

Axminster Town Council

Office Hours
Monday to Thursday
9am – 4pm

Mayor: Cllr Jill Farrow
Town Clerk: Paul Hayward

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Minutes of the meeting of the Operations Committee held on Monday, 23rd March 2026 at 7.00 p.m. at Axminster Guildhall.

Draft Minutes: Part One version

Present: Cllrs Walden (JW) (Chair), Price (JP) (Vice Chair), Ashkettle (JA), Dowdeswell (MD), Dunsbury (RD), Farrow (JF), Hayward (AH), Norman (LN), Osborn (RO), Paice (EP) and Willey (DW).

The meeting was quorate.

Also in attendance were the Clerk to the Council, Paul Hayward, and the Deputy Clerk, Sarah Jackson. One member of the public was in attendance.

The meeting began at 7.00 pm.

The Presiding Chair of the Committee, JW, welcomed all in attendance and outlined the fire precautions, exits, etc. and ran through the agenda procedure and protocol, noting the agenda statements as published.

Public Forum:

No members of the public wished to speak.

- i) JW asked if the chess table was in storage. The Clerk reported that the Chess table had been available for use in the public garden for a long time but would need to be relocated when the sale of the Old Courthouse Concluded.

The Chair subsequently closed the public forum session at 7:01pm.

OC26/015

To note members of the committee present:

As detailed above.

OC26/016

To note and, if thought fit, to approve apologies (and reasons for absence). (LGA 1972 S.85 (1))

The Committee noted apologies from Cllr Hurren, Cllr Leat and Cllr Warwick.

The Chair proposed that the reasons for these apologies be accepted, which was seconded by JP. Resolved unanimously.

OC26/017

To note members of the Committee not otherwise in attendance.

All members of the Committee were accounted for.

Continued overleaf

OC26/018

To receive any declarations of interest from members of the Committee in relation to items of business on this agenda and to note any dispensations previously afforded.

*At the FULL Council meeting held 09/02/2026, minute reference FC26/027, Cllr. Willey was afforded a dispensation * to discuss and vote upon matters pertaining to the Guildhall. This dispensation applies until May 2027 (unless rescinded before that date) and is afforded with respect to Cllr. Willey's relationship to the Council as a regular hirer of the Guildhall. * **Localism Act 2011 (s.33).***

There were no other declarations.

OC26/019

To consider and, if thought fit, approve the minutes of the Operations Committee meeting held 26th January 2026 and to consider any matters arising.

JF raised some minor text errors for amendment, which were not significant to the veracity of the business transacted.

The Chair proposed approval of these substantive minutes with the suggested amendments. Seconded by RO. The approval of the minutes was resolved unanimously.

Action: The Chair is to sign the approved minutes once prepared by the Clerk.

Matters Arising.

There was a single matter arising, which the Clerk gave an update about:

i) JW asked if there had been a response from Devon County Council (DCC) Highways Department.

The Clerk provided an update that there had been no formal response, but in his Devon County Councillor capacity, he confirmed that the Community Road Warden Scheme was under review by DCC. However, the additional funding found by DCC for road repairs has been eaten up by the rising cost of asphalt due to the conflict in the Middle East.

OC26/020

To consider any matters listed on this agenda that Councillors consider should be dealt with as confidential business as per the provisions of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

Six matters were already tabled for Part Two consideration - agenda items OC26/032 to 037(IC).

The Clerk requested that item OC26/021/viii be treated as a part two item due to the need to disclose third-party contractor information that is commercially sensitive.

It was also highlighted that two matters of urgency under OC26/029 needed to be discussed in Part 2. One matter pertained to a site boundary concern at Woodbury Park Allotments, and the other in respect to a request from the Axminster Carnival Committee.

Operations Committee business to be considered:

OC26/021

To consider matters pertaining to The Guildhall and to receive update reports on previous actions/decisions regarding that building:

i) Repairs to the Guildhall roof (front & side) elevations following recent wet weather conditions.

