

## AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY, 3rd AUGUST 2021 AT 7.00 P.M. AT AXMINSTER GUILDHALL

1. PRESENT: Cllr. Walden (Chairman) (for part of the meeting), Cllr. M.D.G. Spurway (Vice-chairman), Cllr. Farrow, Cllr. A.G. Sedgewick, Cllr. S. Sleigh, the Town Clerk and the Administrative Assistant.

1 Member of the public, 0 representative of the press.

IN THE TEMPORARY ABSENCE OF CLLR. WALDEN, CLLR. SPURWAY TOOK THE CHAIR.

2. APOLOGIES: Cllrs. M. Mynard.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

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

COUNCILLORS FARROW, SEDGEWICK AND WALDEN EACH DECLARED PERSONAL INTERESTS AS BEING MEMBERS OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP

CLLR. FARROW DECLARED PERSONAL INTERESTS AS BEING A MEMBER OF AXMINSTER TWINNING ASSOCIATION AND A GOVERNOR OF AXMINSTER COMMUNITY PRIMARY ACADEMY, A MEMBER OF THE LABOUR PARTY, THE NATIONAL TRUST AND THE CO-OP, A FRIEND OF FERNE ANIMAL SANCTUARY, A VOLUNTEER COLLECTOR FOR DEVON AIR AMBULANCE TRUST AND AS A JOINT TENANT OF A TOWN COUNCIL ALLOTMENT AT WOODBURY PARK ALLOTMENTS.

CLLR. SEDGEWICK DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS BEING LIAISON COUNCILLOR ON AXE VALLEY LOCAL ACTION GROUP

CLLR. SLEIGH DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS BEING REGISTERED WITH SOCIAL WORK ENGLAND.

CLLR. SPURWAY DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS A MANAGEMENT MEMBER OF CLOAKHAM LAWN SPORTS CLUB, A MEMBER OF CO-OP FOOD GROUP, AND OF THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS. HE ALSO DECLARED A PECUNIARY INTEREST AS BEING THE OWNER OF A PROPERTY ADJOINING JUBILEE FIELD BUT REMAINED IN THE CHAMBER AS THE FIELD IS NOT YET ADMINISTERED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL.

CLLR. WALDEN DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS BEING VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE GOVERNORS OF AXE VALLEY ACADEMY, AS A MEMBER OF AXMINSTER SKATEPARK STEERING GROUP, AXMINSTER TWINNING ASSOCIATION, LIAISON COUNCILLOR WITH AXMINSTER JOB CLUB, A MEMBER OF THE LABOUR PARTY, COMMUNITY UNION, NATIONAL TRUST AND AS BEING SAFEGUARDING LEAD FOR AXMINSTER YOUTH CLUB.

4. PUBLIC FORUM: A representative of the community group which had requested use of an allotment, presented his case for this need and the value it would have for those young people involved.

Cllr. Spurway, seconded by Cllr. Farrow, proposed that Agenda item 16c be brought forward for consideration at this point. Agreed.

5. ALLOTMENT MATTERS – REQUEST FOR COMMUNITY USE OF ALLOTMENT: Cllr. Farrow explained that the reason the Council had taken the decision was that tending an allotment needed a greater time commitment than had been set out in the proposal. Councillors

put forward various other options which could be considered, including work in some of the public spaces in town, such as weeding of the beds on Minster Green.

Cllr. Spurway, seconded by Cllr. Farrow, proposed that Axminster Town Council should stand by its decision to refuse use of an allotment to Community Waffle but would support other ways of helping this organisation implement its objectives of engaging people with the beneficial effects of gardening. Agreed.

CLLR. WALDEN ARRIVED AT THIS POINT AND ASSUMED THE CHAIR.

