

# Axminster Town Council

Office Hours  
Monday, Wednesday, Thursday  
10am – 12 noon

Mayor: Cllr Jill Farrow  
Town Clerk: Paul Hayward

[www.axminstertowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.axminstertowncouncil.gov.uk)



THE GUILDHALL  
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## Minutes of the meeting of the Operations Committee held on Tuesday, 1st March 2022 at 7.00 p.m. at Axminster Guildhall

### Minutes approved 12<sup>th</sup> April 2022 – Part ONE Minutes (redacted)

Meeting began at 7pm.

Chair, Cllr. Walden, welcomed all in attendance and outlined fire precautions, exits etc.

#### Public Forum:

Representation received from the Chair of the Guildhall Management Committee (Agenda items 22/062 incl.)

Representation received from member of the public regarding bonfires on allotment sites.

*Chair suggested that this matter be discussed at the next OPSCOMM meeting in April.*

Representation from member of the public regarding the ongoing "Banners" project in conjunction with Axminster Totally Locally group (agenda item 22/065e)

Representation from members of the public regarding cemetery matters (agenda item 22/067).

**Chair closed public forum session closed at 7.15pm.**

#### OC22/056

##### To note those members of the committee present:

Present: Cllr. Walden (JW) (Chair), Cllr. Spurway (MS) (Vice-Chair), Cllrs. Brooker A (AB), Farrow (JF), Holt (SH) and Sedgewick (AS). **(Meeting was declared quorate)**

Also, the Locum Town Clerk (LTC) (Paul Hayward) and 4 members of the Public.

No members of the press.

#### OC22/057

##### To note and, if thought fit, to approve apologies (and reasons) for absence:

Apologies received from committee member, Cllr. Mynard (ongoing health matter).

**Approval of apology (and reason) proposed by SH, seconded AB. Resolved unanimously.**

#### OC22/058

##### To note members who were neither present nor had previously given their apologies, and to receive any other apologies of absence:

None.

#### OC22/059

##### 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:

JF, AS & MS all declared a personal interest in agenda item OC22/062 as Councillor members of the Guildhall Management Committee. JF declared a further personal interest as her partner is the Chair of the Guildhall Management Committee.

At the FULL Council meeting held 14/02/2022, Cllr. Farrow was afforded a dispensation\* to discuss and vote upon matters pertaining to parish allotments. This dispensation applies until May 2023 (unless rescinded prior to that date) and was afforded in respect of Cllr. Farrow's disclosable pecuniary interests as set out in the Register of Members Interests. \* *Localism Act 2011 (s.33)*.

*Continued Overleaf.*

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## OC22/060

**To consider and, if thought fit, to approve the minutes of the Operations Committee meeting held 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022 and to consider any matters arising from those minutes:**

*JF asked for a correction to be made to minute 22/039 to amend the time of Cllr. Sedgewick's arrival at that meeting. Agreed. Noted*

*Approval of duly amended minutes proposed by SH, seconded by AB. Resolved unanimously.*

*Minutes reviewed and noted. No matters arising raised.*

*Chair to sign amended minutes at the first available opportunity.*

## OC22/061

**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 (Admissions to meetings) Act 1960:**

None proposed other than those already listed as being discussed in Part TWO session on the published agenda.

*Chair proposed that Standing Orders be suspended temporarily to permit further public representation. Seconded SH. Resolved.*

*Chair further proposed that agenda running order be amended to enable consideration of OC22/065e). Agreed.*

## OC22/065

**To consider matters pertaining Town Centre development and regeneration:**

**e) Liaison with Axminster Chamber of Commerce/Totally Locally re: Banner display project.**

Member of the Banners Project Group spoke in support of the project and outlined the progress so far. After further discussion, *Chair proposed that the Council support the project by way of a £2500 contribution \*. Seconded by AS. Resolved unanimously.*

As this amount is beyond the expenditure limit of this committee, the matter would be referred to FULL Council on 14/3/2022 as a recommendation for approval.

