**AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL**

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BUILDINGS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD AT 7.00 p.m. ON MONDAY, 25TH NOVEMBER 2019 AT THE GUILDHALL

1. PRESENT:, Cllr. A.L.Young (Town Mayor), Cllr. J.J. Farrow, Cllr. Mrs. S.L.N.Leat, Cllr M. Mynard, Cllr. M.D.G. Spurway, Cllr. P.G.W. Wales, Cllr. J.W. Walden, the Town Clerk and the Deputy Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer. 2 members of the public, 0 representative of the press.

CLLR. YOUNG, IN HER CAPACITY AS GUILDHALL MANAGER FOR WHICH SHE DECLARES A PECUNIARY INTEREST, HAS A DISPENSATION TO SPEAK ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE GUILDHALL PROVIDED THE PECUNIARY INTEREST IS NOT OF OVER-RIDING SIGNIFICANCE

CLLRS. FARROW, LEAT, SPURWAY AND WALES EACH DECLARED PERSONAL INTERESTS AS BEING MEMBERS OF THE AXMINSTER GUILDHALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IN RESPECT OF ANY ITEMS RELATING TO THE GUILDHALL.

CLLR. WALDEN DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS CHAIRMAN OF THE GOVERNORS OF AXMINSTER SECONDARY SCHOOL.

2. APOLOGIES: Cllr. D.J. Moore (Deputy Mayor), Cllr. A.E. Bourner, Cllr. D.R.H. Hull.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 28th OCTOBER 2019: having been approved by the Town Council, these were signed by the Chairman.

4.. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF ABOVE MEETING: Cllr. Farrow asked that it be minuted that Light Up Axminster had now withdrawn its application for a grant.

5. PUBLIC FORUM - PROPOSED CHANGE IN ELECTRICITY SUPPLIER: A member of the public welcomed the fact that the Town Council was considering changing to a supplier which generated its power from renewable sources.

6. PUBLIC FORUM – FURNITURE IN PUBLIC GARDEN: A member of the public raised concerns regarding the presence in the public garden of plastic furniture. The Mayor replied that consideration is being given to ensuring that this does not happen and that tables blocking the pathways will be moved.

7. PUBLIC FORUM – LOCKING OF PUBLIC GARDEN: A resident reiterated her views, stated at previous meetings, regarding the closure of the garden outside the trading hours of the businesses. She said that she had received a very supportive response when she had contacted the local medical practice regarding the health benefits access to the garden afforded residents.

8. PUBLIC FORUM – LOCKING OF PUBLIC GARDEN: A resident said that she had brought in a letter regarding this matter about 5 weeks previously but had not yet had a response. The Town Mayor said that she would look into the matter.

9. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

a) Grant Request From Axminster and Lyme Cancer Support – following discussion, Cllr. Walden, seconded by Cllr. Wales, proposed that a grant of £500 be made. Agreed. A letter will be sent suggesting that the group might wish to be added to the list of those considered for an annual award.

b) Consideration of Draft Budget – the Responsible Financial Officer had circulated her initial proposals for the draft budget in summary form and also had to hand copies of the detailed background figures for Councillors to consider between this meeting and the Town Council meeting to be held on 2nd December.

She said that, excluding capital works and subject to any other matters which might be brought to her attention, it appeared that an increase of £36,000 in the budget would be needed.

She explained that some of the work she had done covered re-allocation of costs from one budget heading to another where work which had been done previously by contractors was now being done by Town Council staff. She pointed out that some cost centres had remained un-changed in terms of budget whereas she had applied a small percentage increase to others to reflect inflation.

She will clarify which works to the Guildhall had been budgeted for in prior years but not undertaken for various reasons but which can therefore be funded from reserves.

Cllr. Walden said that two projects for the Amenities budget were the works to the bottom gateway at the Woodbury Lane site and additional taps at North Street. He asked the Town Clerk to find out what the current position is in respect of provision and on-going maintenance by Management Companies of infrastructure such as grit bins in new developments.

During further discussion Councillors advised the Responsible Financial Officer regarding what they felt would be the most helpful format in which the information for the budget discussion could be presented.

10. PROPERTY RELATED MATTERS:

a **Guildhall**:

i) Update on Works Required: - there was nothing to report on major works but in-house staff had been able to rectify the dangerous section of guttering.

ii) Update on Contractors contacted by Surveyor – the autocad survey for the ground floor of the Guildhall had been undertaken, along with that needed for the new sliding doors.

iii) Reports from Contractors Approached by Surveyors – none had been received.

b **Old Courthouse**

1. Museum – nothing to report.
2. Senior Citizens’ Centre – an area of water ingress had been reported and a contractor will be making a site visit to advise on remedial action.
3. Arts Café – a letter regarding storage of garden furniture was approved and will be sent to tenants.
4. Constables’ Room – nothing to report.
5. Retail Outlet – nothing to report.
6. Garden – it was agreed that a letter be send advising that any items of furniture other than the original benches should be removed and a letter to that effect will be sent to the tenants.

**c Cemetery**

i) Tree Works – The contractors were part way through the agreed works but had had to leave site to attend to an emergency and were due back the next day.

**d Amenities** :

1. Section 106 Projects – nothing to report.

11. MATTERS OF URGENCY:

 a) Request for Grant from Totally Locally Axminster – after initial discussion, Cllr. Young, seconded by Cllr. Farrow, proposed that this matter be placed on the agenda for discussion on 9th December. Agreed.

 b) Letter Regarding Drainage of Jubilee Field – the writer will be advised to take this matter up with the District Council. The Town Council will pass a copy on to the Section 106 Monitoring Officer.

12. EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL PARKING CHARGES: in the absence of Cllr. Hull, this matter was deferred. It was reported that the present charging structure would remain in place for the coming financial year.

13. FUTURE PLAN CONSIDERATION – DRAFT RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY: this had been circulated. The Responsible Financial Officer took Councillors through the document and asked them to take it away prior to further discussion at a later meeting.

Cllr. Mrs. Leat 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.

14. QUOTES FOR PROPOSED WORKS:

a) Digital Mapping – Councillors requested that this be presented in a tabulated form. Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Walden, proposed that this be agreed in principle with authority delegated to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to approve, up to a limit of £5000 and then for ratification at the meeting on 2nd December.

b) Options for Electricity Supply – the Deputy Clerk had circulated a summary of various options in the format requested by Councillors. Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Leat, proposed that Green Corona be the supplier of choice. Agreed.

c) Project Management Advice and Surveying – A quote had been received in respect of professional services relating to the progression of electronic sliding doors at the Guildhall and a new ceiling over the stage and also for preparation of Auto Cad plans for the ground floor of the Guildhall in association with those two projects.. Cllr. Walden proposed that these quotes, totalling £2550, be accepted on the understanding that further costs may be involved should some unforeseen problems emerge during the course of the works being undertaken. Cllr. Young seconded the proposal. Carried.

15. TENANCY MATTERS: none.

16 STAFFING MATTERS: none.

Signed ........................................................................................ Date .............................................