

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Held at the Guildhall, on Monday 12th August 2019 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Town Mayor: Cllr. A.L. Young

Councillors: M.N. Adamson-Drage, Cllr. A.E. Bourner, C.A. Doherty,
Ms. J.J. Farrow, D.R.H. Hull, Mrs. S.L.N. Leat, M. Mynard,
M.D.G. Spurway and P. Wales.

The Town Clerk (Miss H. Kirkcaldie) and Administrative Officer (Mrs. S. Gay).

In attendance: Dist. Cllr. I.L. Hall.

14 Members of the public. 1 representative of the Press.

2019/0305 APOLOGIES: Cllrs. D.J. Moore (Deputy Mayor) M. Featherstone, Mrs. A. G.Sedgewick, J.W. Walden and District Councillors Jackson and Moulding.

2019/0306 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: CLLRs. BOURNER, DOHERTY, FARROW, HULL, LEAT, SPURWAY AND WALES 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.

CLLR. HULL DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS BEING A MEMBER OF AN ORGANISATION WHICH HIRED THE SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE.

CLLR. SPURWAY DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS BEING A MEMBER OF THE MANAGEMENT TEAM AT CLOAKHAM LAWN SPORTS CENTRE.

2019/0307 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 8th JULY 2019: Having had it confirmed by her fellow Councillors that the minutes were accurate, Cllr. Young, seconded by Cllr. Mynard, proposed that the minutes be approved and adopted as Council policy. Agreed.

2019/0308 TOWN FORUM – CLIMATE EMERGENCY: a local resident urged Councillors to follow the example of other local councils in the area and declare a Climate Emergency and, having done so, to put it on the agenda as a standing item. She said that local communities want to get involved.

The Town Mayor said that a working party had been set up and had had an initial meeting but that it would be an enormous piece of work to establish the community's present carbon footprint. She added that not all residents had bought into this topic in the same way.

2019/0309 TOWN FORUM – WATER BOWSER: One of the volunteers who waters the floral displays explained why it was desirable for them to have a bowser with a bigger capacity than the present one.

2019/0310 TOWN FORUM – INFESTATION OF WEEDS: A member of the public deplored the widespread presence of weeds in all parts of the town and the fact that they were casting seed in readiness for next year. He wondered what the policies of the District and County Councils were in respect of urban weeds.

Cllr. Hull pointed out that it was difficult for weeds to be sprayed off because of the presence of parked vehicles.

The Town Clerk will contact Cllr. Hall so that the matter can be raised with the higher authorities.

2019/0311 TOWN FORUM – LAND ON LYME CLOSE BETWEEN FORMER POLICE HOUSES AND FIRE STATION: Cllr. Hull said that at present this was a source of weed seeds and suggested that this land could be used as a community orchard with low growing trees which would not cause a problem in respect of the overhead power lines.

2019/0312 TOWN FORUM – STOPLINE WAY CYCLE PATH: Cllr. Hall, who declared an interest as being chairman of Cloakham Lawn Sport Centre, said that that organisation had cleared part of this path where it passed through land it leased from a developer but pointed out that some of the land was under the ownership of Network Rail. He said that if dogs were kept on leads then they would run no risk of coming into any noxious weeds which were on land away from the public right of way itself.

CLLR. YOUNG PROPOSED THAT THE AGENDA ITEM RELATING TO THE IMPACT OF CHANGING CLIMATE BE BROUGHT FORWARD FOR DISCUSSION AT THIS POINT. Agreed.

2019/0313: TOWN COUNCIL POSITION IN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL AND GLOBAL AWARENESS OF THE IMPACT OF CHANGING CLIMATE: Cllr. Adamson-Drage supported the views put forward by the member of the public who had spoken in Town Forum. He said that Axminster would be isolated if it did not follow the example of neighbouring councils.

Cllr. Young said that at a meeting of the working party held the previous week, she and Cllr. Farrow had decided against such a declaration, as it was felt more important to draw up a list of principles and might be difficult to put forward a target date which could not be met. She said that any plan would need the co-operation of residents, which was not guaranteed and there would be costs involved.