*\* Local Government Act 1972, s. 144 "Spending to promote tourism and economy"*

Cllr. Sarah Jackson (SJ) (EDDC, Ward Member Axminster) offered to assist the Town Council with the Council's banner design incorporating the crest and heraldic arms. Chair thanked SJ for her offer of help which would be gratefully accepted.

*Chair further proposed that agenda running order be amended to enable consideration of OC22/067. Agreed.*

## OC 22/067

**To consider matters pertaining to the Town Cemetery:**

i) To consider representations from a local funeral director seeking clarity on the current policy of permitting ashes interments prior to the interment of remains in a pre-purchased full burial plot. *As Standing Orders were still suspended, Chair invited a representative of a local funeral directors to contribute to the debate.*

*After discussion, Chair proposed that Cemetery regulation 37 be disregarded for the time being (ie. relating to the prohibition of interment of remains in a plot AFTER ashes had previously been interred) to allow a burial of remains to take place. The suspension of this regulation to remain in force until such time as the extant Cemetery Regulations could be reviewed by OPSCOMM. Seconded by AS. Resolved unanimously. LTC: Please convey this resolution to local funeral directors.*

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Chair proposed that agenda running order be reverted to that as published. Agreed.

## **OC22/062**

**To consider matters pertaining to the Axminster Guildhall building and curtilage:**

i) It was proposed by Chair that no further provision be made at the side of the building to accommodate staff smoking activity. Resolved unanimously.

ii) It was proposed by Chair that the consideration of the CCTV system and the associated quotes for its improvement and enhancement be deferred into Part Two in light of the commercially sensitive nature of the business to be discussed. Agreed (**see below 075 (IC)**)

iii) LTC was directed to take measurements of the existing planters to the front elevation of the Guildhall (roadside) and to then obtain quotes for the replacement of the planters in both timber and MMT (man-made timber/recycled plastic) taking on board the majority view of members that the "dog leg" returns into the car park should be removed as a safety measure and to create extra parking space. Noted

It was further suggested that the cycle parking amenity is to be moved to the RHS of the car park (by the sandbag store) and that the sandbag store should be painted/marked and braced to avoid damage from vehicular impact. Possible addition of reflective plates and signage were suggested. Finally, there was a suggestion that the existing numbers on the parking bays be removed and an additional disabled parking space provided as a building amenity. Chair suggested that this matter be brought back to OPSCOMM in April for further and more detailed consideration.

LTC: Please note above re: actions and proceed accordingly.

iv) It was agreed by unanimous decision that the project to provide sliding doors in the lobby should be put on hold for the time being as other projects were more urgent. Noted

v) Members considered proposals for audio and electrical improvements to both improve the building amenity and rental opportunities but also to assist towards H&S and Fire Safety compliance. JF suggested that this was more a strategic matter (given the potential costs and related consequences of the works to the building and the overall finances of both GHMC and ATC) and thus should be referred to S&FCOMM. for consideration (it was also noted that GHMC had applied for a grant for similar works and the outcome of that grant was at yet unknown). deferment seconded by AS. Agreed.

vi) It was proposed by AS, seconded by SH, that committee approve the creation of a painted greeting inside the Guildhall outer lobby to welcome visitors into the Guildhall; there was to be no cost to the Council as works would be undertaken by supporters of the GHMC. Resolved unanimously. LTC: Please advise Guildhall Manager accordingly.

vii) Members considered whether Council wishes to create "boxed in" wooden covers for the four heating units in the main hall which were not painted during the recent redecoration works (for the benefit of aesthetics). It was proposed by Chair, seconded by JW, that the existing units should instead be cleaned, and subsequently decorated by Council employees to match the adjoining décor. Supplies of paint were already held so no costs other than cleaning materials and sundry decorating tools/equipment. Resolved unanimously.

LTC was directed to liaise with GH Manager and Handyperson to take this forward as quickly as possible.

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## **OC22/062**

**To consider matters pertaining to the Axminster Guildhall building and curtilage (continued):**

viii) It was proposed by Chair, seconded by MS, that Council dispose of the upright piano in the Churchill Room as it was surplus to requirements and in need of re-tuning which was not deemed financially viable due to its under-use. Resolved unanimously.

