

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 24th November 2025 at 7.00pm.

Members present:

Cllrs. Price (Chair) (JP), Farrow (JF) and Walden (JW).

(Meeting was quorate with three committee members present).

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 7.05pm

Part ONE business.

EC25/018

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

As above.

EC25/019

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, Hurren, Leat and Paice 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.

EC25/020

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

None.

Continued overleaf.

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EC25/021

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.

EC25/022

To consider and, if thought fit, approve the minutes of the Employment Committee meeting held 26th June 2025.

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

It was proposed by JW, seconded by Chair, that the minutes of that meeting be approved.

Resolved. Matters arising from these minutes:

- 1) Member/Staff team-building/training day event still pending.*
- 2) Provision of uniforms for staff members still pending.*
- 3) Appraisals still pending.*

All noted.

EC25/023

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 under EC25/029 to 034 inclusive.

EC25/024

To note that the LGPS Employer Contribution will be reduced from 21.9% to 18.1% effective from 1st April 2026 (a budgetary factor for the FY26-27 fiscal budget).

Noted. RFO confirmed that this reduction had been factored into the FY26-27 budget calculation for employee costs,

EC25/025

To note the present position with the NJC Local Government Settlement (Pay Negotiation) for FY26-27.

Noted.

Continued overleaf.

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EC25/026

To consider any matters considered as urgent by the presiding Chair for discussion.
No matters raised by Chair for discussion or reference.

EC25/027

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

The next scheduled meeting date of the committee was noted as 2nd February 2026 unless any extraordinary meetings were required before that time.

EC25/028

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.

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.

EC25/029 (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.

As there were no matters of business to be covered under this particular agenda item, the Chair proposed that the item be deferred. Agreed.

EC25/030 (IC)

To receive an update report from Clerk relating to ongoing employee resourcing and workload, and anticipated future resourcing and capacity and to resolve any actions thereafter;

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Continued overleaf.

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Clerk provided a report regarding current operational resourcing challenges and workload. Noted. Points raised during the subsequent discussion:

Comparisons with local/neighbouring Councils all undertaking the same administrative and statutory/legislative duties.

Challenges with accommodation and suitable office space to accommodate additional staff. Pressures of work from Guildhall operation (primarily evening times but also involves daytime cover).

****These minutes have been redacted as they relate to confidential employee matters****

Lone working.

Anticipated pressures from LGR and future devolution service abrogation.

Clerk offered to prepare a draft working paper for committee's consideration as to possible changes to the employment organisational chart (incorporating the GH) and to circulate this to all members as soon as possible for their review and commentary. Noted with thanks.

EC25/031 (IC)

To consider budgetary figures for inclusion in FY26-27 Axminster Town Council fiscal budget incorporating any amendments or adjustments in advance of variable workflow and service demand as a result of Local Government Reorganisation;

It was noted that Strategy & Finance Committee were meeting on 1st December to consider their initial recommendations for the FY26-27 budget. Chair suggested that EmployComm add a recommendation to that committee that they factor in the recruitment of an additional member of staff (role/duties/scope yet to be agreed upon) so that any future changes could be brought about without budget/fiscal challenges that might prevent implementation.

This was felt by members to be the most practical way forward.

Clerk/RFO: Please note and integrate into the budget draft for S&Fcomm to consider 1/12.

EC25/032 (IC)

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

i) Probationary periods

ii) Performance management / appraisals

Continued overleaf.

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Proposals made from Chair. Resolved unanimously.

Clerk: Please note and action accordingly.

These minutes have been redacted as they relate to confidential employee matters

EC25/033 (IC)

To consider practical methods to boost / improve member/employee engagement and interaction (this item is a follow-up to topics discussed in earlier meetings).

The Chair proposed that this matter be deferred to the next meeting of the FULL Town Council on 8/12 to ascertain when members might be available for this event, given that it was felt to be unreasonable for employees to come in to attend outside of their contracted or rota hours. Preferences expressed:

Tuesday daytime (2pm)

Clerk suggested that the event could integrate some training elements and thus the costs could be included within the Council's training budget using the established powers available for such events. Noted.

EC25/034 (IC)

To receive a summary update report on employee leave allocations and periods of leave remaining, including TOIL accrued, including a year-to-date sickness/absence report:

- a) Clerk / Proper Officer
- b) All other ATC employees

Reports were noted.

With no further items to discuss, the Chair closed the meeting at 8.45pm.

Signed Date: 2nd February 2026

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