Cllr. Adamson-Drage said that it was right that the matter be looked into thoroughly and suggested that the Town Council could set a target date in respect of its own activities.

Following further discussion, which ranged over matters such as individual responsibility, planting of trees and greater generation of green energy from buildings, Cllr. Bourner,

seconded by Cllr. Adamson-Drage, proposed that a Climate Emergency be declared for Axminster Town Council. Agreed.

Cllr. Mrs. Leat, seconded by Cllr. Hull, proposed that a date be set for a public meeting to show that the Town Council was following through. Agreed. Cllr. Young suggested that she send out 3 possible dates, such as Saturday afternoons, for such a meeting.

2019/0314 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8th JULY – 2019/0280 DOG BINS AT TRINITY HILL NATURE RESERVE: Cllr. Farrow had reported that there was now a red dog bin at one of the entrances. The emailed report from Dist. Cllr. Jackson indicated that it was now policy to combine the content of litter bins and dog bins prior to it being fed into the waste to energy incinerator so eliminating the need to replace the red dog bins.

2019/0315 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12TH JUNE – 2019/0293 OPERATION LONDON BRIDGE: A meeting will be arranged between the Town Council's working party and the Rector regarding this matter which he will then be able to pass on for consideration by the wider Axminster Churches Together group.

2019/0316 UPDATING OF COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP LIST: Councillor numbers having increased, membership of committees was updated with room for further amendments once absent Councillors had been consulted. The Old Courthouse will be managed, like the Guildhall, via the Buildings and Finance Committee with working parties which report back to the Buildings and Finance Committee being used in all areas of responsibility wherever possible to expedite matters.

2019/0317 MATTERS OF URGENCY: the Town Clerk said that there were two matters of urgency, both relating to quotes and asked that these be considered in committee. Agreed.

2019/00318 MINUTES OF PLANNING WITH TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8th JULY 2019: the accuracy of the minutes having been confirmed, Cllr. Mrs. Leat, seconded by Cllr. Spurway, proposed that these be approved and adopted as Town Council policy. Agreed.

2019/0319 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING WITH TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 8th JULY 2019: None.

2019/0320 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING WITH TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 29th JULY 2019: Cllr. Mynard pointed out that his declaration of a pecuniary interest and absence from the chamber while application 19/1328/FUL had not been recorded, nor the fact that no one had advised him when to return to the chamber so he had missed that part of the meeting which followed. The minutes having been altered to reflect this information, Cllr. Mrs. Leat, seconded by Cllr. Spurway, proposed that these were now a true record of the meeting. Agreed. Cllr. Mrs. Leat, seconded by Cllr. Young, proposed that these be approved and adopted as Town Council policy. Agreed. The Town Mayor and Town Clerk apologised for omitting to recall Cllr. Mynard to the meeting.

2019/0321 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING WITH TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 29^H JULY 2019: None.

2019/0322 MINUTES OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8TH JULY 2019: Cllr. Spurway pointed out that the minutes should be corrected to read “held at the Guildhall”. This correction having been made, Cllr. Spurway, seconded by Cllr. Young, proposed that these minutes were an accurate record of the meeting. Agreed. Cllr. Spurway, seconded by Cllr. Young then proposed that they be approved and adopted as Town Council policy. Agreed.

2019/0323 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8TH JULY 2019: None.

2019/0324 MINUTES OF THE CEMETERY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23RD JULY 2019: accuracy of the minutes having been confirmed by those present, Cllr. Spurway, seconded by Cllr. Farrow proposed that they be approved and adopted as Council policy.

2019/0325 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE CEMETERY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23RD JULY 2019: None.

2019/0326 REPORT OF THE CEMETERY WORKING PARTY MEETING HELD ON 30TH JULY 2019: Cllr. Spurway proposed that the report was an accurate record of the working party’s actions. Cllr. Hull declined to second the proposal as he objected to one of the policies in the report. Approval and further consideration of the report were deferred to the next meeting of the Town Council.