LTC was given delegated authority (in conjunction with GH Manager) to arrange its safe and secure disposal by whatever means necessary. Noted

ix) It was proposed by Chair, seconded by AS, that the two matching "Roll Boards" (Axminster Urban and Rural District Councils) in the Churchill Room be re-located within the room to allow for the subsequent re-location of the Mayoral photographs. Resolved unanimously.

LTC was given delegated authority (in conjunction with GH Manager and Handyperson) to arrange for the works to be carried out as expeditiously as possible. Noted

x) It was proposed by Chair, seconded by AS, that the third "Roll Board" (Axminster Parish Council) be removed (as it was incomplete) and placed into secure, safe storage until further notice. Resolved unanimously.

LTC was given delegated authority (in conjunction with GH Manager and Handyperson) to arrange for the works to be carried out as expeditiously as possible. Noted

xi) It was proposed by Chair, seconded by AS, that the Heritage Clock (1926) be removed from display (as non-functional and at risk from theft and damage) and offered in the first instance to Axminster Heritage Centre for public display (on loan); alternatively, that it be placed into secure, safe storage until further notice. Resolved unanimously.

LTC was given delegated authority to make arrangements for the works to be carried out as expeditiously as possible. Noted

xii) It was proposed by AS, seconded by Chair, that the committee supported "in principle" the renaming of the Churchill Room to the Jubilee Room (with the subsequent removal and storage of the two pictures of Sir Winston Churchill, but that, given the history and significance of the room name, the committee wished the matter to be considered at the Annual Parish Meeting on 4/4/22 (to seek public views) and then at FULL Council on 11/4/22 to obtain the ratification of the entire Council body. Resolved unanimously.

LTC: Please note and add to both agendas accordingly.

xiii) Members considered the matter of the "Axminster" Engine Plate and Crest which had been removed from the Guildhall balcony during the recent redecoration and had yet to be re-instated. It was unanimously agreed that Council should not sell (or dispose of) these heritage items (which were listed as Council assets) but that, for the time being, they should not be instated in their previous locations. Chair felt that the vast majority of Guildhall visitors who sat (or stood) facing the stage would be wholly unaware of the existence or provenance of the items.

It was subsequently proposed by Chair, seconded by SH (who declared a personal interest in view of his association with the Heritage Centre) that the items should be offered "on loan" to the Heritage Centre (HC) to form part of a display of the history of the items (and their association with the town) whereupon they would be more accessible to residents and visitors alike. Resolved unanimously. LTC: Please liaise with the Trustees of the HC accordingly.

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Chair proposed that Standing Orders be resumed. Agreed

## OC22/063

**To consider matters pertaining to the Old Courthouse (OCH) complex:**

i) It was proposed by Chair that the consideration of the quotes for the garden improvement works be deferred into Part Two in light of the commercially sensitive nature of the business to be discussed. Agreed (see below).

ii) Further to the prior resolution of the committee – OC22/038 – 1<sup>st</sup> February 22, and a subsequent recommendation from the LTC by way of his afforded delegated authority to act in this regard, it was proposed by Chair, seconded by AB, that the resolution (for two new garden benches previously resolved upon for purchase) be amended to re-use a wooden bench currently in storage and that the second bench be supplied from the “Welcome Back Fund” street furniture already provided, thus saving the £800 expense previously agreed upon. Resolved unanimously.

iii) Following a request from a member of the public, members considered bringing forward the Spring/Summer opening hours for the public garden space. It was unanimously agreed to leave the opening hours as they were until the 31<sup>st</sup> March. Noted.

LTC: Please convey this decision to the correspondent.

## OC22/064

**To consider matters pertaining to Section 106 projects ongoing:**

Chair proposed that item i) from the agenda be considered in Part TWO session due to the confidential legal and financial matters involved. Resolved unanimously.

## OC22/065

**To consider matters pertaining Town Centre development and regeneration:**

Chair apologised for the delay in getting the signage/branding project briefing report before members to consider and proposed that agenda items a) to c) inclusive be deferred to the next meeting of the OPSCOMM in April. Noted. Chair suggested that any new signage should incorporate reference to Axminster’s twin town, Douvres-la-Delivrande, and that new “gateway” signage might be designed to incorporate floral planters or similar. Noted.

d) Chair proposed that agenda item d) be deferred into Part Two in light of the commercially sensitive nature of the business to be discussed. Agreed (see below).

e) This matter had been considered at an earlier part of the meeting (see above).