The Town Clerk gave a brief update, explaining that weather conditions had prevented progress, but Initial inspections indicated that a large section of the roof gulley and timber had become rotten, with repair costs estimated at over £10k.

Continued overleaf

It was discussed whether the scaffold tower or a cherry picker was safest for a closer inspection, and if the Clerk was confident enough to assess whether any roofing quotes were proportionate.

JW proposed that the Committee delegate authority to the Clerk to obtain a cherry picker, seek contractor quotes, and bring the report back to the Operations Committee/Full Council for a decision on spend. Seconded by LP. There were 10 votes in favour and 1 abstention. The proposal was carried.

Actions: Clerk, please bring a report back to the earliest available meeting once the repair costs are known.

v) External building repairs & redecoration to Guildhall frontage and side elevations (and signage)

It was felt that this item should be discussed prior to, and considered alongside, OC26/021/ii and OC26/021/iii, as they are intrinsically linked.

The Clerk outlined the extensive work required. The Chair commented that the works were necessary to protect the building in the long term, especially given that it had not been adequately maintained in the past. However, it was difficult to proceed without a clear understanding of the costs.

ii) Associated consequential repairs to Jubilee Room ceiling and woodwork.

OC26/021/ii and OC26/021/iii were discussed together.

iii) Associated consequential repairs / reinstatement of internal decoration.

The Town Clerk explained that the repair of woodwork on the ceiling and redecoration of the Jubilee Room cannot proceed until the repair to the roof to prevent water ingress is complete. However, it was feasible that this could be before the additional external works to the front of the building had concluded.

The Chair proposed that the Committee direct the Clerk to obtain quotes for the redecoration work and internal and external repair work, and to return with a report that includes a proposed delivery plan. Seconded by JP. Resolved unanimously.

Actions: Clerk, please get quotes and bring them back for consideration at the earliest opportunity.

iv) Replacement of 2nd WC in the dressing room with water-efficient modern WC sanitaryware.

The Clerk outlined the problems with the existing facilities and reported that the other dressing room WC facilities had been replaced with a close-coupled cistern last year, following damage caused by a hirer. The cost to replace the second WC would be approximately £400 plus minor redecoration to be undertaken by the GMOs. This was confirmed to be within the spending threshold that the Chairs could authorise under delegated authority.

Actions: Clerk, please proceed with arranging the WC refit for the second dressing room.

vi) Main Hall / Jubilee Room floor condition and sanding options.

The Clerk explained that sanding and refinishing of the floors used to happen every other year but hadn't been done since 2018. He highlighted that the work was more urgent for the Main Hall floor, but that the Jubilee Room floor could be budgeted for in the financial year 2027/2028 if the Council wanted to spread the cost. Indicative costs were provided in a quote from the previous contractor.

Discussions covered whether there were cost savings associated with having both done at the same time, and if heavy-wear hires could have a wear and tear charge added to their hire fee to plan for the future, and that this was another example of consequential and unavoidable costs associated with running a space of this nature.

JW proposed that the Committee direct the Clerk to seek competitive quotes for sanding the Main Hall floor, that the floor in the Jubilee Room be budgeted for FY27/28, but that delegated authority be given to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Operations Committee, to proceed with appointing the contractor offering best value. Also, that a sinking fund should be set up so that future years can be budgeted for as a routine maintenance cost. Seconded by JP. Resolved unanimously.

Actions: Clerk, please proceed with seeking quotes and make the necessary arrangements in consultation with the Guildhall Manager regarding existing bookings, and make the necessary budgeting arrangements for future years.

Continued overleaf

vii) Blinds / screens and window furniture in the Main Hall and the Jubilee Room.

The Clerk outlined:

- The condition of the existing blinds in both the Jubilee Room and the Hall.
- The necessity to be able to black-out the room in some circumstances whilst allowing plenty of daylight in others.
- The limitations of the temporary measures already implemented in the Hall.
- Both spaces were less appealing to hirers due to the current daylight access/blinds condition.
- The likely project costs involved.

