

AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BUILDINGS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD AT 7.00 p.m. ON MONDAY, 28th MAY 2019 AT THE GUILDHALL

1. PRESENT:, Cllr. A.L.Young (Town Mayor), Cllr. C.A. Doherty, Cllr. J.J. Farrow, Cllr. D.R.H. Hull, Cllr. Mrs. S.L.N.Leat, Cllr M. Mynard, Cllr. M.D.G. Spurway, Cllr. J.W. Walden the Town Clerk and the Deputy Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer. 0 member of the public, 0 representative of the press.

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. 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.

2. APOLOGIES: Cllr. D.J. Moore (Deputy Mayor), Cllr. A.E. Bourner and Cllr. M. Featherstone.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: these were signed.

4. PUBLIC FORUM:- None.

5. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

a) Annual Return – the Responsible Financial Officer said that the internal audit was scheduled for 3rd June She had asked for an extension to the submission date to the external auditor to avoid the need to have an extra ordinary meeting to enable Council to approve the documents prior to the advertising of the public rights. It was agreed, proposed Cllr. Walden, seconded Cllr. Hull, that the meeting on 24th June be scheduled as an extra-ordinary meeting of the full Town Council with a similar meeting to be held on 28th June if required.

The Responsible Financial Officer said that an area of concern was lack of consideration of Risk Assessments matters by the full Town Council. Cllr. Walden said that as the Risk Assessment Committee did not have delegated powers the occasions when its minutes were considered by full Town Council represented such consideration.

b) Grand Piano – the Town Clerk said that the prospective purchaser was still obtaining reports from advisors. The upright piano from the Churchill Room will be advertised via social media.

6. PROPERTY RELATED MATTERS – GUILDHALL:

i) Update on Works Required: - a report from the Consultant Surveyor had been circulated. He said that he hoped to contact further contractors regarding the doors into the inner foyer in the current week. In respect of the stage walls and ceiling he said that the most cost effective solution would be to use fibreboard in combination with a multi-foil insulation material. Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Farrow, proposed that the existing fibreboard be removed in its entirety and replaced. Agreed . The Surveyor will be asked to prepare a specification and obtain 3 quotations.

7. PROPERTY RELATED MATTERS – OLD COURTHOUSE

i) General Update on Repairs – the roofing contractor would be advising the Town Clerk when he would be starting work. The local contractor had not yet submitted a quotation for the external decoration works. The Town Clerk will contact him to remind him.

ii) Museum – a cleaner had indicated that it would be about 12 hours work to prepare the premises for an incoming tenant. Matters relating to metering will be discussed with an electrical contractor. Contact had been made with the current tenants and confirmation received from one, so far, that the premises would be cleared and vacated. The Town Clerk will liaise with the Care Service regarding water supply to the Museum.

iii) Senior Citizens' Centre – neither a flooring specialist nor the local joinery had been willing to investigate the problem. The Town Clerk had asked the handy man to do this and the work would be undertaken later in the week.

iv) Arts Cafe – nothing was raised.

v) Former T.I.C. – nothing to report.

vi) Garden Maintenance – following the resignation of the contractor who had undertaken this over many years, it was resolved that the routine work be undertaken by one of the Town Council staff with specialist help being sought when deemed necessary. A member of the public had approached the Town Clerk regarding the intended removal of a statue from the garden with the consent of the family in remembrance of whose son it had been placed there originally. The Town Clerk will ask that this be put in writing.

8. PROPERTY RELATED MATTERS – CEMETERY

i) Tree Works – it was agreed that agenda item dii be discussed at the same time.

The tree condition report had been received from the contractor. A priced list had been included for those works deemed most urgent, broken down for the individual sites. Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Hull proposed that the contractor be asked to undertake those works as priced on the list which had not already been allocated elsewhere, subject to confirmation that the price would cover removal of all arisings and subject to notification being provided as to when the work would be done so that no inconvenience would be caused to allotment holders. Agreed.

Cllr. Young proposed that the information regarding the condition of the sycamore about which a resident wished to make arrangements be passed on. Agreed.

Cllr. Walden proposed that a cost be sought for work to this tree, even although it was not in the category requiring urgent attention.

ii) Buttresses – further quotes for repair work are awaited. Cemetery staff reported that the problem was manifest on the southern chapel but not the northern one.

Cllr. Walden left the meeting at this point.

