained from her fellow Councillors that the minutes were accurate, Cllr. Young, seconded by Cllr. Hull proposed that these be approved and adopted as Council policy. Agreed.

2019/0182 TOWN FORUM – PROGRESS WITH SECTION 106 FUNDING

DISBURSEMENT: in response to a question from a member of the Bowls Club, the Town Clerk said that she was still trying to find a date which would suit representatives from both Councils to have a meeting and arrange dates for public consultation and voting.

2019/0183 TOWN FORUM: Former Town Mayor Mr. J. Jeffery congratulated the new Councillors and wished them well.

2019/0184 TOWN FORUM – CLOSURE OF PREMISES IN TOWN: former Town Mayor, Mr. M. Symes, asked what could be done to increase the footfall in the town centre. It was pointed out that it was the effect of changing shopping patterns and was reflected nationwide. Mention was made of the “just a card” scheme which aims to encourage the public to buy something, however small, when visiting local shops. Cllr. Mrs. Leat said that the high street of today was seen as a place to socialise not to shop.

2019/0185 TOWN FORUM - ALLOTMENTS: a member of the public expressed his concerns regarding the potential loss of the allotments at Millwey for housing development. Cllr. Walden assured him that the Town Council would not agree to any change without a least two years notice and then only if an alternative site of suitable quality, with good soil, good access and a good water supply was available to tenants.

Cllr. Young proposed that agenda item 19 be brought forward. Agreed.

2019/0186 FORWARD PLAN FOR ALLOTMENT PROVISION AT MILLWEY RISE:

Cllr. Hull gave some background information regarding the proposed use of the former playing field and current allotments at Millwey for future housing development and urged that thought be given to the kind of housing required. He also urged fellow Councillors to look at a site off St. Andrew's Drive which he felt would be suitable as an alternative to the Millwey Rise Allotments and which could be prepared ahead of the need to move.

Cllr. Moore said that he thought that something had been built there already.

2019/0187 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2019: None.

2019/0188 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2019: None.

2019/0189 MATTERS OF URGENCY – REQUEST FROM A LOCAL ORGANISATION TO USE THE TOWN COUNCIL ELECTRICITY SUPPLY IN THE MINSTER CHURCH FOR AN EVENT DURING THE CHERRY FAYRE: the request indicated that the organisation would keep a record of the electricity used and reimburse the Town Council for the cost thereof. Cllr Walden, seconded by Cllr. Bourner proposed that consent be given. Agreed.

2019/0190 MATTERS OF URGENCY – TRIP TO DOUVRES: some time ago it had been agreed that three tickets be purchased to cover the travel costs of representatives from the Town Council to attend the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations of the D-Day landings. Both the Town Mayor and the Deputy Town Mayor expressed deep regret that because of prior commitments they would not be able to represent the town. The Town Council will be represented by Cllr. Walden, Cllr. Bourner and Cllr. Farrow.

2019/0191 POLICE REPORT: the Town Clerk stated that there had been 51 crimes in the town in March.

Cllr. Walden said that it was unacceptable that at present there was no warranted officer attached to Axminster Police Station. There were concerns regarding drugs.

2019/0192 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: this was available on the website.

2019/0193 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS: those from Cllrs. Hall and Moulding were on the website. In his final report as a District Councillor, Cllr. Hull said he had raised concerns regarding the lack of signage for the Industrial Estate at Millwey. In

her inaugural Comments, District Councillor Jackson said that she was delighted to have been elected to represent Axminster and invited residents and Councillors to let her know of any areas of concern that they wished to have pursued. She said that she was trying to find out whether there was a way in which the Spiral could be made to function as an area of public open space as originally intended.

2019/0194 TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS: the retiring Town Mayor, Cllr. Walden, had undertaken the following duties:

Planted a rose bush in the Old Courthouse Garden to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Country Markets,

Attended Easter Services

Participated in the Exeter Pride march

Attended the launch of the Axe Valley Croquet Club season.