The Clerk suggested that a single blind could be purchased for £250, fitted by the GMOs and tested before the Council commit to the entire spend. He was asked whether, if the trial were successful, the remaining blinds would be purchased and fitted, to which the Clerk explained that a cost comparison exercise would be undertaken, and a report returned for consideration.

JW proposed that the Committee direct the Clerk to run the trial by purchasing a blind for £250 and to report back on its success, including costings for the full project.

Seconded by DW. Resolved unanimously.

Actions: Clerk, please proceed with the blinds trial and if successful, liaise with the Deputy Clerk and Guildhall manager about a suitable time for their installation by the GMOs.

viii) Emergency lighting / external perimeter lighting.

This item was moved to Part Two.

OC26/022

To consider matters pertaining to Town Amenity and services, and to receive updated reports on previous actions/decisions regarding amenities in the town and parish:

i) Town Centre CCTV upgrades / enhancements (update report).

The Clerk reported that the planning application was live and due to conclude for comments on 26th March. Providing the Listed Buildings officer has no objection, the application should be approved shortly after. However, the Clerk also reported that the grant from the OPCC had not yet been paid. The update was noted.

OC26/023

To consider matters pertaining to allotments and to receive updated reports on previous actions and decisions regarding town allotments:

i) To consider variations to the extant Allotment Regulations; eligibility criteria for tenancy.

The Deputy Clerk outlined the reasons for the potential change, including contextual information on vacancies, the length and composition of the allotment waiting list, and the number of applicants and existing tenants that could be affected.

Councillors noted that there had been sufficient sustained demand from within Axminster for some years and that residents subsidise the provision of allotments through their Council Tax. Councillors recognised that other parishes have a duty to consider allotment provision for their residents within their own parish areas. They felt it was no longer appropriate or fair for Axminster Town Council to continue offering allotments to people who do not contribute to Axminster's precept, and that this was consistent with other councils' approach as well.

JF proposed that the Town Council remove the eligibility criterion from its allotment rules that allows non-residents who work in Axminster to apply for an Allotment. Also, the Council should honour the long-term tenancy agreements for the 3 tenants already registered as living outside of the Axminster parish area as of 23rd March 2026, with any new address changes dealt with in accordance with the extant allotment rules. Seconded by JW. There were 10 votes in favour of the proposal and 1 abstention. The proposal was carried.

Continued overleaf

Actions: Deputy Clerk, please make the necessary changes to the Allotment Rules and publish them on the website. Please liaise with the Administration and Services Officer to make a note of this decision on the stipulated tenants' files.

ii) To consider minor works to the access track at Woodbury Park allotments (lower) to provide enhanced tenant amenity.

The Town Clerk explained the access challenges associated with Woodbury Park Allotment track, which will require substantial long-term works, and the limitations of the GMO team to undertake those works, which would therefore require external support to deliver. However, an offer of help from an allotment tenant has been made, which, if acceptable, would provide an interim solution, with the only cost being the supply of the necessary plant, which could be hired.

The Clerk highlighted that if the individual offering support was willing to assist with some work on a particularly hard-to-let plot, we could make the best use of any hired plant at the same time, with spoil used to assist with either the allotment plot improvement works or the ongoing creation of the orchard bank.

JW proposed that the Town Council graciously accept the offer of help and direct the Clerk and Deputy Clerk to make the necessary arrangements.

Seconded by MD. Resolved unanimously.

Actions: Clerk, please work with the Deputy Clerk to contact the volunteer, thank them and accept the offer, and make the necessary arrangements to facilitate the track and plot works.

iii) To note the installation of additional fencing at North Street allotment to accommodate localised emergency storage on Town Council land asset.

The Clerk outlined the plan to create a fenced compound with a concrete pad for the siting of an emergency store at North Street Allotments. He explained that the cost of the fencing was minimal and highlighted that the cost of the store itself had already been approved.