2019/0327 MINUTES OF THE BUILDINGS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29TH JULY 2019: Cllr. Wales asked that the minutes be corrected to show that he had been present at the meeting. This having been done, Cllr. Wales seconded Cllr. Young’s proposal that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting. Agreed. Cllr. Young, seconded by Cllr. Doherty, proposed that the minutes be approved and adopted as Council policy. Agreed.

2019/0328 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE BUILDINGS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29TH JULY 2019: Cllr. Adamson-Drage said that it might be possible for an arrangement to be put in place which would enable Axminster to share use of a larger bowser owned by Lyme Regis Town Council and said he would liaise with the watering volunteers.

2019/0329 FINANCIAL MATTERS – APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS FOR JULY: Cllr. Spurway, seconded by Cllr. Wales, proposed that these payments be approved. Agreed.

2019/0330 FINANCIAL MATTERS – REPORTING OF ANY ITEMS APPROVED FOR EXPENDITURE BY TOWN MAYOR OR COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN: None.

2019/0331 FINANCIAL MATTERS - ENERGY PROVIDER: there was insufficient information available to progress this item.

2019/0332 FINANCIAL MATTERS - INSURANCE RENEWAL: there was insufficient information available to progress this item.

2019/0333 FINANCIAL MATTERS – RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER’S REPORT: the written report from the Responsible Financial Officer stated that she had now removed the notice of public rights. She was continuing to draft a Risk Management Strategy for Council’s consideration. She and the Town Clerk had been scrutinising the lease documents for the new financial and lease agreements for the new office equipment. The number of signatories on the bank account was now up to a satisfactory level. The Town Clerk added that a response from the Auditors had been received requesting information regarding the loans.

2019/0334 FINANCIAL MATTERS – RE-INSTATEMENT OF SUSPENDED STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS: Cllr. Young proposed that the upper spending limit of the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk be reduced from £2000 to £300 and that those standing orders/financial regulations suspended as per minute 2019/0157 be re-instated. Cllr. Bourner seconded the proposal. Agreed.

2019/0335 UPDATE ON SECTION 106 MONEYS DISBURSEMENT: the Town Clerk informed Councillors regarding progress with the projects which had been submitted. Cllr. Young, seconded by Cllr. Spurway, proposed that Axminster Town Council should thank the District Council for supplying the updated position relating to the proposed Section 106 projects and welcome the fact that it should prove possible to fund all the eligible, affordable and possible sports projects put forward for Axminster without any need for community consultation.

Cllr. Hull expressed his disappointment that the District Council had ruled out locating an adult gym in the existing playing field areas. Cllr. Adamson-Drage regretted that none of the moneys had been allocated for a project in Raymonds Hill. Cllr. Young told him that the reason it had not been possible to progress the intended project for Raymonds Hill was related insurance problems.

A vote was taken and the motion was carried.

2019/0336 RESPONSE TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION OF CHANGES IN LEVEL OF SERVICE PROVISION BY DEVON AND SOMERSET FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE: details of the proposals had been available on line since early July. All options put forward would involve the closure of Colyton Fire Station.

Several Councillors said that they felt that this was a similar situation to that faced by local communities in respect of the cottage hospitals a couple of years earlier.

Cllr. Young proposed that a letter be sent expressing the Town Council’s displeasure at the proposed closure of Colyton Fire Station.

Cllr. Bourner proposed that the motion be amended to indicate the need to keep Colyton Fire Station open and to look at ways to avoid the closure of fire stations in any area. Cllr. Adamson-Drage seconded this proposal. Agreed.

2019/0337 RESPONSE TO TRAFFIC CONSULTATIONS FROM DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL: Cllr. Spurway, seconded by Cllr. Mynard, proposed that Axminster Town Council should support the extension to the no parking areas in North Street and at Millwey Avenue. Agreed. Changes in charges for on-street parking permits for certain necessary users were noted.

