

AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING OF THE EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Held at Axminster Guildhall at 10.30 a.m. on Monday, 16th March 2020

PRESENT: Cllrs. A.L. Young (Chairman), J.J. Farrow and M.D.G. Spurway.

Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk
0 Members of the Press 0 Members of the Public

1. APOLOGIES: Cllrs. D.J. Moore (Vice-chairman), C.A. Doherty, D.R.H. Hull, S.L.N. Leat.
2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3RD MARCH 2020: having been approved by the Town Council, these were signed.
3. PUBLIC FORUM: None present.
4. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 3rd MARCH: None.
5. MATTERS OF URGENCY: None.
6. FUTURE PLANNING: None.

Cllr.Farrow 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.

7. TO DISCUSS STAFFING MATTERS: following a lengthy discussion regarding the falling through of Option 3, the Mayor proposed what course of action should be taken as a result. Cllr. Farrow seconded the proposal. Carried.

The Mayor proposed that the hours of the Administrative Assistant be doubled to enable her to carry out duties for which she is at present being paid on an ad hoc basis. Cllr. Spurway seconded the proposal. Carried.

The situation regarding Coronavirus was discussed. The Mayor proposed, seconded by Cllr. Farrow, and agreed that the Deputy Town Clerk should work from home should the schools be closed, as was thought likely. Cllr. Young, proposed, seconded by Cllr. Farrow that the Town Council should buy a mobile telephone for her Town Council calls. Agreed.

The office will be closed to the public. It was not known what would happen regarding the operation of public halls and any decision regarding that would lie with the Guildhall Management Committee.

The uncertainty of the situation was acknowledged as a problem. The Annual Parish meeting had been cancelled as not being necessary for Council business. A decision on Town Council meetings would need to be taken and consideration given to holding these on a conference call basis or via email with ratification at a later date. The Town Clerk said that processes for the Cemetery would need to be considered. The Town Clerk will have to have her computer enabled for home working. The situation regarding the Cemetery Caretakers and the arrangement for them to work safely.

Cllr.Young, seconded by Cllr. Farrow, proposed that all staff be paid full pay for the duration, should they succumb to COVID-19 or have to self-isolate(for up to 14 days) because of contact with someone affected. Agreed. Cllr. Young said that the Council should not be frightened to take decisions to protect its staff.

If the Guildhall is closed to the public it might be an opportunity to carry out decoration and similar work. Cllr. Young said that many events at the Guildhall were already being cancelled.

Cllr. Farrow asked what could be done to support the Community. Cllr. Young said that she had thought about contacting the local press to invite members of the public who needed assistance with shopping to ring in and then to try to link them with suitable volunteers. Cllr. Farrow said that a lot of thought would need to be given to ensure that all parties were operating safely.

The Mayor said that it would be prudent to await further advice from central Government.

Draft Absence Management Policy – this will be discussed at the next meeting. It was agreed that this be held on Monday 23rd March at 11.00 a.m.

Signed Date