Actions: Clerk and Deputy Clerk, please proceed with the installation of the fencing, concrete pad and emergency store at North Street allotments.

OC26/024

To consider matters pertaining to the Town Cemetery (Chard Rd) and to receive update reports on previous actions/decisions regarding the cemetery:

i) To receive an update relating to the Cemetery Chapel condition and security works.

The Town Clerk reported that the security works on the chapel were due to conclude this week, which would enable the new equipment to be collected, stored securely and put into active use, enabling the GMO team to start making inroads into the backlog of grounds work they have accrued over the preceding five months.

The Chair thanked the Clerk and the Deputy Clerk for their efforts in resolving this matter.

ii) To consider maintenance and repair works to the Cemetery wall.

The Town Clerk reported that he had had initial discussions with a stonemason, who confirmed that the work to remove part of the wall to widen the turn and prevent damage to graves from vehicle tyres was possible and would cost approximately £1,600 (work and additional materials). There would be a small additional cost for strategically placing attractive stone on the problematic corner to provide further protection.

The Clerk explained that achieving further quotes was proving challenging but would make every effort to do so. He sought authority to proceed at this price or at a lower price if a qualified stonemason provides a quote lower than this.

Continued Overleaf

JA expressed concerns about deviating from the procurement requirements to obtain 3 quotes. Others highlighted that it was a relatively small sum and acknowledged the issues the Clerk faced in obtaining numerous local quotes. There was general discussion of the existing value that can be agreed upon under the Chair's delegated authority and that this matter should be brought back to FULL Council for debate in the near future.

JA proposed that the Clerk return the matter to the Committee once additional quotes are found, rather than book the work. LN seconded the proposal. There were 2 votes for, 4 votes against, and 5 abstentions. The proposal was not carried.

EP suggested a contractor she had worked with before. The Clerk agreed to explore this avenue.

JW proposed that the Committee directs the Clerk to proceed with the appointment of a stonemason to undertake the wall works up to a value of £1,600, subject to the Clerk's best endeavours to obtain 2 additional quotes in line with the Council's financial procedures, with suspension of the appropriate financial regulation and authority to proceed with the current quote if this is not to be possible. Seconded by EP. Resolved.

Actions: Clerk, please seek further quotes and, with the Chair of Operations Committee's agreement, appoint a suitably qualified contractor who can provide the work within budget.

iii) To consider (temporary) repairs to the main driveway through the cemetery for users' amenity.

The Clerk briefly outlined the deteriorating state of the road through the cemetery, explaining that a substantial resurfacing exercise would be necessary in the long term. However, he suggested that the Grounds Team could undertake some patch repairs with the provision of cold-lay tarmac, aggregate and bonding spray, which would allow proper mitigation of trip hazards and help slow the deterioration of the road surface in the interim. The Clerk advised that the total cost would be approximately £1,500 and highlighted that finding a supplier could be challenging due to international supply chain issues arising from conflict in the Middle East.

JW proposed that the Committee direct the Clerk to purchase the road repair materials within a £1,500 budget. Seconded by EP. Resolved unanimously.

Actions: Clerk, please seek a supply for cold-lay tarmac within the stipulated budget. Deputy Clerk, please make arrangements for the cemetery track patch repairs to commence once the materials arrive.

OC26/025

To consider matters pertaining to the Community Orchard and Wildflower Meadow (Chard Rd):

i) To consider matters pertaining to projects at this Town Council amenity site.

The Deputy Clerk gave an update on

- Work that had already been undertaken this year, despite poor weather and a lack of equipment.
- Projects in progress and on the horizon
- What advice had been sought and from whom?
- There was a clear appetite among volunteers to undertake biodiversity improvement work.
- That most Orchard and Meadow projects do, however, rely on other projects for materials to keep costs low, so a strategic delivery was therefore necessary.

