

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 Employment Committee

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

Held in person on Thursday 26th June 2025 at 7.30pm.

Members present:

Cllrs. Farrow (Acting Chair) (JF), Leat (SL), Paice (EP), Price (JP) and Walden (JW).
(Meeting was quorate).

Also present:

Clerk to the Council, Paul Hayward.

No members of the public in attendance.

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

Public Forum session.

No public speakers present.

Chair closed the Public Forum session at 7.32pm

Part ONE business.

EC25/001

To elect a Chair of the Employment Committee.

It was proposed by SL, seconded by EP, that JP be elected as Chair. JP accepted the nomination. There were no further nominations for the position.

Resolved unanimously.

EC25/002

To elect a Vice-Chair of the Employment Committee.

It was felt by members that the election of a formal Vice-Chair was unnecessary with an acting Chair being chosen if and when the presiding Chair was unavailable. Noted.

EC25/003

To note members of the Employment Committee present at the meeting:

As above.

Continued overleaf.

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EC25/004

To receive and, if thought fit, to note the absence and to approve the reasons given for the absence: (LGA 1972 s.85(1))

Cllrs. Dowdeswell and Hurren had sent their apologies and reasons for absence. Noted.

It was proposed by the Chair, seconded by JW, that the apologies (and reasons therefore) be approved. Resolved unanimously.

EC25/005

To note members of the committee who are neither present nor have given their apologies for absence:

None.

EC25/006

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.

This does not preclude the need for members to declare any additional interests that may arise during the meeting.

No declarations of interest offered by members in relation to the business on the agenda for consideration.

EC25/007

To consider and, if thought fit, approve the minutes of the Employment Committee meeting held 25th November 2024.

And to consider matters arising from those minutes not otherwise listed on this agenda.

It was proposed by the Chair, seconded by SL, that the minutes of that meeting be approved. Resolved. Matters arising from these minutes:

JF proposed that a +1 SCP incremental rise be approved for the Clerk in relation to employment year FY24-25 (this not having been implemented in FY24-25) based on his most recent satisfactory Performance Management Review (Appraisal). Seconded by JW. Resolved unanimously. RFO: Please note and execute accordingly backdating the increment award to 1/4/2024.

EC25/008

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 (see below).

No other matters to be considered in Part Two session other than that already listed on the agenda and the matter detailed above under EC25/014 to 017 inclusive.

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EC25/009

To note that the Council continues to comply with the Pension Act 2004 (pension Regulation and Auto-Enrolment Legislation) and that the next statutory enrolment and declaration date is the 22nd July 2025.

Clerk (as head of paid service/HR) confirmed that Council was complying fully with the relevant legislation. Noted.

EC25/010

To consider whether the Council should re-subscribe to Medigold Health in respect of Occupational Health Services for Council employees for a further period (12/24/36m).

It was proposed by SL, seconded by JW, that the Town Council should re-subscribe to the Medigold Health service for a further 36 months to secure the benefits of economy of scale and a pro-rata reduced annual fee for this essential service. Resolved unanimously.

Clerk: Please liaise with Medigold Health accordingly.

EC25/011

To consider any matters considered as urgent by the presiding Chair for discussion.

No matters raised by Chair for discussion or reference.

EC25/012

To note the date of the next scheduled meeting of the committee.

The next scheduled meeting date of the committee was noted as 24th November 2025 although it was recognised that an additional meeting might be necessary in September to allow the committee to review the forthcoming Staff Appraisals and decide upon any actions, remuneration adjustments etc. Clerk: please circulate possible dates for a September 2025 committee meeting.

EC25/013

JF 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 JW. Resolved unan.

Continued overleaf.

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The Part One meeting recording was stopped and a separate recording commenced for Part Two.

Part TWO business.

Business to be considered in Part Two session; matters which are considered as confidential as they relate to Council employment.

Chair proposed that agenda item EC25/016(IC) be considered as the first item of business in Part Two. Noted and agreed.

