

AXBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL
DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF AXBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON
MONDAY 17TH AUGUST 2009 IN THE TOWN HALL, THE SQUARE, AXBRIDGE

Meeting commenced: 7.30pm

Meeting concluded: 9.30pm

Present: Councillors Mrs J Trotman (Mayor), D Bratt, Mrs K Browne, J Gall (Deputy Mayor), B Hamblin, J Lukins, P Passey, Mrs E Scott (from minute 63/09) and M Taylor

Apologies for absence: Councillors C Byrne, Mrs P Ham and Mrs V Issac

Also in attendance: Mrs V L Brice (Town Clerk), PC Tom Pether and three members of the public

62/09 Minutes of the Council Meeting – 20th July

It was noted that the cost of the Arnold Baker book referred to in minutes 45/09(d and e) had been listed as £53.60 but that the subsequent invoice had been for £55.60.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the council meetings held on 20th July 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the cost of the Arnold Baker book being amended (if shown to be a typing error) and the work “Aspen” being spelt correctly in minute 51/09. The word “minutes” in the heading of the confidential minute would also be deleted.

At this juncture, Councillor Mrs Scott joined the meeting.

63/09 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Bratt - declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Town Hall, as Town Hall Manager.

Councillor Mrs Browne – declared a personal interest in the item relating to the pageant, as her husband is involved in this association (minute 66/09(g) refers) and advised that her children were no longer part of Axbridge Saxons Football Club.

Councillor Gall - declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the changing rooms, (minute 67/09 refers) being a parent of a child attending Axbridge Saxons Football Club.

Councillor Hamblin – declared a personal interest in the item relating to Bristol International Airport – the Airport being a member of the Axbridge Chamber of Commerce of which he was also a member (minute 65/099b) refers).

Councillor Lukins – declared a personal interest in the item relating to the cricket club, being president of the club (minute 67/09(b) refers).

Councillor Passey – declared a personal interest in the item relating to the bus partnership 126 scheme, living in close proximity to one of the sites (minute 68/09(b) refers).

Councillor Mrs Scott – declared a personal interest in the item relating to Bristol International Airport – the Airport being a member of the Axbridge Chamber of Commerce of which she was also a member (minute 65/099b) refers).

64/09 Reports

A County Councillor’s Report – no report.

B District Councillor Report – District Councillor Mrs Scott advised that the street name plate for Fennel Lane had been erected. Sedgemoor Splash would be closing at the end of August and funding from this had been earmarked for a new swimming pool.

C Police – PC Tom Pether gave a brief update on an incident at a local business premises, on vehicular interference, and on the work of Police Community Support Officer. The main issues from the recent Partnership and the Community Together (PACT) meeting held in Axbridge had been parking and speeding. Members welcomed short but regular checks on parking within Axbridge and thanked the police for their support in reducing anti social behaviour.

D Axbridge and District Museum Trust – A volunteer to run the Friends of the Museum group was sought and would be advertised in OYEZ.

E Chamber of Commerce – a written report updated members on the Showcase arrangements including the wish to use the car parking area of the furlong for traffic approaching from Cheddar. A leaflet of events scheduled on the day was circulated.

F Cheddar Valley Cluster Group Meeting – a written report updated members on the key issues arising at the meeting.

G Farmers' Market – an additional Farmers' Market would be held on the day of the Showcase. The community table would not be needed at this event. Residents would be encouraged in OYEZ to advise of the nature of their use of the community stall to ensure this didn't conflict with market stall holders.

H Pageant – a written report updated members on Chairmanship of the organisation.

I School Governor – Somerset County Council was seeking volunteers for school governors. Details available from the Town Clerk.

J Somerset Market Towns Forum – the Annual General Meeting would be held in November, possibly in Axbridge.

K Town Trust – the Mayor's Boards had been moved into the Town Hall.

L Other Representative Reports

Twining – it was unlikely that the trip to Houlgate would proceed due to insufficient interest.
Voices of Axbridge Project – the group had met and purchased some equipment.