6. MATTERS AND ACTIONS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON 6<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2021:

- a. Purchase of equipment – the D-handled strimmer and the pump had been purchased. The salt storage option was out of stock. The Town Clerk said that the Handyman had mentioned that there were other items he needed. Permission was granted to purchase a 30-foot extension reel. There was discussion regarding need for a compressor and possibly a generator. The latter two items were not approved and further information regarding need and costs were requested.
- b. Bench for former Cllr. Spiller - the Town Clerk is liaising with the Highways Officer.
- c. Railway Station Garden – Cllr. Walden proposed that this might be a project for the Lowara community support day.
- d. Tesco Chain Link Fencing – a response is awaited from the Tesco maintenance division.
- e. Stanchions – the painting of the remaining stanchions had been approved and would take place shortly. A quote had been approved for the remedial work on the defective stanchion.
- f. Health and Safety Audit – a quote had been accepted and arrangements will be made for this to take place.

7. UPDATE ON SECTION 106 PROJECTS:

- a. Fun Trail – there was nothing to report on this.
- b. Skatepark – the Town Clerk was instructed to send a letter to the relevant officers at the District Council, copied to the District Councillors, asking for an update on progress with this matter.
- c. Raymonds Hill Play Area – the landowners are getting a lease prepared and the Planning Consultant and the equipment provider are liaising in the preparation of the planning application.

8. UPDATE ON VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGNAGE: The Town Clerk said that she was awaiting agreement from the Neighbourhood Highway Officer regarding the placement of the pole so that it can be approved by the owners.

9. UPDATE ON TOWN SIGNAGE: Cllrs. Walden had a letter from the Dementia Matron explaining that the black on yellow was the preferred specification for those suffering from Dementia. He would be asking County to remove the redundant sign for the information bureau. The Town Clerk said that there was a possibility that some of the Welcome Back funding could be directed to this project. Cllr. Walden is in the process of drawing up a list of the locations for the required signs.

10. JUBILEE FIELD:

- a. Update on position –details of Heads of Terms had been received. Cllr. Walden expressed concerns regarding the reference to the “residue” of funding. The Town Council’s understanding was that the field would be handed over with a dowry of £10,000. The other matter of concern was the clause prohibiting erection of any structure on the site. This would appear to debar the installation of a shed in which to store the tractor for cutting the grass, should the Council so wish. Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Spurway, proposed that the Town Clerk should send a letter to the District Council officer setting out these concerns.
- b. Maintenance – safety inspection training for the outdoor staff had been arranged for 20<sup>th</sup> August. A price is awaited from the District Council for them to cut the grass if necessary.

11. PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY:

- a. Update on FP 69 – the Town Clerk had had a site meeting with the Hon. Footpath Warden to identify the works needed on two steeper gateway areas which were in urgent need of attention on safety grounds. He will approach various contractors to get quotes for suitable remedial works.

12. JUBILEE FOUNTAIN: The work had been completed. Streetlighting had reiterated its position that it was not responsible for the lighting on the Fountain. Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Sleigh, proposed that the electricity supply remain disconnected. Agreed. The contractor had said that the painting of the lighting unit was too complicated. Cllr. Farrow asked that the cost of this element be deducted from their invoice. Cllr. Farrow will respond to the member of the public who was critical of the work which had been done because of the damage to the lichens. The Handyman will be asked to paint the bollards.

13. DISTRICT COUNCIL “WELCOME BACK” FUND: There was prolonged discussion regarding the options for this funding stream. The Town Clerk said that the preference was for it to be directed to types of items shown in the illustrations, though not necessarily in those materials, other Town Councils having expressed the view that recycled plastic was their preferred material for benches and tables. Cllr. Walden said that the funding might be used to put in two more benches in the Old Courthouse Garden. Cllr. Sleigh felt that there was no room for further benches there, but others felt that there would be once the vegetation was cut back. It was agreed that a request be made for funding for two benches for the Old Courthouse Garden and two for the Jubilee Field.

Discussion moved on to consideration of tripartite refuse bins to encourage greater recycling. It was felt that the best options for these to be located would be by South Street Car Park and by the Puffin Crossing outside River Cottage. Clarification will be sought as to whether, if a change is made, the responsibility for emptying these bins would continue to be met by the District Council.