9. PROPERTY RELATED MATTERS – AMENITIES:

- i. Delegated Section 106 Powers – Cllr. Young proposed that, pending the Council coming up to full strength, powers be delegated to those Councillors available to attend meetings with District Council officers to deal with Section 106 Projects. Cllr. Mrs. Leat seconded the proposal. Carried.
- ii. Cutting of Amenity Grass Areas – the Town Mayor said that on reflection she felt that it would be best to look at each area on an individual basis and then come up with a policy as to use and cutting. This will be done in conjunction with the handy man. Cllr. Farrow that consideration should be given to adopting a general policy to be as supportive of wildlife as it concomitant with public safety issues. Cllr. Mrs. Leat said that help would be needed to achieve this.
- iii. Station Grounds – the Town Mayor said that the land was owned by S.W. Rail. She said that as the gateway to Axminster for those coming by train it needed to be cleared and improved. She felt that the Town Council could act as a catalyst for making visible improvements to the town environment.

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Cllr. Hull proposed that a letter be sent to Tesco seeking a financial contribution.

Cllr. Young declared a pecuniary interest as being an employee of Tesco.

Cllr. Hull spoke also of the Co-op community fund. He, and Cllrs. Farrow, Leat, Mynard, Spurway, each declared pecuniary interests as being shareholders in Co-op.

Cllr. Spurway suggested that the project be put forward for the Tesco green token scheme.

Cllr. Mynard said that groups such as the Scouts and Guides, as well as commercial firms may be prepared to get involved. Young Farmers were also mentioned. Cllrs. Mynard and Mrs. Leat will draw up a list of possible groups.

10. PROPERTY RELATED MATTERS – PIPPINS: the Town Clerk confirmed that the contractor appointed to undertake repairs to the roof had been directed to liaise with the Pippins Users group regarding the timing of the works.

11. UPDATE ON BANKING ARRANGEMENTS: the Responsible Financial Officer was putting in place arrangements for Cllrs. Spurway, Mynard and Fellows to become signatories. Cllr. Doherty said that she would be willing to become a signatory also.

12. MATTERS OF URGENCY: the Town Clerk asked for a matter of urgency relating to the Cemetery to be referred into Committee.

13. FUTURE PLAN CONSIDERATION: the Town Mayor said that she would like to take a plan-do-review approach to Town Council business. One change which had been highlighted in the course of the meeting had been the need to insert two additional Town Council meetings in June to accommodate submission of the annual return. She suggested that a countdown to the submission be put in place which could then be reviewed as to success.

In the absence of the Deputy Mayor, the Town 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.

14. QUOTES FOR PROPOSED WORKS:

- i. C.C.T.V. at Guildhall – a quote for upgrading of the closed circuit television security system at the Guildhall was discussed. It was agreed that there was a need for additional cameras all round the outside of the building. The Town Clerk will contact the contractor and ask him to come in to discuss this and other matters and also contact other suppliers for comparable quotes.
- ii. New Printer, Scanner and Computers – the Deputy Clerk reported on the demonstration received at the secondary school of their printer and said that a proposal had been received from a supplier for a similar printer that would suit Town Council needs. A further proposal was awaited in relation to computers which could be networked with the new printer and would meet the specification already agreed by the Town Council. Mailing options and other aspects of data handling had been discussed. Cllr. Mynard asked whether it would make sense to supply councillors with tablets. Cllr. Mrs. Leat said that it was worth looking into the various matters which had been discussed as they would future proof the Council.

15. TENANCY MATTERS: the Town Clerk gave details regarding tenancies within the former museum. Two tenants will be moving out and a new tenant would be moving in once the premises became empty at the end of June.

16. EXTENSION TO EXISTING RIGHT OF BURIAL: a request had been received to extend a right of burial taken out in 1930 for a further 50 years. The applicant accepted that the final 11 year of the existing lease would be forfeit. Cllr. Spurway, seconded by Cllr. Hull, proposed that this be permitted subject to a form of indemnity being signed and the Right of Burial being transferred into the applicant's name. Agreed. This was the first instance of what is likely to become a more regular pattern of requests to extend/renew leases on grave spaces.

The same applicant had sought permission for an angled stone to be placed in front of the existing headstone to accommodate additional names. Cllr. Spurway proposed that this be permitted, subject to the applicant signing a waiver absolving the Town Council from liability should the stone be damaged in the course of Cemetery maintenance as its position would make it more vulnerable to such damage.

17. ELECTRICAL WORKS AT THE OLD COURTHOUSE: Cllr. Young, seconded by Cllr. Mynard proposed that the remaining necessary corrective works highlighted by the recent condition report on the wiring at the Old Courthouse be priced and undertaken on health and safety grounds. Agreed.

Signed Date