## OC22/066

**To consider matters pertaining to the Jubilee Field open space amenity:**

i) Members received an update on the transfer of land from EDDC to the Town Council. Noted.

ii) Members agreed upon the proposed location for the EDDC Jubilee Oak tree planting (some 5m east of the SE corner of the play area fencing); this is to be organised by EDDC Streetscene personnel during the first 2 weeks of March. It was agreed that a wider discussion on further planting was necessary by OPSCOMM. or Council; furthermore, that the Committee had no objection to receiving donations of trees from the public but that the Council would specify which trees were to be planted rather than simply accepting any donations. This was to ensure consistency and regularity of planting. Proposed Chair, seconded JF. Resolved unanimously.

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## **OC22/067**

### **To consider matters pertaining to the Town Cemetery:**

*This matter had been discussed earlier in the meeting (see minutes above).*

## **OC22/068**

### **To consider matters pertaining to the Town Allotments:**

i) Members received an update on line-marking improvements at Woodbury Park site from the LTC who confirmed that he had met with the DCC Highways Officer on site and that they did not agree that any additional line markings were required; in fact, such markings were likely to lead to displacement of parked vehicles elsewhere and potentially worsen the problem of speeding vehicles along this section of road. No further action proposed or warranted. Noted.

ii) Members received an update on the provision of Eco-WC's at the three allotment sites as per earlier resolution to purchase and install such amenity. The general consensus amongst allotment users was that such an amenity would be welcomed but there were concerns and reservations about the practical aspects of emptying and cleaning the units and the maintenance and disposal of the waste material (which ordinarily would be composted over a 3 year cycle). With this in mind, no further action was proposed ie. the "principle" of the amenity had been approved but, at this time, there was no urgency to provide it until further notice or until requested. Noted.

## **OC22/069**

### **To consider matters pertaining to Health and Safety / H&S Sub-Committee:**

i) Members considered the Health and Safety Audit Report and received an update from LTC (including a review of assessment reports received to date). Noted.

ii) Members considered proposals (in consultation with the Strategy & Finance Committee) to enter into a fixed consultancy agreement with a H&S Consultancy Contractor to formalise H&S compliance measures. It was noted that a linked resolution had already been passed by S&FCOMM. on the 28<sup>th</sup> February in this respect and members noted that outcome. It was also noted that work on the H&S policies, procedures and protocols would be undertaken by the H&S SubComm. in conjunction with the LTC.

iii) Members considered draft Terms of Reference for the H&S sub.comm.  
Chair confirmed membership as: Chair, Vice-Chair, 3<sup>rd</sup> Councillor member, office staff representative, outdoor staff representative and Proper Officer.  
JF asked that the following clause be added: "That the Chair of the H&S Sub.Comm. can invite any person whose attendance would be conducive to the business of that meeting"  
**It was proposed by Chair, seconded by AS, that these amendments were acceptable and that they be integrated into the Terms Of Reference document. Furthermore, that these Terms Of Reference be hereby adopted for use by the H&S Subcomm. Resolved unanimously. Noted.**  
LTC: Please note and publish accordingly.

*Continued Overleaf.*

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## **OC22/070**

### **To consider update from Locum Clerk re: Welcome Back Funding capital expenditure:**

LTC reported that items were still awaited from suppliers and that a further report would be forthcoming as soon as possible. Members had already started to consider using some of the furniture at key locations across the town and LTC had been in dialogue with EDDC Streetscene teams regarding replacing older waste bins with the new dual-purpose versions. Noted.

## **OC22/071**

### **To consider proposals for new/improved/replacement amenities in the parish:**

#### **i) To consider options for re-purposing of the concrete plinth formerly used as base for bus stop.**

A suggestion had been put forward to re-use the redundant plinth as a base for a secure storage "unit" or "shed" to store grit salt, sandbags, signs, tools, bad weather materials etc as a parish amenity for the northern part of the town in case of flooding, snow etc. members were in broad agreement as to the principle and asked LTC to seek consent of the landowner and to return to OPSCOMM with quotes for such a storage unit thereafter. **Proposed by Chair, seconded by SH. Resolved unanimously.** LTC: Please note and action accordingly.