EC25/016 (IC)

To receive an update report from Clerk relating to Guildhall employee matters and to resolve any actions thereafter;

This agenda item is considered confidential as it relates to Council's employment matters and/or employees.

i) Probationary Periods

ii) Performance Management / Appraisals

Clerk presented report to committee members.

- i) Clerk confirmed that all existing employees have successfully passed their probationary periods and had been confirmed as permanent staff members.
- ii) After a lengthy debate regarding a proposal that members of the Employment Committee sit in on staff appraisal meetings, and after hearing from members and from the Clerk as Head of Personnel to all staff members, it was confirmed that the Clerk would continue to conduct staff appraisals one-on-one with all employees, with the Clerk's own appraisal being conducted between the Clerk and the Presiding Chair of the Council (with contributions being sought from all members beforehand). Noted.

Furthermore, it was agreed to add a section to the footer of the template appraisal form which would allow each completed appraisal to be countersigned and acknowledged by either the Chair of Council, or the Chair of the Employment Committee. Noted.

Substantive proposal as above proposed by SL, seconded by JW. Resolved unanimously.

Continued overleaf.

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EC25/014 (IC)

To consider matters pertaining to Council employees and remuneration which require the attention and decision of the employment committee;

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Clerk confirmed that there were no outstanding remuneration matters to be considered other than noting that the NJC National Pay Agreement was still being negotiated and was likely to be approved and implemented in October/November 2025.

A suggestion was put forward that all GH "customer-facing" staff members should be provided with branded/personalised T-shirts / Polo shirts for use when on duty – with a name badge clearly indicating their role (this could also extend to GH volunteers) both to present a more professional and coordinated image to clients but also to act as a focal point in the event of a fire or evacuation scenario when the ability to spot GH staff and volunteers would prove useful and aid customer evacuation protocol.

Clerk also advised that the previous stock of monogrammed GMO uniforms has become worn and damaged and required replacement. This was authorised from within existing budget subject to Clerk's, and Chair of Employment Committee's, delegated authority.

Clerk: Please note and action accordingly in conjunction with GH Manager.

EC25/015 (IC)

To receive an update report from Clerk relating to ongoing employee recruitment and to resolve any actions thereafter;

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Clerk provided a report regarding recent recruitment for the vacant Guildhall Event & Guest Co-ordinator role (formerly Front of House Supervisor). Recommendation of panel:

Applicant ONE:

Increase existing weekly hours (with an initial 3m trial period) from 10 to 25 by way of a contract variation; the new role to be merged with their existing employment contract.

Applicant TWO:

A new contract of employment for the new role (shared with A1) at 10 hours per week.

Employee THREE:

A contract variation taking weekly hours (and commensurate pay) from 20 hours per week down to 15. SCP rates to be identical for all roles. All positions eligible for LGPS inclusion.

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The net effect in terms of hours is 0 (zero) but it was recognised that there would some cost implications to the Council, namely Employers NI contributions and extra training/induction costs. However, this was felt to be outweighed by the 50% increase in available shift patterns possible with 3 staff members as opposed to 2 previously. This recruitment decision was recommended to the committee unanimously by Clerk, LC and JP having been the panel that undertook the 4 interviews.

Recruitment as above proposed by SL, seconded by JW. Resolved unanimously.

Clerk: Please note and liaise with GH manager accordingly to amend contracts, create new contract and induct new employees into the Council.

EC25/017 (IC)

To consider practical methods to boost / improve member/employee engagement and interaction.

It was suggested that a staff/member training event (daytime) was arranged to allow councillors to meet employees and encourage an understanding of each other's roles and duties to foster a spirit of unity and mutuality within the Council. Clerk was asked to take this forward with Guildhall Manager, Deputy Clerk and the wider teams to determine some practical dates in September/October for such an event. Noted.

With no further items to discuss, the Chair closed the meeting at 9.00pm.

Signed Date:

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