The Deputy Clerk highlighted that the volunteer group had requested a second bench and that a suitable MMT bench was currently located in the Old Courthouse Garden and could be relocated to the Orchard if the Committee were minded to agree.

JW commended Bernie Steadman for her ongoing coordination of the volunteer group and the efforts of all those involved with the Orchard and Meadow development.

Continued Overleaf

JW proposed that the Council direct the Deputy Clerk to relocate the highlighted bench to the Orchard from the Old Courthouse Garden at an appropriate time. Seconded by LP. Resolved unanimously.

Actions: Deputy Clerk, please make the necessary arrangements to move the bench at the appropriate time.

ii) To consider matters pertaining to Axminster Climate Action Group (ACAG).

JW highlighted that ACAG now consisted of only 2 members, but that in any case, there was very little the group could do to affect or influence change at this level. This was noted.

iii) To consider the Town Councils' approach to establishing a Biodiversity protocol / policy.

The Deputy Clerk commented that the template policy and resources circulated to councillors were very reassuring, as they highlighted several possible actions that a council could undertake that were already underway through the Council's ongoing land management and the community orchard initiative.

However, whilst noting the Council could adopt a policy based on the template highlighted by NALC, she highlighted that the subject was a module of the CiLCA qualification. She went on to suggest that the Council wait until staff had completed this training, after which they would be better equipped to offer advice on implementing such a policy and, potentially, to provide an Axminster-specific initial draft.

Councillors agreed this was a sensible approach.

Actions: Clerk and Deputy Clerk, please bring this item back once the biodiversity module of the CiLCA training has concluded.

OC26/026

To consider any matters pertaining Axminster Town Council Emergency Planning protocol/policy, and the ongoing activity and involvement of the Axminster Emergency Plan Working Group.

LN provided an update on the research undertaken so far by some members of the working group, which primarily consisted of a risk assessment and fact-finding exercise. JW thanked them for the work undertaken so far and looked forward to the further development of the protocol.

OC26/027

To consider any matters pertaining to parish footpaths, bridleways and other related P3 issues and to receive update reports from the Clerk on that subject.

The Clerk thanked the Parish Footpath Warden, who is enjoying his retirement and suggested that now is the time to seek a new warden. He highlighted the impact of LGR on the Public Rights of Way team at Devon County Council (DCC), noting that the practical works had suffered as a result, which in turn affected the Town Council. He reported that 150 parishes are subscribed to the P3 scheme, out of a possible 415 in Devon. DCC subsequently undertake all works for those not within the scheme. It is not yet known what the P3 scheme will look like under the future Unitary authority.

MD commented that he was able to reply to an enquiry from a member of the public regarding the bridge at Footpath 69 within seconds, thanks to the Deputy Clerk's prompt response. JW suggested that the Council should advertise for new wardens, with these positions to be numerous rather than just a single volunteer.

JF suggested that a written thank-you should be sent to the footpath warden for his long service. LN offered to assist, and it was noted that TW had also offered to help previously.

A number of community-led walking groups were also highlighted as potential helpers due to a shared desire to keep PROW accessible.

The Deputy Clerk explained that tentative conversations had already begun and that training and a reporting framework would need to be implemented so that reports are triaged through a central point, allowing someone to subsequently undertake remedial actions.

Actions: Clerk and Deputy Clerk, please note the suggestions and comments made and progress accordingly with advertising for volunteers, training, creating a reporting framework, and writing to the Footpath Warden with thanks

Continued Overleaf

OC26/028

To consider any matters pertaining to Jubilee Field amenity, and to receive update reports from the Clerk on that subject:

The Clerk provided an update on Jubilee Field and asked whether the Committee were happy to grant him delegated authority to use any remaining funds from the dowry associated with the acquisition of Jubilee Field for remedial works to the existing path and the completion of the circular walking loop around the field. Councillors commented on how frequently they heard requests for this amenity by members of the public.

