

Axminster Town Council

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

Mayor: Cllr Jill Farrow
Town Clerk: Paul Hayward

www.axminstertowncouncil.gov.uk



THE GUILDHALL
WEST STREET
AXMINSTER
DEVON
EX13 5NX

Tel. 01297 32088

Email: Clerk@axminstertowncouncil.gov.uk

Axminster Town Council:

Minutes of the meeting of the Strategy & Finance Committee

DRAFT MINUTES – YET TO BE APPROVED; Part ONE Minutes (redacted)

Held in person on Monday 29th September 2025. Meeting started at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Farrow (JF) (Chair), Price (JP) (VC), Bridge (PB), Hayward (AH), Leat (SL), Osborn (RO), Paice (EP) and Walden (JW).

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

Also present:

Town Clerk, Paul Hayward (PH)

Deputy Town Clerk, Sarah Jackson (SJ)

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 7.05pm

SF25/068

To note members of committee present:

Attendance at meeting shown above.

SF25/069

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

Apologies received from:

Cllr. Dowdeswell. Reason for absence noted and accepted.

Cllr. Dunsbury. Reason for absence noted and accepted.

Cllr. Warwick. Reason for absence noted and accepted.

Cllr. Willey. Reason for absence noted and accepted.

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

Continued overleaf.

Axminster Town Council

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

Mayor: Cllr Jill Farrow
Town Clerk: Paul Hayward

www.axminstertowncouncil.gov.uk



THE GUILDHALL
WEST STREET
AXMINSTER
DEVON
EX13 5NX

Tel. 01297 32088

Email: Clerk@axminstertowncouncil.gov.uk

SF25/070

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

Cllrs. Hurren. Absence noted.

SF25/071

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.

SF25/072

To consider and, if thought fit, to approve the minutes of the Strategy & Finance Committee meeting held 28th July 2025 and to consider any matters arising from those minutes.

Approval of minutes proposed by Chair, seconded by Vice-Chair. Resolved unanimously.

Matters arising:

None raised.

SF25/073

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 (SF25/081 to 82(IC) inclusive).*

Strategy & Finance Business to be considered:

SF25/074

Committee to receive most recent (Q1) Bank Reconciliation, Balance Sheet and Summary (Budget) Monitor report (financial information) as per recommendation of FULL Council.

Noted.

Continued overleaf.

Axminster Town Council

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

Mayor: Cllr Jill Farrow
Town Clerk: Paul Hayward

www.axminstertowncouncil.gov.uk



THE GUILDHALL
WEST STREET
AXMINSTER
DEVON
EX13 5NX

Tel. 01297 32088

Email: Clerk@axminstertowncouncil.gov.uk

SF25/075

To receive and consider the Internal Auditor's Interim Audit Report, and to determine what actions to take in respect of recommendations and observations therein.

Chair noted recommendation regarding Guildhall Booking protocol revision. Chair proposed adoption of the recommendation. Seconded Vice-Chair. Resolved unanimously.

RFO: Please note and action accordingly.

SF25/076

To consider any updates/developments with regards to Local Government Reorganisation and/or MCHLG Devolution programme that may impact upon the Town Councils FY26-27 financial stability, fiscal planning and the subsequent budget and precept considerations.

Brief report received from Clerk/RFO. Noted.

SF25/077

Consequently, to consider creation of draft budget / expenditure (and precept calculation) plan for FY26-27, and to instruct RFO accordingly to prepare a budget plan/proposal that accords with those deliberations and decisions.

After a lengthy discussion between members of committee of the possible implications of LGR on the Town Council's budget and financial position for FY26-27 and beyond, and the ongoing deliberations at District and County Council level with regards to stewardship, asset and service transfer (and abrogation), Chair proposed that the RFO be directed to begin creation of a balanced fiscal budget (and precept) for FY26-27 based on known financial factors, and taking into account any inflationary increases that were known or had been previously identified. Seconded by SL. Resolved 5 votes for, 3 against. Carried.

RFO/Clerk: Please note and action accordingly bringing a first draft back to S&F comm in October.

SF25/078

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

Chair raised a matter of urgency regarding the sale of the Old Courthouse Complex following a meeting with a member of the public. No actions required at this time.

SF25/079

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

27th October 2025 and other dates as per published agenda.

Continued overleaf.

Axminster Town Council

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

Mayor: Cllr Jill Farrow
Town Clerk: Paul Hayward

www.axminstertowncouncil.gov.uk



THE GUILDHALL
WEST STREET
AXMINSTER
DEVON
EX13 5NX

Tel. 01297 32088

Email: Clerk@axminstertowncouncil.gov.uk

SF25/080

Vice-Chair 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. The Chair seconded the proposal. Resolved.

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:

SF25/081 (IC)

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

As this agenda item relates to commercially sensitive business, this item will be considered as a Part Two confidential matter.

RFO provided an update on matters pertaining to The Old Courthouse. Noted.

SF25/082 (IC) To consider update report on matters pertaining to improved/upgraded play facilities/amenities at Millwey Rise and Cloakham Lawns.

As this agenda item relates to commercially sensitive business, this item will be considered as a Part Two confidential matter.

Report received from Clerk. Noted. No further action for the time being.

With no further business to attend to, the Chair closed the meeting at 7.50pm.

Chair thanked all committee members for their time and attendance.

Signed Date: 27th October 2025

Minutes of the meeting of the Strategy & Finance Committee.

Held in person on Monday 29th September 2025. Meeting started at 7.00 p.m.

DRAFT MINUTES – YET TO BE APPROVED; Part ONE Minutes (redacted)