2019/0338 UPDATE ON REQUEST FOR GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE ON MINSTER GREEN: Nothing further to report at present.

2019/0339 COUNCILLOR INDUCTION TRAINING: The Town Clerk will notify Councillors of the dates when this will be made available once she has liaised with the Deputy Town Clerk.

2019/0340 REQUEST FOR SUPPORT FROM PLASTIC FREE AXMINSTER: In response to the letter received from this group, Cllr. Young, seconded by Cllr. Bourner, proposed that Axminster Town Council should support the efforts of all those involved in Plastic Free Axminster and welcome this opportunity to put on record its appreciation for the improvements to the appearance of the town which have resulted from the work it has undertaken so far. Agreed. Cllr. Young, seconded by Cllr. Adamson-Drage proposed that Cllr. Farrow be nominated as the Town Council's representative on Plastic Free Axminster. Agreed.

2019/0341 PROLIFERATION OF FLY POSTING: Cllr. Hull expressed his displeasure regarding the number of posters left in place throughout the town long after the events advertised had taken place and proposed that offenders be asked to remove them within fourteen days. Several Councillors agreed with these sentiments and it was felt that the onus on removal should lie with the event organisers. Cllr. Hull said that the enforcement powers lay with the District Council. Some Councillors felt that there was little likelihood of action as the officers were probably too busy.

2019/0342 FUTURE PLANS – REGISTERS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS: Councillors completed these documents.

2019/0343 CORRESPONDENCE :

- a. Letters Received.
 - i.
- b. Meetings
 - i. 19th July – Axminster Carpets.
- c. Reports Received - the following reports are available for consultation in the office:
 - i.

The 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. Doherty seconded the proposal. Agreed.

2019/0344 STAFFING MATTERS – EQUIPMENT FOR LENGTHSMAN: The Town Mayor said that the Deputy Clerk had been looking in to options. The Buildings and Finance Committee had concluded that at this stage that it would be better to opt for a

low emission conventional van than a hybrid or all-electric. The indicative costs to lease this type of van were around £280 per month but action was needed sooner rather than later.

Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Bourner, proposed that this be approved with power to act being delegated to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and officers. Agreed. Details of the options considered will be circulated.

Other equipment being investigated will include a mechanical device for compacting in-filled potholes.

2019/0345 QUOTES TO CONSIDER – EXTERNAL DECORATING AT OLD

COURTHOUSE: The Town Clerk said that she was awaiting a third quote for this work.

2019/0346 QUOTES TO CONSIDER – UPGRADE OF PHOTOCOPIER AND

COMPUTER SYSTEMS: An electrician had made a site visit as a result of which an additional quote had been received in respect of the installation of data cabling. The Town Clerk said that she had questioned the representative of the installing firm and pointed out that this had not been mentioned at the time the original quote had been considered. A subsequent offer had been received to reduce the quote by 50%.

Following discussion, Cllr. Doherty proposed that no additional sum be paid as this matter had been raised when the representative had attended a meeting at the Guildhall. Cllr. Leat seconded the proposal. Carried.

2019/0347 QUOTATIONS RECEIVED – WORKS TO EMERGENCY LIGHTING AT

GUILDHALL: the regular inspection by the contractor had highlighted that many of the fittings were in need of replacement and a quote for £1695 had been received for the work required. Cllr. Wales questioned why new units were needed when just the batteries should need to be replaced. The Town Clerk replied that she had been advised that the matter was not as straight forward as that. Cllr. Young said that the contractor had been very thorough in the work undertaken and that it was a matter of Health and Safety and proposed that the work be undertaken. Cllr. Adamson-Drage seconded the proposal. Carried.

2019/0348 TENANCY MATTERS - LEASES: The Town Clerk said that a working party would be needed to look over the work she had done on the leases so that these could go to the solicitors. Cllrs. Leat, Bourner and Young will be on that working party.

Signed Date.....