JP proposed that the Council agree to the principle of using the remaining dowry funds, if necessary, to complete the path loop and any remedial works to the existing path and that they direct the Clerk to seek the necessary quotations from suitable contractors. Seconded by JF. Resolved unanimously.

Actions: Clerk and Deputy Clerk, please seek quotes and a suitable contractor to undertake these path works.

OC26/029

Chair's Announcements / Matters of Urgency for discussion only to be noted:

There were no further matters to be discussed other than those highlighted by the Clerk as necessary for discussion in Part Two.

OC26/030

Date of next scheduled meeting for the Committee: 1st June 2026, 7pm, at Axminster Guildhall.

For future committee meetings, see the 2026/27 meeting calendar available online.

OC26/031

JP proposed that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act namely, the financial affairs or business affairs or employment affairs of the Town Council by virtue of the fact that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Seconded by Chair. Resolved unanimously.

Matters to be considered in committee session (Part Two)

The items of business listed below and any others from this agenda are to be agreed upon by members of the Committee if and when appropriate (see OC26/020).

OC26/021 viii (IC) – Carried over from earlier Part One discussions above.

To consider emergency lighting and external lighting.

This matter is deemed confidential due to commercial sensitivity.

The Clerk provided an update and explained the requirements for the external lighting system to remain compliant and operationally sound, but recognised sensitivities regarding the impact of external lighting on neighbours.

JF highlighted how costly this can be, but that it is necessary to protect people, and so finding a suitably competent and qualified contractor trumps all. JP stated that these works should be made a priority. DW suggested that low-level lighting could help mitigate the impact on neighbours, and that the implications of the new Martyn's Law should also be considered.

Actions: Clerk, please seek advice and quotes from suitably qualified contractors, and return with a proposal and assurance from our Health and Safety consultant that the solution meets all safety and legal requirements.

Continued Overleaf

OC26/029 (IC) Matters of urgency.

i) Regarding a request to use the Jubilee Room by a Community Group for an event.

This matter was deemed confidential for commercial sensitivity reasons.

The Clerk explained that there had been a request made by a local community organisation for a town-based event.

Discussions included: what the room would be used for, what arrangements the organisation had had in place previously, costs and staffing implications, whether to charge a fee or offer the space for free and how to remain fair and consistent with other charities and community groups.

JP highlighted that, in this instance, as the Guildhall had an event in the Main Hall that evening, additional staffing requirements would be limited to the requested daytime hours. MD suggested he seek clarification on timings and exactly what the facility would be used for during the requested timeframe.

*JW proposed suspension of the Standing Orders to enable the meeting to continue after 9pm.
Seconded by JF. Resolved unanimously*

JP proposed that the space be offered free of charge as a sponsorship for 2026 only, with the hirer made aware that bookings for future years would be subject to a booking fee (to be determined later) to remain fair and consistent with charges applied to other community groups. Seconded by LN. Resolved unanimously.

Actions: Clerk, please communicate approval for the provision of the space to the organisation requesting it, and work with the Guildhall Manager to ensure the space is booked and that any staffing requirements are met.

ii) Regarding a boundary issue at Woodbury Park Allotment

This matter is deemed confidential as disclosure could impact the Council's legal position.

The Clerk highlighted that following a routine inspection of Woodbury Park Allotment, the Deputy Clerk had highlighted several boundary concerns, but most notably, a neighbour at Brunenburg Way who appeared to have installed a drainage pipe through the boundary bank into the Allotments. The Clerk also highlighted that attempts to plant hedging along the same section of boundary bank were unsuccessful, as a person unknown had snapped all of the whips planted by the team. However, he explained that the culprit could not be definitively and conclusively identified.

MD confirmed that installing the drainage pipe was illegal and that case law supported this. Councillors agreed that what had happened was unacceptable.

Actions: Clerk, please investigate and begin a dialogue with the resident explaining the Council's position.

OC26/032 (IC)

To consider matters pertaining to The Old Courthouse Complex (sale/disposal) and legal matters associated with that subject.