There was nothing to report from the Axbridge Action Group, Somerset Association of Local Councils and Sports and Social Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 7.50pm for public participation.

[Three members of the public addressed the council objecting to the proposed siting of the west-bound bus stop along Cheddar Road (just before the entrance to the reservoir lane when approaching from Cheddar). The Chairman of the highways advisory group gave a factual response]

The meeting resumed at 8.07pm.

65/09 Planning and Licences Committee

a) Meetings held on 27th July 2009 and 17th August

Members received the minutes of the 27th July 2009 for information. The Chairman updated members on the meeting held just before Council. Members expressed concern at the lack of progress in the provision of the footpath outside Old Butcher's Yard which contravened the planning permission. The conditions of the application would be given to District Councillor Mrs Scott for attention.

b) Bristol International Airport Expansion

The Chairman advised that Sedgemoor District Council had notified the Town Council of the application to expand the airport, which had been submitted to North Somerset Council. Members expressed concern at the impact on traffic, particularly along the A38.

RESOLVED: that, in line with the recommendation from the Planning and Licences Committee, a letter be sent to Somerset Highways, copied to North Somerset Council and County Councillor Mrs Hill, to say that the Council presumes they have been consulted on this application and would be interested to know their views as this Council is very concerned at the impact on traffic, on the A38 in particular.

66/09 Administration and Finance

a) Report of Administration and Finance Advisory Group – August 2009

Members received this report - the key issues being set out below.

b) Insurance – Town Markers and Automated External Defibrillator

Members received an update.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the Town and Parish Markers be insured both public liability (at no cost) and all risks at a cost of £25; and
- 2) that the Clerk responds to the questions raised by the Insurance Company regarding the Automated External Defibrillator and be authorised to approve a quote for insurance cover, subject to it being less than 2% of the capital cost (i.e. approximately £28). Any higher quote would be considered by Council at its next meeting.

c) Financial Regulations

Members received the two key changes to the regulations to include a new section on minor and urgent payments and changes to the timetable of items to be bought to council. Minor alterations had also been made and the full set of regulations was made available.

RESOLVED: that the revised financial regulations be approved.

d) Foundation Degree in Community Engagement and Governance

The Local Council Policy course, which the council had agreed and budgeted for had been changed to the Foundation Degree. Members had been assured that the new course was still as relevant and was modular based, with level one being achieved over a 2 year period. The costs had increased to £3,225 for level one, with associated expenses. The Clerk would be willing to study this course which would start in September 2009 with the support of the Council. It was envisaged that the Council would meet the associated costs i.e. travel, accommodation and books and that the Clerk would not be paid for her time i.e. studying or travelling. A repayment plan would also need to be agreed should the Clerk leave the council's employment during, or shortly after, the Course.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the Clerk registers for the Foundation Degree in Community Engagement and Governance;
- 2) that the Personnel and Protocol Advisory Group put together a repayment scheme and costing plan; and
- 3) that the council make a final decision on this matter at the next meeting, when the full details and costs are known.

e) Cemetery Fees

The group recommended that the fees and charges remain the same for 2009/10.

RESOLVED: that the fees and charges remain as at present for 2009/10.

f) Power of Well Being

The Council received a written summary and discussed whether it wished to obtain the power of well being which would enable it to spend money on items it could not presently do i.e. support local businesses. It would be a requirement for a least 10 members of the Council to receive training.

RESOLVED: that consideration of this matter be deferred to after the next election.

g) Cleaning of War Memorial

It was noted that arrangements should be made to clean the war memorial and add a name. Costing details and information would be required first.

RESOLVED: that the Council intends to carry out these works to the memorial in time for the Remembrance Service in November 2010 and costing information would be sought for inclusion in the budget.

h) Ancient & Honourable Guild of Town Criers

Members supported the Town Crier in her work on behalf of the Town.

