

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Held at the Guildhall, on Monday 9th September 2019 at 7.00 p.m.

Present:

Town Mayor: Cllr. A.L. Young

Deputy Mayor: Cllr. D.J. Moore

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

The Town Clerk (Miss H. Kirkcaldie),

In attendance: Dist. Cllr. A.T. Moulding.

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

2019/0349 APOLOGIES: Cllrs. C.A. Doherty, M.D.G. Spurway, County/District Councillor Hall and District Councillor Jackson.

2019/0350 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: CLLRS. BOURNER, 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.

2019/0351 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 12th AUGUST 2019: Cllr. Farrow pointed out that paragraph 2 in minute 2019/0335 should end with the phrase "related to insurance issues". This correction having been made, Cllr. Young, seconded by Cllr. Bourner, proposed that the minutes be approved for accuracy. Agreed. Cllr. Young, seconded by Cllr. Hull proposed that they should be adopted as Council policy. Agreed.

2019/0352 TOWN FORUM – CLOSURE OF LYME STREET: a local resident expressed his serious concern at the failure of utility companies to put adequate advance warning and directional signs when they undertake emergency road closures and the potential for injury when, as in this case, one of the consequences is that vehicles then have to do complicated manoeuvres in an area where there may be numerous vulnerable pedestrians, to get back on track. As part of this discussion it was pointed out that there is no restriction on the use of Combe Lane by heavy goods vehicles.

2019/0353 TOWN FORUM – OLD COURTHOUSE GARDEN: a member of the public spoke out about the Old Courthouse and the matter of sea gulls. She objected to the notice which had been put in place directing that birds should not be fed and to the removal of the bird feeders. She said that the notice should have specified sea gulls and that she felt that the alleged problem had arisen because of food dropped by cafe patrons using the open part of the garden or by failure of cafe staff to clear plates left in the open part of the garden by such patrons. She felt that the matter should have been discussed in the open part of the meeting. It was pointed out that it had been raised by the tenants and their staff on behalf of affected patrons and as such had been dealt with in committee as a tenancy matter. Cllr. Walden said that he felt that the ban on feeding birds during the summer months was a reasonable way to manage the situation.

2019/0354 TOWN FORUM – POTHOLES AT RAILWAY STATION: A member of the public deplored the state of the site road at the station yard and car park.

CLLR. YOUNG DECLARED A PECUNIARY INTEREST AS BEING AN EMPLOYEE OF A RETAIL OUTLET PART OF WHICH IS ACCESSED FROM THE ACCESS ROAD TO THE STATION YARD BUT DID NOT LEAVE THE ROOM AS THIS WAS NOT RELEVANT TO THE MATTER UNDER DISCUSSION.

Cllr. Young said that she had had a meeting with a representative of Network Rail regarding an adjacent piece of land at the station and been told that the land did not belong to them. A member of the public said he would try to find out whether the Land Registry held any details. He said that it might be worth raising the matter at the forthcoming Devon County Council highways conference on 4th October. The Town Clerk confirmed that the mechanical macadam compactor had not been purchased as yet.

2019/0355 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12th AUGUST – 2019/0313 CLIMATE EMERGENCY: Cllr. Young said that she had had a meeting with the member of the public who had spoken at the July meeting, along with her daughter and a representative from Plastic Free Axminster. A further meeting would take place later in the week and she urged the working party members to come if they were available.

2019/0356 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12TH JUNE – 2019/00309 WATER BOWSER: the Town Clerk said that Mr. Jeffery had resolved the matter in his own way.

2019/0357 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12TH JUNE – 2019/0332 INSURANCE: the Town Clerk said that this had been renewed but further details were awaited from the insurers regarding any long-term agreement offer and the cost of insuring additional items.

2019/0358 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12TH JUNE – 2019/0336 FIRE STATION CLOSURES: Councillors noted the receipt of a letter from Budleigh Salterton Town Council.

2019/0359 CO-OPTION OF ADDITIONAL MEMBER FOR RAYMONDS HILL: No applications had been received.

2019/0360 UPDATING OF COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP LIST: Cllr. Featherstone's name was added to the planning, cemetery and amenities committees' membership. The Town Clerk apologised to Cllr. Walden for having omitted his name from the membership of the Buildings and Finance Committee. In the interests of clarity it was confirmed that the chairmanship of the Risk and Emergency Planning Committee lay with the Town Mayor ex officio.

2019/0361 MATTERS OF URGENCY: None.

2019/0362 REPORT OF CEMETERY WORKING PARTY: this was held over to the next meeting as there were insufficient members there to make and second the proposition.

2019/0363 MINUTES OF PLANNING WITH TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12th AUGUST 2019: the accuracy of the minutes having been confirmed, Cllr. Mrs. Leat, seconded by Cllr. Adamson-Drage, proposed that these be approved. Agreed. Cllr. Mrs. Leat, seconded by Cllr. Young, then proposed that they be adopted as Town Council policy. Agreed.

