

AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BUILDINGS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD AT 7.00 p.m. ON MONDAY, 27th January 2020 AT THE GUILDHALL

1. PRESENT: Cllr. A.L.Young (Town Mayor), Cllr. A.E. Bourner, Cllr. J.J. Farrow, Cllr. Mrs. S.L.N.Leat, Cllr M. Mynard, Cllr. M.D.G. Spurway, Cllr. P.G. Wales, Cllr. J.W. Walden, the Town Clerk and the Deputy Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer and the Administrative Assistant. 2 members 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

CLLRS. BOURNER, FARROW, LEAT AND SPURWAY EACH DECLARED PERSONAL INTERESTS AS BEING MEMBERS OF THE AXMINSTER GUILDHALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IN RESPECT OF ANY ITEMS RELATING TO THE GUILDHALL.

CLLR. WALDEN DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS CHAIRMAN OF THE GOVERNORS OF AXMINSTER SECONDARY SCHOOL.

2. APOLOGIES: Cllr. D.J. Moore (Deputy Mayor), Cllr. D.R.H. Hull.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 25TH NOVEMBER 2019: having been approved by the Town Council, these were signed by the Chairman.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF ABOVE MEETING: None.

5. PUBLIC FORUM – INFORMATION IN SUPPORT OF GRANT REQUEST: A member of the public who runs a gymnastic club had submitted a request for a grant to fund new equipment and spoke in support of that request. Councillors requested some further information before they would be able to consider the request.

The member of the public left at this point.

6. PUBLIC FORUM – PROPOSAL FOR USE OF FORMER MUSEUM PREMISES AT OLD COURTHOUSE: A member of the public spoke in support of a proposal she had put forward for using the above premises. There was dialogue with members regarding the feasibility of installing a lift in the premises, which are listed. The Town Clerk said that this had been investigated on previous occasions and the costs and difficulties involved had led to a decision not to progress the idea.

7. PUBLIC FORUM – PROPOSAL FOR USE OF CONSTABLE'S ROOM FOR OFFICES: A member of the public confirmed that his employers were amenable to his applying for the tenancy of the above part of the Old Courthouse.

8. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

a) Finalisation of Budget for 2020-2021 – the R.F.O. had circulated a document setting out the Precept Calculations and other budgetary considerations which had been changed since the Precept had been set. She spoke of the need to ensure that funding was in place to honour earmarked reserve funds. She reminded Councillors of the need to ensure that Council reserves remained adequate but did not, without a valid reason, exceed the amount which the external auditor considered reasonable, which was approximately double the level of precept. She recommended that some of the projects included in the budget be funded from these earmarked funds, such as the Town Improvement Fund and the Town Building Fund. The R.F.O. expressed her concern that the auditor would not be happy with earmarked funds which did not have a specific goal and suggested that the funds be renamed as Special Project Funds. Cllr. Walden said that the fund could be drawn on to provide a building for the more efficient running of the Town Council's operations. He proposed

that the R.F.O. prepare a proposal to put to Council regarding the topic of earmarked funds and their use, taking into account the points raised in the discussions regarding the distinctions about the two funds. Cllr. Young seconded the proposal. Carried.

Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Young, proposed that the budget be set at £284,066. Agreed. This recommendation will be put to the full Town Council.

9. PROPERTY RELATED MATTERS:

a **Guildhall:**

- i) Update on Works Required – doors between outer and inner foyers: - Cllr. Young said that she felt Councillors needed more time to consider the information regarding the sliding doors. Following discussion relating to the fact that the information supplied did not comprise costs for the entire project from removal of the present doors to installation of a fully functioning set of sliding doors, Cllr. Young proposed that a letter be sent to the Consultant re-iterating the requirements of the Town Council. Agreed.
- ii) Update on Works Required – works in main hall roof void: - Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Bourner, proposed that an offer from Cllr. Walden to let the Town Clerk have a contact who could advise on what needs to be done be accepted. Agreed.
- iii) Update on Works Required – carpeting:

CLLR. YOUNG DECLARED A PECUNIARY INTEREST AS BEING THE SPOUSE OF AN EMPLOYEE OF AXMINSTER CARPETS BUT REMAINED IN THE CHAMBER.

Cllr. Walden proposed that three quotes be obtained to supply and fit carpet of Axminster quality. Agreed.