RESOLVED: that the Council pays the Town Crier's membership subscription of £26.00 to the Ancient and Honourable Guild of Town Criers.

i) Pageant – Reference

The Town Clerk had received a request from the Axbridge Pageant Festival 2010 association to act as a referee for grant applications made by the association for this event. It was suggested that OYEZ could be used to highlight contact details and access to tickets.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk be authorised to provide a reference for grant applications accordingly.

j) Financial Monthly Report and Payment of Invoices

The detailed financial report for August 2009 including all payments is set out below. On the advice of the Chairman of the Leisure and Recreation Advisory Group, who had notified the Clerk that the works to the goalmouth were currently not acceptable, the council was asked to approve payment of the grass cutting works only at the present time.

To	For	Value	Power
Payments for authorisation			
Mrs V Brice	Clerks salary (August)	837.96	S.112(2) LGA 1972
Mr D Hogarth	Furlong Manager (August)	171.74	S.112(2) LGA 1972
Post Office	NI and Tax (August)	142.80	
Somerset County Council	Pension contribution (August)	227.04	LG Pension Scheme Regs 1997
Mr A Laken	Town Maint. Cont.	165.00	
Mr R Hembrow	Grass Cutting (June & July)	698.42	S.10 Open Spaces Act 1906
LTSB Commercial Finance Ltd**	Printing of OYEZ (August)	45.00	
Society of Local Council Clerks	Charles Arnold Baker publication	55.60	
Mr Hellier	Handrails, Church Steps	2409.25	
R & S B Fencing & Agricultural Services	Fencing, Allotments	322.00	
West Country Groundcare Ltd	Grass Cutting (Mar-Jul) GRASS ONLY	621.00	
Moore Stephens	External Audit Fee	460.00	
G B Sport and Leisure*	Works to play area	315.79	
Lukins Surfacing	Works to fit handrails	745.50	
A & H G T C	Town Crier's membership	26.00	
Vodafone	Council's telephone (July)	27.69	
EDF Energy (changing rooms a/c)	Electricity	20.00	

	Total:	7,290.79	
* on receipt of invoice			

RESOLVED: that the expenditure detailed above be approved.

k) Computer Equipment for use by the Clerk

Following the group meeting, Councillor Gall had investigated the purchase of equipment for use by the Clerk and the group wished to take advantage of current offers. A budget of £750 was available.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the Clerk be delegated to set up an account with a supplier as long as that supplier is able to invoice the Council and wait until the next council meeting for payment
- 2) that the Clerk be delegated to purchase a laptop from the supplier to a cost of up to £550 (excluding VAT)
- 3) that the Clerk be delegated to purchase ancillary items up to a value of £200 (excluding VAT) on her credit card, assuming the laptop is purchased, with repayment to be authorised at the next meeting of Council.
- 4) That it be noted that the Council had intended to put this matter as an agenda item at the next Council meeting but wished to be in a position to take advantage of current offers to the benefit of the Council.

67/09 Leisure and Recreation Advisory Group

a) Report of the Leisure and Recreation Advisory Group

Members received this report. It was noted that the Council had been assured that weed killer sprayed around the sub station by contractors working for SWEB was not harmful.

b) Cricket Nets

The Clerk advised that, following a meeting with interested parties, the ground work for the cricket nets would take place the week commencing 21st September 2009 (weather permitting) with the carpets and nets being fitted by the end of February 2010. The carpet and steelworks would be purchased early (to maintain the price) and stored in the football container, with a staged payment being made accordingly.

c) Containers, Furlong

These would be painted after the summer holidays and would include anti vandal paint on the roof. A sign would indicate that this was the case and, in the meantime, parents would be advised in OYEZ to remind their children that climbing onto the containers is not a safe thing to do.

68/09 Highways Advisory Group

a) Report of the Highways Advisory Group – August 2009

Members received this report - the key issues being set out below. The Chairman explained the decisions relating to the A368 Experimental Weight Restriction, which now included proposals to apply a weight limit on a further stretch of the A368 (to its junction with the A37) and a section of the B3134 (from its junction with the A368 to its junction with the B3135).

b) Quality Bus Partnership Route 126 – Axbridge

Members considered the recommendation from the Highways Advisory Group to support the proposals for this scheme, which aimed to improve the 126 bus route through Axbridge, in conjunction with the objections raised during public participation to the proposed location of the Barnabas Close bus stop (west bound). The current plans included the relocation of/changes to stops at Cheddar Road (by Barnabas Close) and Jubilee Road, but excluded the proposed relocation of the bus stop from the top of West Street to the top of Houlgate Way (east bound).