#### **ii) To consider recent correspondence received on subject of CCTV GDPR/Data capture compliance and governance protocol/policy.**

Chair noted that this matter had been discussed by S&FCOMM. on 28/2 and suggested that no further discussion was necessary given the outcome of that meeting. Noted.

#### **iii) Members received a further update report from LTC on matters relating to improved defibrillator coverage across the town. It was proposed by Chair, seconded by MS, that the committee supported the roll-out (and provision) of additional defibrillation equipment throughout the town (subject to agreement on site locations etc). and that LTC should bring a briefing paper back to FULL Council with costings and hosting agreement principles. Resolved unanimously.**

LTC: Please note and action accordingly.

#### **iv) To consider suggestion for provision of eco-habitat "bug boxes" across Council's green space and recreation areas.**

**It was proposed by JF, seconded by Chair, that a single unit should be installed at the Jubilee Field site, both as an educational tool for younger citizens, and as a general parish environmental amenity. Resolved unanimously.**

SH kindly offered to draw up a design specification which could be passed to a local community group for pricing and construction. LTC advised that sufficient funds existed within the Solar PV Sustainable Reserve for such a project (covering materials and hardware ostensibly).

#### **v) To consider request from resident for enhanced street lighting on FP71 between Fosseway Close and Lyme Close (adjacent to electrical sub-station) as a parish amenity.**

After debate, it was unanimously agreed that Council did not wish to provide such an amenity on land over which it had no jurisdiction or ownership and that users of the footpath (71) should encouraged to equip themselves with a torch if they wished to use the pathway during the hours of darkness. Noted.

*Continued overleaf.*

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## **OC22/071**

**To consider proposals for new/improved/replacement amenities in the parish (continued):**

**vi) To consider suggestion that festive Lighting on Minster Green be “regularised” in terms of colour and style with provision of improved electrical supply to enable concurrent “switch on” in conjunction with local community groups.**

**It was proposed “in principle” by JF, seconded by AS, that the lights on the tree nearest the Conservative Club be regularised as suggested above, subject to costs for these works being brought back to Committee for further consideration as quickly as possible. Resolved unan.**

LTC: Please note and action accordingly.

## **OC22/072**

**To consider proposals for Council assets and/or plant & equipment:**

i) Members received an update on the proposal to purchase a generator for outdoor use. Advice received had indicated that this would not be ideal and that Council should, instead, consider investing in a range of cordless, high-power, HD, tools for outdoor staff to use.

LTC also mentioned that All Saints Parish Council (ASPC) might have a generator that is not used which could be borrowed for some field tests to see if there were advantages to owning something similar.

Chair suggested that:

a) LTC liaise with Handyperson to detail a list of equipment that was needed and then approach one or other of the local firms in Axminster that could supply such equipment to see if a deal could be brokered to promote that brand whilst keeping our asset spend as local as possible and minimising costs to the taxpayer!

b) LTC approach ASPC to enquire as to whether ATC might borrow the generator for some field testing.

Agreed by committee members as a sensible course of action. LTC: Please action accordingly.

ii) Chair proposed that this agenda item be considered in Part TWO as it related to an employment matter that was deemed confidential. Agreed (see below).

## **OC22/073**

**Chair’s Announcements / Matters of Urgency to be noted:**

No Chair’s announcements.

LTC had been asked to obtain a quotation relating to the Council’s works vehicle.

Chair proposed that discussion on that subject be deferred into Part TWO session due to the commercially sensitive nature of the business to be considered. Agreed (see below).

LTC also reported that an EDDC dog bin at the cemetery had gone missing and that he was in dialogue with EDDC Streetscene to seek its urgent replacement as a much-used public amenity.

**Noted.**

## **OC22/074:**

Vice-Chair of Committee (MS) 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. Seconded by SH. Resolved.