This matter is deemed confidential as disclosure could compromise the security of council assets.

The Clerk highlighted two matters of significance. The first concerned an FOI request, and he explained that the information for it was currently being compiled.

Continued Overleaf

The second matter concerned a tenant's request to have both gates unbolted and opened. He confirmed that, when this was discussed, the previously held position was to decline the request due to concerns about the security of the entire complex. After discussion, Councillors felt that given the complex was soon to be sold, they were not minded to alter their position at this stage, suggesting that the tenant contact the new owner once the sale had been completed. **JW proposed that the Council decline the request. Seconded by JF. Resolved unanimously. Actions: Clerk, please communicate the Council's decision to the tenant.**

OC26/033 (IC)

To receive and update on Town Council resourcing issues, in the wider context of future Local Government Reorganisation and service demands from residents and visitors.

This matter is deemed confidential as it relates to employment matters.

The Clerk asked that this item be deferred to the Employment Committee. Agreed.

OC26/034 (IC)

To receive and update on matters pertaining to Cemetery Chapel works and Cemetery Assets.

This matter is deemed confidential as disclosure would compromise the security of council assets.

The Clerk explained that there was nothing further to add than had been covered in agenda item OC26/024 (i).

OC26/035 (IC)

To consider a commercially sensitive matter pertaining to the Jubilee Field boundary.

This matter is deemed confidential for commercial sensitivity and legal reasons.

The Clerk outlined the issues regarding a portion of the boundary wall and the trees that needed attention, and what had already been done to address the neighbours' concerns. He sought consent to undertake land registry searches to ascertain, beyond doubt, ownership and responsibility for the boundary wall.

Actions: Clerk, please proceed with the Land Registry searches.

OC26/036 (IC)

To consider the Council's IT & telephony Infrastructure.

This matter is deemed confidential for commercial sensitivity and data security reasons.

The Clerk outlined the telephony and IT requirements for Council and Guildhall operations, including software, cloud migration, and data security. He detailed the various quotes found, including the one from the existing supplier and a sector-specific alternative. He recommended a solution that not only met all requirements at a significantly lower cost but would also reduce ongoing IT support and software licensing costs moving forward.

Councillors discussed the proposal and the need to ensure access to its data and queried whether the website would be affected. The Clerk explained that the website was provided separately through another supplier and would be unaffected, as would other cloud-based systems already in use by the Council.

JP thanked the Clerk for taking on the feedback from the last time the matter was discussed and suggested that, as such, the Council should support his recommendations.

JW proposed that the Council appoint the supplier recommended by the Clerk and direct him to progress with the cloud migration, telephony upgrades and ongoing IT support provided by them. Seconded by DW. Approved unanimously.

Actions: Clerk, please contact the supplier and make the necessary arrangements for the IT service transfer.

Continued Overleaf

OC26/037 (IC)

To consider a matter relating to Millwey Rise Play area.

This matter is deemed confidential for legal and commercial confidentiality reasons.

The Clerk outlined the progress of the Millwey Rise Play extension, the lease agreement, and the requirement to obtain a licence to undertake boundary works from EDDC. Following a recent site meeting, another possible project had been discussed which would require further negotiation between EDDC and ATC.

There was some additional discussion around the interpretation of the present arrangements, CCTV coverage, liability, the possibility of a negotiated dowry etc. There was general agreement that it made sense for both areas of the play area to be ultimately managed by the same authority to prevent public confusion.

JW proposed that the Council direct the Clerk to commence negotiations with EDDC regarding the second matter. Seconded by JP. Resolved unanimously.

Actions: Clerk, please note and action accordingly, and bring a report back to Council as soon as possible.

With no further business to attend to, the Chair closed the meeting at 21.45 hrs.

Signed Date: 1st June 2026.

**Minutes of the meeting of the Operations Committee held on Monday,
23rd March 2026 at 7.00 p.m. at Axminster Guildhall.**

Draft Minutes: Part One version