

AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY, 6th JULY 2021 AT 7.00 P.M. AT AXMINSTER GUILDHALL

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

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

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, HOLT, SEDGEWICK, TUCKER, 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: None.

5. MATTERS AND ACTIONS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON 8TH JUNE: A site visit to the Cemetery will be arranged for a Monday morning. An engraver and vice had been purchased. The pump, strimmer and salt storage had still to be purchased.

6. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE – REVISION 3; Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Spurway, proposed that these be adopted. Agreed.

7. UPDATE ON SECTION 106 PROJECTS:

- a. Fun Trail – the District Council will be incorporating this into the upgrade of the Millwey Rise play area but not time scale for delivery was available.

- b. Skatepark – the outcome of negotiations between the District Council, the Skatepark Group and Cloakham Lawn Sports Club regarding site ownership was awaited.
- c. Raymonds Hill Play Area – the landowners had been asked to prepare a draft lease for the Town Council’s consideration and the Planning Consultant to prepare a planning application.

8. UPDATE ON VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGNAGE: The order had been placed. Negotiations were ongoing regarding the precise location of the sign within the curtilage of the property mid-way along Crewkerne Road as there were several individuals/organisations who had to agree to this, and confirmation was awaited from the Highways Officer as to whether this could operate in both directions. Cllr. Sleigh said that it would be more effective if the hedge on the adjacent property were to be cut back further.

9. UPDATE ON TOWN SIGNAGE: Cllrs. Walden and Sedgewick had attended a joint meeting with Axminster Heritage. It had been agreed that finger post signage within the town centre should be the priority.

CLLR. WALDEN, SECONDED BY CLLR. FARROW, PROPOSED THAT AGENDA ITEM 12 BE BROUGHT FORWARD FOR CONSIDERATION AT THIS POINT. AGREED.

10. DISTRICT COUNCIL “WELCOME BACK” FUND: Notification had been received from the District Council of funding available to welcome back the public to the re-opening of the local economy post-COVID 19. The letter indicated the nature of the items which would be covered by the funding. The funding did not have to be spent on items located only in the town centre. The Town Clerk said that the Jubilee Field might be a possible location or that it might be of interest to Action in Axminster for the proposed picnic tables. Cllr. Walden felt that the funding could be used for the Finger Post Signage project. The Town Clerk will liaise with the District Council officer. At the same time, she will ask for clarification regarding the requirement for display of sponsorship acknowledgement.

11. JUBILEE FIELD:

- a. Update on position – the Town Clerk was still awaiting a response regarding completion of the legal documentation required to effect the transfer of the field from the District Council to the Town Council.
- b. Maintenance – safety inspection training for the outdoor staff had been arranged for 20th August. A price will be sought from a contractor for the cutting of the field should the existing outdoor staff be unable to cover that due to staff shortages. Cllr. Spurway, who re-iterated his pecuniary interest as stated above, mentioned the trees at the bottom of his garden which were on Jubilee Field land. Cllr. Walden spoke of the proposal to plant trees within the field in due course. It was agreed that the Town Clerk seek the District Council’s permission to get a safety survey of the existing trees carried out prior to the transfer of the field so that the Town Council was aware of any works required. The advice of consultants regarding a planting lay-out will be sought. Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Walden, proposed that Cllr. Sleigh be responsible for the tree planting project. Agreed.

12. PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY:

- a. Update on FP 69 – a costed estimate was awaited from the District Council for works to be carried out on their land to eliminate the risks associated with an informal path and to put in place a safer alternative.
- b. FP 66 – Devon County Council had placed a temporary closure order on this footpath pending the re-instatement of a defective footbridge. The closure was for six months.

13. JUBILEE FOUNTAIN: All necessary permissions had been obtained and work would start on 12th July.

14. STREET FURNITURE:

- a. Benches – the Handyman had been working on the plaque for the bench in memory of George Pye. In the absence of the Lengthsman, the Town Clerk will do the forms for the bench in honour of former Cllr. Mrs. Spiller.
- b. Planters – the Handyman will make replacements for any defective wooden planters during the winter.

15. OLD COURTHOUSE WORKING GROUP: Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Walden, proposed that this item be referred to the Strategy and Finance Group. The information regarding the works required to resolve damp and fire damage matters at the Arts Café will be placed on the Town Council agenda.