**Part ONE recording was terminated.**

**Meeting moved into Part TWO committee session with members of the public and press excluded. Chair invited Cllr. Sarah Jackson to remain to speak on OC22/064.**



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**Part TWO session of the Operations Committee meeting held 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022.  
This session of the meeting was also audio-recorded.**

**OC 22/064 (IC) - also shown as OC22/077 on agenda**

**To consider matters pertaining to the S106 Skatepark project at Cloakham Lawns:**

*This matter having been proposed for consideration as a Part TWO agenda item.*

Cllr. Jackson (EDDC) spoke to bring members up to date with project progression re; land transfer to EDDC from CLSC and the creation of a sub-lease to the Axminster Skatepark Charity.

**Chair thanked SJ for her contribution and proposed that ATC work with all partners and stakeholders to bring both Phase 1 and Phase 2 to completion as quickly as possible.**

**Seconded by JF.**

LTC: Please note and add this matter to FULL Council in Part B as a standing agenda item hereafter. JF suggested that she and the Chair co-operate (in the absence of former Cllr. Tucker) to assist wherever possible.

**OC 22/062ii) (IC) – also shown as OC22/075 on agenda**

**To consider quotes received for improved CCTV coverage/image capture at Guildhall:**

*This matter having been proposed for consideration as a Part TWO agenda item.*

**Chair proposed that this matter be deferred to the next OPSCOMM meeting to allow LTC to obtain further comparative quotes for the improved specification. Agreed unanimously.**

LTC: Please note and action accordingly.

**OC 22/063 (IC)**

**To consider quotes received for garden maintenance/improvements works**

*This matter having been proposed for consideration as a Part TWO agenda item.*

**i) It was proposed by JF, seconded by Chair, that Contractor AB be commissioned to undertake the proposed garden tidying/pruning/maintenance works for the sum of £668, subject to clarification by the LTC of their Public Liability cover and their relevant certifications for these works. Resolved unanimously.**

LTC: Please note and make the necessary arrangements.

**OC 22/065d) (IC)**

**To consider matters pertaining to proposed Axminster Town mapping project:**

*This matter having been proposed for consideration as a Part TWO agenda item.*

SH presented a report on the proposed project spend to update and improve the existing mapping image and publications as a benefit to the town's economic regeneration.

**It was proposed by AS, seconded by Chair, that Council approve expenditure \* of up to £800 towards the costs of a re-drawing of the existing map and the creation of A1 copies (with image publication rights to be acquired by the Council with the agreement of the author).**

**Resolved unanimously.** LTC/SH: Please work with artist/author to proceed in this respect.

**\* Local Government Act 1972, s. 144 "Spending to promote tourism and economy"**

**OC 22/072ii) (IC)**

**To consider matters pertaining to improvements to works vehicle on safety grounds:**

*This matter having been proposed for consideration as a Part TWO agenda item.*

After discussion, **it was proposed by Chair that the additional safety features identified were not required and that no further action was necessary, after due consideration of the risks and potential costs. Agreed and noted.**

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## OC 22/073 (IC)

### Chair's Announcements / Matters of Urgency to be noted:

*This matter having been proposed for consideration as a Part TWO agenda item.*

After discussion, it was proposed by Chair that the Council should retain the use of the works vehicle and not seek the termination of the lease agreement. Seconded by SH. Resolved unan.

## OC 22/076 (IC)

To consider a request for the planting of a memorial tree within Z section at the Town cemetery; Council to consider whether to permit a variation to Council's extant Cemetery Policy.

After discussion, it was proposed by Chair that the extant Cemetery Regulations were clear on this matter (Regn. 28) and that Council would not permit a tree to be planted alongside a grave plot as this might lead to ground/plot disturbance and damage. Seconded JF. Resolved unan.

LTC was directed to convey this decision to applicant and to suggest an alternative planting location in the cemetery away from grave plots; Council was in full agreement that donations of trees were to be encouraged and welcomed subject to committee's agreement on the location, proposed size and species. Noted

**With no further business to attend to, the Chair closed the meeting at 21.50hrs.**

Signed ..... Date 12<sup>th</sup> April 2022