- iv) Update on Works Required – Stage Works: Cllr. Leat confirmed that the preference of users was for manually operated front curtains. She added that there was a division of opinion among those who had been consulted as to whether works to the stage ceiling were required before works to the lighting. The Deputy Clerk said that advice was awaited from a consultant regarding options for the ceiling. Cllr. Walden proposed that the work on the stage curtains be undertaken based on revised quotes from suppliers who had quoted previously and to be reported at the next Town Council meeting. Agreed.
- v) Update on Works Required – Stage Lighting: - the Town Clerk said that one of the issues was that the lighting bars needed to be replaced as they did not comply with current regulations. During discussions it was suggested that free-standing lighting towers may be preferable to the present set up.
- vi) Update on Works Required – Replacement of Outdated Fuse Board: - a recent problem had identified the existence of an outdated fuseboard. Cllr. Walden proposed that this be replaced as a matter of Health and Safety.
- vii) Water Leak in Upstairs Kitchen: - a leak had occurred in the piping supplying the sink in the upstairs kitchen which had caused water damage in the inner foyer. A contractor had repaired the leak. It was agreed that the kitchen needed to be upgraded in the light of how the kitchen is used. Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Leat, proposed that three new cabinets be fitted plus a new sink, refrigerator and microwave. The whole kitchen will be gutted by Town Council staff and the refurbishment undertaken either by them or by an outside contractor as appropriate. Agreed.
- viii) Stanchions – Cllr. Walden proposed that the necessary works be done. Agreed. The Town Clerk will ask a structural engineer to prepare a specification which can be distributed to contractors.

- ix) Bar – this is in need of a complete refit. Cllr. Walden proposed that professional bar fitters be asked to quote. Agreed.

b Old Courthouse

- i) General Update on Repairs: - the Town Clerk was not sure when the decorators would be finishing their work. The water ingress at the Senior Citizens was now thought to be the result of faulty flashing round the roof light and further works would be needed.
- ii) Museum – the installation of sub-meters will be considered further once the use of this area is decided.
- iii) Senior Citizens' Centre – an area of water ingress had been reported and a contractor will be making a site visit to advise on remedial action.
- iv) Arts Café – Cllr. Walden said that a spray-on coating was available which was transparent. He proposed that a surveyor be consulted regarding his views and that the views of the Conservation Officer should be challenged citing the fact that it has been done on other listed buildings. Cllr. Young said that she would look into the matter.
- v) Former Tourist Information Office – the ponding of water on the roof remains a problem but there is no water ingress.
- vi) Garden – a specialist will be instructed to prune the fig and the magnolia. Suitable new planting will be obtained for the former Dyers' Garden bed.

c Cemetery

- i) Path – a plan had been circulated indicating those areas where the condition of the path was causing a problem, whether as a result of width or ground condition. Cllr. Walden proposed that the matter be passed to the Cemetery Committee for consideration at this stage.
- ii) Field – it had not proved possible to find anyone prepared to graze sheep in the field because of the presence of dog faeces. It was agreed that the Handyman be asked to cut the field.
- iii) Digital Mapping – nothing further to report.

d Amenities:

- i. Trees on Valley Path – Network Rail had advised that some work had been done but they had not responded to a request for a site meeting. A further site meeting will be requested to sort out problems which had not been dealt with previously.
- ii. Section 106 Projects – Cllr. Spurway mentioned that the Bowling Club project was completed. A meeting with Section 106 Officers will be arranged for March.
- iii. Brown Signage to Promote Axminster: - the Heritage Centre needs to indicate what information is needed on the signs as this will affect size and cost.
- iv. Hedge Cutting at Allotments – the contractor will be contacted.
- v. Problems At Lower Entrance to Woodbury Park Allotments – the agreed work is to remove 3m of the bank from the post up the lane to enable a better view up the lane.
- vi. War Memorial Flower Bed– the Town Clerk said that it had been suggested that a faculty may not be needed. Cllr. Young felt that it was appropriate that the Town Council get the necessary permissions before anniversary celebrations in May.

10. MATTERS OF URGENCY: None.

11. FUTURE PLAN CONSIDERATION:

- i) Old Courthouse – agreed that item this be deferred for lack of time.
- ii) Risk Management – Cllr. Young asked for volunteers willing to form part of an ad hoc risk management working party to let the Deputy Clerk know. The Deputy Clerk will arrange a meeting for this working party.

Cllr. Mrs. Leat 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. Farrow seconded the proposal. Agreed.

12. QUOTES FOR PROPOSED WORKS: this item was deferred for lack of time.

13. TENANCY MATTERS: Cllr. Young, seconded by Cllr. Walden, proposed that the Constable's Room be let to the individual who had applied on the same terms as had been granted to the previous tenant. Agreed.

14 STAFFING MATTERS: none.

Signed Date