RESOLVED: that Somerset County Council be advised that the Town Council accepts the proposals highlighted in the current bus stop plans.

Councillor Mrs Scott voted against this decision and requested that her vote be recorded.

c) National Highways and Transport Survey

The Council had been invited to take part in this survey seeking views of service users.

RESOLVED: that the Chairman of the Highways Advisory Group complete this survey on behalf of the Council.

d) Highways Matters

a) Culvert, The Square – The culvert outside the chemist and the co-op needed attention and would be included in a site meeting with Somerset Highways.

b) Lay-by – Councillor Lukins was still pursuing the ownership of the lay-by. The Clerk had recently received a reply from Somerset Highways which would be passed to the group for consideration.

c) Portmeade Drove – the footpaths officer would be asked about improvements to the Drove.

69/09 Cemeteries, Allotments and Open Spaces Advisory Group

a) Allotment and Town Maintenance Contractor report

The Town Maintenance Contractor had worked 11 hours. Suggested work included cleaning signs in the Square and cleaning and re-oiling the footpath notice board.

b) Land at the Allotments – Community Allotment Association

.A piece of land had become available at the allotments and it was suggested, as this land was not of sufficient quality to be let as an allotment, that it be offered free of charge to the Community Allotments Association who may wish to extend their current orchard area into this adjoining piece of land. It was understood that the Association would be willing to take on the land.

RESOLVED: that this area of land be offered, rent free, to the Community Allotment Association and that the agreement be added to, to reflect this.

70/09 Personnel

a) Report of the Personnel and Protocol Advisory Group

A meeting was scheduled to take place on 28th September but would be moved forward to accommodate more urgent matters – including the Clerk's course. The group was also asked to consider a sound system in the Town Hall.

71/09 Green Issues/Recycling

Information on eco-meters and home insulation would be included in OYEZ if appropriate.

72/09 Consultation Document - Sedgemoor District Council – Review of Parish Charter

RESOLVED: that this Parish Charter be referred to the Administration and Finance Advisory Group for consideration.

73/09 General Correspondence and Diary Dates

The Council had received a list of correspondence, including diary dates.

74/09 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED: that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted which relates to contractual information.

75/09 Confidential Item – Affordable Housing Project

Members received an update on the progress to date. Members wished to seek assurance on how and when the Town Council would be actively involved in this process and also wished to stress other priorities of the Town Council which may impact on the best use of the site currently being considered. A meeting had been suggested by the Community Council for Somerset accordingly.

RESOLVED: that Councillors Bratt, Hamblin, Lukins and Mrs Scott attend the site meeting, to be confirmed for Thursday 20th August.

76/09 Confidential Item – Meadow Street Car Park

The Clerk drew attention to the confidential summary setting out the key points regarding the contract and lease and explained the process, and costs, for the transfer of funds.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the revised contract and lease be signed by the approved signatories (previously agreed)

- 2) that the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and/or Councillor Taylor be authorised to sign the transfer documentation relating to Land Registry at the appropriate time, as required by the Solicitor (two signatures required)
- 3) that the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and/or Councillor Taylor be authorised to sign the return for stamp duty land tax at the appropriate time, as required by the Solicitor (one signature required)
- 4) that the transfer of the purchase price and the stamp duty tax be made by CHAPS or BACS payment, as appropriate, when required by the Solicitor, with the form to be signed by two cheque signatories
- 5) that the Meadow Street Car Park Management Working Group consist of Councillors Hamblin, Passey, Mrs Scott and Taylor, with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor ex – officio; and
- 6) that the Working Group meet to draw up a remit for consideration by the Council at its next meeting and, if feasible, aim to meet on the first Monday of each month.

Chairman

Dated