14. STREET FURNITURE:

- a. Benches – the Handyman had advised that he would be able to repair the bench outside the former Methodist Church using timber salvaged from another bench.
- b. Asset Transfer Opportunity – Cllr. Walden said that he would not favour a suggestion that the Town Council take on responsibility for those benches in the parish which are currently maintained by the District Council. No time scale had been finalised for discussion of asset transfer opportunities.

15. WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS: the Town Clerk will draft a policy for working with volunteers. Referring to the recent work in repainting the wall of South Street Car Park, Cllr. Walden suggested that this be pressure washed annually. The Town Clerk suggested that it be repainted every two years. She will liaise with the local Streetscene Officer regarding the surplus paint from this year's repainting.

16. RECONFIGURATION OF OFFICE RECEPTION AREA: Cllr. Walden said this had been referred to the Operations Committee. The Administrative Assistant said that the present arrangement worked well apart from in winter because of the lack of thermal efficiency of the foyer doors. Discussion moved to re-examining the installation of automatic doors, which had foundered when considered previously because the scheme had covered only supply and not fit. The Town Clerk said that Councillors needed to decide whether the preference was for sliding or opening doors. Cllr. Farrow said that a specification should be drawn up so that contractors were being asked to quote on the same basis. She said she and Cllr. Sedgewick would prepare a specification for consideration by the Strategy and Finance Committee.

17. CEMETERY MATTERS:

- a. New Cemetery Groundskeeper – the Town Clerk said that the new member of staff would be starting work on either 6<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> August, depending on various factors and gave details of training which had been arranged.

18. MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE ALLOTMENTS:

- a. Visibility Splay at Lower Gate at Woodbury Lane – Cllr. Walden said that there was nothing further to report at the moment. The Handyman and Lengthsman will cut it back at the start of next week.
- b. Tree Matters – none.
- c. Land at End of North Street – this will be an item for negotiation with the District Council when it is ready to discuss asset transfer.

19. MATTERS PERTAINING TO BUILDING REPAIRS:

- a. Guildhall – the Town Clerk raised concerns regarding the condition of the wall between the Guildhall and Minster Court. There is an area where the wallpaper is peeling away in the Refreshment Room. Cllr. Sedgewick mentioned that the damp in the front office was still an outstanding matter. There are pieces of mortar falling off the building. The Town Clerk said that many of these items would be highlighted in the report from the surveyor after his visit on 17<sup>th</sup> August and she expected that this report would highlight what works were needed urgently.
- b. Old Courthouse - the Town Clerk was awaiting confirmation of a date for Councillors and the Tenant to meet the project managers and contractors regarding remedial works for the damp and fire damage.
- c. Cemetery Chapels – the Town Clerk will chase up the specification for works to the chapel stonework. The Handyman had reported that the certification for the workshop wiring was due for inspection and that the Toilet in the Caretaker's Chapel needs attention and that he would do that over the winter.

20. HEALTH AND SAFETY: No matters had been raised by any members of staff since the last meeting.

21. HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE: Referring to clause Cllr. Farrow questioned that it was the responsibility of the committee to carry out Risk Assessments. Cllr. Sedgewick said that it was part of the Town Clerk's job description and that she was directly responsible to the full Town Council. Cllr. Walden felt that the committee was responsible for raising issues of risk. The Town Clerk was asked to reword it and circulate to members. No other issues were raised.

22. MEMBERSHIP OF HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE: a meeting of the Committee will be arranged for 10<sup>th</sup> August.

23. MATTERS OF URGENCY: None.

THERE WERE NO MATTERS TO BE DEALT WITH IN COMMITTEE.

Signed ..... Date .....

ACTION
Arrange Cemetery Site Visit
Purchase extension reel. Get more information, inc. costs re compressor and generator.
V.A.S. - agree pole location with NHO and site owners.
Jubilee Field - send letter to E.D.D.C. re Heads of Terms.
FP69 Quotes to be obtained for remedial works on muddy slopes/steps.
Jubilee Fountain - bollards to be painted/invoice to be reduced as metalwork not painted/response to member of public.
Welcome back fund - request 4 benches and enquire about recycling bins
Volunteers - draft policy and liaise with Streetscene re paint.
Office Reception Area - set out requirements for contractors to quote.