2019/0364 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING WITH TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 12th AUGUST 2019: None.

2019/0365 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING WITH TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 27TH AUGUST 2019: the accuracy of the minutes having been confirmed, Cllr. Mrs. Leat, seconded by Cllr. Bourner, proposed that these be approved. Agreed. Cllr. Mrs. Leat, seconded by Cllr. Wales, then proposed that they be adopted as Town Council policy. Agreed.

2019/0366 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING WITH TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 27th AUGUST 2019: None.

2019/0367 MINUTES OF THE BUILDINGS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 27TH AUGUST 2019: Cllr. Walden pointed out that under item 12 iii the value of the quote accepted had not been inserted, which was £7680. This having been done, Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Wales, proposed that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting. Agreed. Cllr. Young, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Leat, proposed that the minutes be approved and adopted as Council policy. Agreed.

Responding to a question from Cllr. Walden, the Town Clerk said that she had requested a quote from the insurers for a three-year "long-term" agreement and was also in discussion with them regarding the fact that the Town Council would be adding various new assets over the coming months. She said that she envisaged that some of the difference between the cost of a long term agreement as opposed to a short term agreement would be offset to some extent by the increased cost of adding new items such as the photocopier.

2019/0368 FINANCIAL MATTERS – APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS FOR AUGUST: these were not available because of staff leave.

2019/0369 FINANCIAL MATTERS – REPORTING OF ANY ITEMS APPROVED FOR EXPENDITURE BY TOWN MAYOR OR COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN: None.

2019/0370 FINANCIAL MATTERS – RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER’S REPORT: the written report from the Responsible Financial Officer stated that she was still awaiting a response from the external auditor. She would be contacting staff regarding re-enrolment in the Pensions Scheme. She has been working on a Risk Management Strategy for the Council and will put it forward for consideration in due course. She hoped that the equipment enabling the Town Council to take card payments would be in place by start of October.

2019/0371 REQUEST FROM ROYAL BRITISH LEGION FOR A GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE ON MINSTER GREEN: The Town Clerk had circulated a briefing note to all Councillors. Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Featherstone, proposed that, subject to all necessary permissions and arrangements having been obtained from and/or put in place by East Devon District Council and the Parochial Church Council, the Royal British Legion and Axminster Town Council, Axminster Town Council will fund the cutting, preparation and initial stocking of the beds from the Town Improvement Fund. Agreed. Cllr. Hull suggested that as part of this exercise the approach slab accessing the memorial be levelled.

2019/0372 REQUEST FOR HAND RAIL ON STEPS BY MARY KNOLL: Cllr. Walden said that the ownership of this area of land has long been unclear. He felt that the request was valid and that the Town Clerk should obtain quotes from various people and raise the matter with the Highway Authority as well. Cllr. Young said that the steps were not in good condition and was concerned that by providing a hand rail this was encouraging their use.

2019/0373 FUTURE PLANS – PAPERLESS MEETING INFORMATION: Cllrs. Adamson-Drage, Farrow, Hull, Leat, Moore, Sedgewick, Walden, Wales and Young said that they were happy to dispense with hard copies of documents for Council meetings.

It was noted that it was not possible at present to send the documentation out as one, emailed pack so members would need to make use of the Members’ Area as well.

2019/0374 CORRESPONDENCE :

- a. Letters Received.
 - i. Letter of thanks from Nourish.
 - b. Meetings
 - i. Axe Valley L.A.G. 5th September.
 - ii. 19th September – East Devon A.O.N.B. meeting, Seaton Tramway.
 - iii. 24th October - Working Together for the Future of East Devon.
- CLLR. WALDEN URGED PEOPLE TO ATTEND THIS EVENT.
- c. Reports Received - the following reports are available for consultation in the office:

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. Walden seconded the proposal. Agreed.

2019/0375 STAFFING MATTERS – EQUIPMENT FOR LENGTHSMAN: there had been no progress regarding the vehicle for the lengthsman but staff sickness had reduced the urgency. Cllr. Adamson-Drage offered to show his colleagues a van similar to that required once it had been obtained by Lyme Regis Town Council. Training is being arranged where appropriate and available, though some aspects are proving problematic and guidance from Devon County Council will be sought.

2019/0376 QUOTES TO CONSIDER –UPGRADE OF SECURITY CAMERA SYSTEM AT GUILDHALL: following discussion, the Town Clerk was asked to contact the suppliers regarding compatibility with the existing equipment to ensure that an integrated system was achieved.

2019/0377 TENANCY MATTERS - LEASES: The Town Clerk reported that the tenant of the Constables’ Room appeared to be vacating the premises. It had not been clear when this was to be done up until now. She will liaise with the prospective in-coming tenant.

Signed Date.....