

# 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  
WEST STREET  
AXMINSTER  
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EX13 5NX

Tel. 01297 32088

Email: [Clerk@axminstertowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:Clerk@axminstertowncouncil.gov.uk)

## Axminster Town Council:

### Minutes of the meeting of the Strategy & Finance Committee

**MINUTES APPROVED 28<sup>th</sup> July 2025; Part ONE Minutes (redacted)**

**Held in person on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2025. Meeting started at 7.00 p.m.**

Present: Cllrs. Farrow (JF) (Chair), Bridge (PB), Dowdeswell (MD), Leat (SL), Osborn (RO), Price (JP), Walden (JW) and Willey (DW).

*(Meeting was declared as quorate with 8 members present).*

Also present:

Town Clerk, Paul Hayward (PH)

No members of the public in attendance.

*Chair welcomed all in attendance and ran through meeting procedure and protocol.*

*Chair highlighted the building fire precautions and alerted those present to the fire exits.*

### Public Forum session.

No public representations.

No members of the committee wished to speak in public forum at this point of the meeting.

As such, Chair closed the Public Forum session at 7.02pm

### SF25/038

**To elect a Chair of the committee for the Council Year to April 2026.**

*JW proposed JF as Chair. Seconded by DW. JF accepted the nomination. JF called for further nominations. No other persons nominated. Proposal carried nem con (7 votes for, 1 abstention).*

### SF25/039i)

**To note members of committee present:**

Attendance at meeting shown above.

*Continued overleaf.*

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## SF25/039ii)

**To note and, if thought fit, to approve apologies for absence and reasons therefore:**

Apologies received from:

Cllr. Dunsbury. Reason for absence noted and accepted.

Cllr. Hurren. Reason for absence noted and accepted.

Cllr. Paice. Reason for absence noted and accepted.

Cllr. Warwick. Reason for absence noted and accepted.

**Chair proposed that these absences and reasons be approved. Seconded JW. Resolved.**

## SF25/039iii)

**To note members of committee not otherwise present and to receive any other apologies for absence:**

Cllrs. Burrough and Keen. Absence noted.

Chair asked the Clerk again to contact both members to remind them of their need to send apologies for absence if unable to attend a meeting to which they had been summoned.

## SF25/040

**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:**

*A declaration at this point does not preclude the need for members to declare any additional interests that may arise during this meeting.*

No declarations of interest put forward by members.

## SF25/041

**To consider and, if thought fit, to approve the minutes of the Strategy & Finance Committee meeting held 28<sup>th</sup> April 2025 and to consider any matters arising from those minutes.**

**Approval of minutes proposed by Chair, seconded by JW, subject to the correction of one minor typographic error. Resolved unanimously.**

### **Matters arising:**

*Clerk confirmed that installation of the CAP24 plaque at the Guildhall was in progress and that suitable publicity via press and social media would also be arranged.*

*In addition, publicity around the new community orchard to be arranged as new assets provided and site amenities improved.*

*Continued overleaf.*

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## SF25/042

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: None raised by committee members other than to note that item already listed on this agenda (SF25/051(IC)).

## Strategy & Finance Business to be considered:

### SF25/043

To note that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for FY25-26 will contain a new assertion (A10) and that the Town Council will be required to conform to the 8 new actions as laid out in the JPAG guidance document for 2025; RFO provided a report on compliance resource and timescales.

Report noted. Clerk was asked to collate all relevant statutory legislation and compliance guidance from DALC, NALC and the SLCC and bring this back to the committee as soon as possible for further consideration. In addition, an agenda item for the FULL Council meeting to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2025 was suggested as a separate discussion topic. Noted.

### SF25/044

Committee to receive most recent Bank Reconciliation, Balance Sheet and Summary (Budget) Monitor report (financial information) as per recommendation of FULL Council. Reports for April 2025 (*May 2025 not yet available*) were noted.

### SF25/045

To consider whether the Council should re-engage ST Accountancy for a further period (to be determined) to provide internal audit services (interim and EOY) as per the Town Council's financial regulations.

JW proposed that ST Accountancy be re-appointed for a further 2-year period (ie. to provide internal audit services to the Town Council for FY25-26 and FY26-27). Seconded by DW.

Resolved unanimously. Clerk: Please notify the internal auditor accordingly and re-issue the IA appointment letter.

*Continued overleaf.*

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## SF25/046

**To consider the format, scope and duration of the proposed Guildhall Business Plan.**

RFO was asked by members to prepare a financial report (incorporating financial data from the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023) in conjunction with the Guildhall Manager to outline the costs and income for the Guildhall, broken down into categories as follows:

Performance / Acts

Bar transactions

Staff costs

Administration costs

Community Venue costs and income

Town Council costs and income

Capital expenditure

This information to be provided to the Town Council at their meeting scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> July to assist members in the preparation and formulation of the emerging Guildhall Business Plan 2025 to 2028.

## SF25/047

**To consider matters pertaining to the Town Council's Civic Regalia; Clerk provided report.**

After a lengthy debate, it was proposed from the Chair that no action be taken at this time ie. that the existing Mayor's robes and hat be retained without replacement. Resolved unanimously.

## SF25/048

**To consider any matters considered as urgent by presiding Chair for discussion/notation only.**

None raised by Chair / Clerk.

## SF25/049

**To note the date of the next scheduled meeting of this committee;**

28<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

## SF25/050

JP 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. DW seconded the proposal. Resolved.

*Continued overleaf.*

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Part ONE recording was stopped at this point and the meeting moved into Part TWO (Confidential) session whereupon recording was resumed.

## Committee business to be considered in Part Two:

### SF25/051 (IC)

To consider update report on matters pertaining to The Old Courthouse.

Members considered the confidential reports from professional advisors.

After debate, it was proposed by JW, seconded by MD, that this committee should make a formal recommendation to the FULL Council meeting to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> as to their decision this evening. Resolved unanimously.

Clerk was asked to undertake further associated administrative tasks in the meantime.

Noted.

With no further business to attend to, the Chair closed the meeting at 8.30pm.

Chair thanked all committee members for their time and attendance.

Signed ..... Date: 28<sup>th</sup> July 2025

Minutes of the meeting of the Strategy & Finance Committee.

Held in person on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2025. Meeting started at 7.00 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED 28th July 2025; Part ONE Minutes (redacted)