16. RECONFIGURATION OF OFFICE RECEPTION AREA: The plans envisaged by Cllr. Holt were not yet available.

17. CEMETERY MATTERS:

- a. Provision of paths and Preparation of Next Interment Area – Cllr. Spurway said there was a need to widen the paths in the older part of the cemetery, where possible, to cope with modern, wider, vehicles. The issues of longer-term development of the Cemetery facilities was referred to the Strategy and Finance Committee.
- b. Maintenance and Operational Arrangements since retirement of Caretaker – it was agreed that the contractor be asked to continue to cut the Cemetery for the foreseeable future.
- c. Parking Provision - it was agreed that this should not affect further the position of the seat in honour of former Cllr. Mrs. Spiller.

18. MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE ALLOTMENTS:

- a. Removal of accumulated rubbish – The Administrative Assistant reported that most of this had been removed but the plot would need some intensive work to get back to a workable condition.

CLLR. WALDEN, SECONDED BY CLLR. SLEIGH, PROPOSED THAT AGENDA ITEM 18d BE BROUGHT FORWARD. AGREED.

- b. Request for Community Use of Allotment – The Administrative Assistant outline a request from a local organisation for use of an allotment for a two hourly period each week. Following discussion, it was Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Farrow, proposed that the request be refused on account of the intensive long-term work that proper upkeep of an allotment involves. Agreed. It was, further, agreed that it be recommended to the local organisation that work on the Railway Approach Garden Project be a more suitable project for it to support.

The Town Clerk said that a District Council Officer was looking for volunteers to work on one of the beds opposite the Guildhall the following Thursday and this will be passed on to the group.

Cllr. Sleigh asked whether any of the Town Council allotments were suitable for those with accessibility problems. Cllr. Walden said that this was not the case at present but there had been some raised beds near the gate at the North Street site.

- c. Tree Matters – none.

CLLR. SEDGEWICK ARRIVED AT THIS POINT.

- d. Land at end of North Street Allotments – Cllr. Walden reported that he was awaiting a decision by the District Council regarding disposal of its assets at which point an application to take on this land could be made.

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

20. HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE: The Town Clerk had not completed work on these.

21. MEMBERSHIP OF HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE: The Handyman will represent the outside staff and the Administrative Assistant would represent the office staff and Cllrs. Walden and Spurway will be the other members.

22. MATTERS OF URGENCY – SOUTH STREET CAR PARK: The Administrative Assistant reported that the District Council had confirmed that it would supply the paint for the works on the South Street Car Park wall. The Handyman will be asked to pressure wash it beforehand.

23. MATTERS OF URGENCY – TESCO FENCING ON WEST STREET FRONTAGE: The Administrative Assistant reported that she had been in contact with Tesco Head Office regarding the state of the JHS decorative railings. Cllr. Walden asked that she add to that the fact that urgent works on the chain-link fencing were also needed on safety grounds.

Cllr. Spurway 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. Cllr. Farrow seconded the proposal. Agreed

24. TO CONSIDER ANY QUOTATIONS RECEIVED: among which-

- a. Stanchions – Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Sleight, proposed that the quote of £2850 to complete the painting of the stanchions be accepted. The Administrative Assistant said that a local contractor had quoted a price of £1350 to replace the defective section on one of the stanchions. Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Spurway, proposed that this be accepted.
- b. Health and Safety Audit – Councillors considered the quotes received, all of which were based on providing long-term advice and support. Cllr. Walden asked that the contractors be asked to give a cost for coming in to do a basic Health and Safety Audit so that the Council could discuss the findings and then decide how to progress from there.
- c. Tractor Resale price – there had been no progress with this matter.
- d. Tractor Repair price - there had been no progress with this matter.

25. ALLOTMENT TENANCY MATTERS - in response to a question, the Administrative Assistant said that the waiting list stood at around 15 across all three sites.

Signed Date

ACTION	BY WHOM
Arrange Cemetery Site Visit	Town Clerk
Follow up Heads of Terms for Jubilee Field.	Town Clerk
Equipment Purchase	Office staff
Seek advice from groundwork contractor	Administrative Assistant
Tractor repair/resale price.	Administrative Assistant
VAS Mid-Crewkerne Road Permission. D.C.C. officer comment	Town Clerk
Signage details	Administrative Assistant
Arts Café works to go on Town Council agenda	Town Clerk
Request reception plan from Cllr. Holt.	Town Clerk
Complete licence application for SRS seat.	Town Clerk
Revert to contact re Community Allotment.	Administrative Assistant
Complete sub-committee terms of reference	Town Clerk
Contact Tesco re chainlink fence on West Street.	Administrative Assistant
Seek quote for simple one off health and safety audit.	Town Clerk