2019/0195 MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2019: Cllr. Mrs. Leat, seconded by Cllr. Doherty, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2019/0196 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 8<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2019: None.

2019/0197 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 29<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2019: Cllr. Mrs. Leat, seconded by Cllr. Bourner, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2019/0198 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 29<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2019: None.

2019/0199 BUILDINGS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2019: Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Bourner, proposed that these be approved and adopted. Agreed.

2019/0200 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUILDINGS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2019: None.

2019/0201 FINANCIAL MATTERS – APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS FOR APRIL: The Deputy Mayor proposed that these be approved.

Cllr. Walden said that he objected and referred to a payment for £8500 made to Axminster Guildhall Management Committee and implied that this should not have been made until it had been approved by the Town Council.

The Town Mayor left the meeting at this point as having a pecuniary interest to declare arising from her employment as Guildhall Manager.

Cllr. Moore assumed the Chair.

Cllr. Walden explained that his concerns were threefold and arose from the fact that he had been alerted by Cllr. Rowe that the full amount had been requested all at once,

Guildhall Accounts had not been audited for two years and no budget had been presented to the Town Council. He expressed grave concerns about the fitness of the constitution of the Guildhall Management Committee. Cllr. Farrow said that she agreed with some of the points made by Cllr. Walden.

He suggested that in future advance notice be given of all payments.

The Responsible Financial Officer said that if an item of expenditure has been included in the Town Council's budget it is, by virtue of that fact, pre-authorized and was merely being ratified at the meeting. She pointed out, also that the expenditure in question was not in fact listed on the sums put forward for approval.

Cllr. Spurway said that the auditors had indicated that it would be easier to do the outstanding work in one block and the information for the past year was only just ready to go to them. He said that a special meeting would be called once the work was completed and the report from the auditors returned.

Three new public representatives would be needed on the Committee following the elections. Cllr. Moore, seconded by Cllr. Farrow, proposed that all Councillors present, excluding Cllrs. Young and Walden, be Town Council representatives on the Committee. Agreed.

After it had been re-iterated that the payment to which Cllr. Walden referred was not on those listed for approval anyway, Cllr. Leat, seconded by Cllr. Doherty, proposed that the payments as listed be approved. Agreed.

2019/0202 FINANCIAL MATTERS – BANK RECONCILIATION FOR MARCH: this was signed.

2019/0203 FINANCIAL MATTERS – ANY ITEMS APPROVED FOR EXPENDITURE: None.

2019/0204 FINANCIAL MATTERS – RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT: the Responsible Financial Officer said that she was working on the annual return. On her recommended that an extension to the deadline be requested, Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Doherty, proposed that this be sought. Agreed.

She added that she was working on updating the bank account signatories and would check with the bank what was happening.

2019/0205 FINANCIAL MATTERS – ANNUAL RETURN UPDATE: the internal auditor is due on 3<sup>rd</sup> June.

2019/0206 DISPOSAL OF PIANOS: nothing to report.

2019/0207 SECTION 106 MONEYS: covered under Town Forum

2019/0208 ALLOTMENTS AT MILLWEY: covered under Town Forum

2019/0210 CORRESPONDENCE:

- a. Letters Received
  - i. E.D.D.C. – various re elections.
  - ii. E.D.D.C. - Future High Streets Fund.
- b. Meetings
  - i. L.A.G. meeting date change
- c. Reports Received - the following reports are available for consultation in the office:
  - i. Health Watch Voices

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. Spurway seconded the proposal. Agreed.

2019/0210 STAFFING MATTERS: Cllr. Young, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Leat, proposed that a member of staff be granted one week’s leave of absence on compassionate grounds. Agreed.

2019/0211 STAFFING MATTERS: following discussion it was agreed that it would be acceptable for a relative of a member of staff to apply for co-option to the Town Council as any conflicts could be managed.

2019/0212 DEBTORS: Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Young, proposed that debts outstanding to the Town Council totalling xxxx be written off. Agreed.

There was no business to be discussed under quotations or tenancy matters.

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

