

AXBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL
DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF AXBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON
MONDAY 16TH NOVEMBER 2009 IN THE TOWN HALL, THE SQUARE, AXBRIDGE

Meeting commenced: 7.30pm

Meeting concluded: 9.25pm

Present: Councillors Mrs J Trotman (Mayor), D Bratt, Mrs K Browne, Mrs P Ham, B Hamblin, Mrs V Isaac, J Lukins, P Passey, Mrs E Scott and M Taylor

Apologies for absence: Councillors C Byrne and J Gall (Deputy Mayor) and PC Tom Pether

Also in attendance: Mrs V L Brice (Town Clerk) and 2 members of the public.

117/09 Apologies for absence

Councillor Matthews –had indicated that he wished to resign from the Council as he was now working in Leeds. A letter of resignation was unlikely to be forthcoming. However, he had not attended any meetings since 15th June 2009 and, as such, would no longer be a member of Council after 15th December 2009 if he took no part in council business during that time.

RESOLVED: that, after 15th December 2009, the Clerk be authorised to contact Sedgemoor District Council to declare the vacancy so that the process can begin.

118/09 Minutes of the Council Meeting – 19th October 2009

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the council meeting held on 19th October 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to Minute 104/09 on Quarry Liaison being amended to refer to meetings held during the daytime on a Wednesday.

119/09 Declarations of Interest

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

Councillor Hamblin – declared a personal interest in the item relating to Funding of Town Events (minute 126(d)/09 refers) being Chairman of Axbridge Chamber of Commerce

Councillor Mrs Isaac - declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Cricket Club being involved with the club.

Councillor Lukins – declared a personal interest in the item relating to the cricket club, being president of the club.

Councillor Mrs Scott – declared a personal interest in the item Funding of Town Events (minute 126(d)/09 refers) being a member of Axbridge Chamber of Commerce.

120/09 Reports

District Councillor – reported on the Electoral Review process (which proposed a reduction in Sedgemoor District Councillors possibly resulting in an amalgamation of Axbridge with a neighbouring parish), Budget cuts (a funding gap of almost £900,000 was anticipated and would affect grant funding), Youth Democracy Day (had been held in Bridgwater with the aim of forming a Youth Council which could be considered within Axbridge) and Mendip Hills AONB Partnership Meeting (application for the Mendips to receive GeoPark status).

Police - PC Tom Pether had been unable to attend. Sergeant Tripp had moved to a different job and had been replaced by Police Sergeant Elaine Linham.

Axbridge Action Group and Chamber of Commerce – the Group would make a presentation to the Chamber of Commerce on its Streets and Parking Improvement Plan

Cheddar Valley Cluster Group Meeting –Councillor Taylor reported on the group meeting held on 4th November 2009 which had received presentations on Sedgemoor District Council's budget, Bridgwater Hospital, Local Development Framework and Peat and Aggregates Extraction Strategy. RLT3 funding of £5,000 was available.

Farmers' Market – forms to apply for traffic orders to cones had been received. The Christmas Market would, hopefully, include musical entertainment.

Modern Town Archivist –had made use of space within the filing cabinet at the Town Hall.

Pageant – The progressive supper and fund raising meeting were taking place. Residents would have an opportunity to sign up for the pageant on 29th November 2009.

Quarry Liaison Meeting – a written report had been circulated.

Sports and Social Committee – Christmas Trees would be put up on 5th December. Father Christmas night to take place on 19th December 2009.

Town Trust – the Clock was now lit and working.

Voices of Axbridge - would write a report on how money received was spent.

There was nothing to report from the Axbridge and Museum District Trust, Somerset Association of Local Councils, Somerset Market Towns Forum and School Governor. No report was forthcoming from the County Councillor.

The meeting adjourned at 7.44pm.

No members of the public wished to speak.

The meeting resumed at 7.45pm

121/09 Planning and Licences Committee

a) Meeting held on 2nd November 2009

Members received the above minutes for information. Sedgemoor District Council had advised that the trees in The Court, St Mary's Street were being well managed by the owner, so it was not necessary to apply Tree Preservation Orders at the present time.

b) Local Development Framework

Members had received a presentation on this last month. The Local Development Framework also encompassed the Core Strategy. Whilst the Planning and Licences Committee had not wished to make any comments, it was felt that other committees may wish to have an input. The Consultation period would end on 18th January 2010.

RESOLVED: that the Local Development Framework proposals and Core Strategy be considered by both the Administration and Finance and the Highways Advisory Groups, with the Clerk being delegated to respond on behalf of the Council, in consultation with the Group Chairmen.

c) Planning Application

Members considered the following application and the recommendation from the Group to object to the proposals on highways grounds.

02/09/00034/RSM

Applicant:	Miss P E Edbrook
Proposal:	Erection of three dwellings with parking court
Location:	Land to the South of, Trafalgar Cottage, Jubilee Road, Axbridge, BS26 2DA

RESOLVED: that Sedgemoor District Council be advised that the Town Council objects to the above application on highways grounds – particularly in relation to access, visibility lines and the proximity to the junction and that the application has missed the opportunity to provide parking for the owner of Trafalgar Cottage and for the neighbouring cottages.

122/09 Administration and Finance

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

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

b) Budget and Precept 2010/11

The draft budget had been amended to take into account changes suggested at the last meeting and to provide more accurate figures, where known. The dependant carers allowance had been removed as the Council seemed unable to pursue this under current legislation. A further £500 had been allocated to the car park fund. Members thanked the Group, and Councillor Taylor, in particular, for their work in preparing the budget.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the draft budget for 2010/11 (attached as an appendix to these minutes) be approved;
- 2) that the precept of £57,000 for 2010/11 be approved accordingly; and

3) that the financial/budgetary issues raised by Sedgemoor District Council, just prior to the Council meeting, be referred to the Group for consideration and recommendation to Council in due course.

c) Dog Bin - Cycleway

The Council noted the cost of providing and emptying a dog bin at the Cheddar Road end of the cycleway.

RESOLVED: that the quote from Sedgemoor District Council to provide and install a dog bin (£144.35) and empty the dog bin (£2.63 per visit) be accepted and the order placed accordingly.

d) Remembrance Day Wreath and Donation

An invoice from the Royal British Legion for the production of the wreath of poppies had been received, in the sum of £16.50. In previous years, members had also wished to make a donation to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal (S137 powers).

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the invoice of £16.50 be paid together with a donation of £58.50 to the Poppy Appeal, giving a total payment of £75.00 to the Royal British Legion
- 2) that this expenditure be authorised as permitted under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

e) Financial Monthly Report and Payment of Invoices

The detailed financial report for November 2009 including all payments is set out below. Members noted that the direct debit for the University of Gloucestershire had been set up incorrectly and had been cancelled, but that it was possible that the first payment had already been taken.

Payments made since last meeting for ratification

Ref.	To	For	Value	Power
	Somerset County Council	Attendance at MH AONB Forum	10.00	
Payments for authorisation.				
	Mrs V Brice	Clerks salary (November)	884.80	S.112(2) LGA 1972
	Mr D Hogarth	Furlong Manager (November)	184.46	S.112(2) LGA 1972
	Post Office	NI and Tax (November)	146.28	
	Somerset County Council	Pension contribution (November)	229.32	LG Pension Scheme Regs 1997
	Mr A Laken	Town Maint. Cont.	240.00	
	Mr R Hembrow	Grass Cutting (October)	349.21	S.10 Open Spaces Act 1906
	LTSB Commercial Finance Ltd	Printing of OYEZ (October)	45.00	
	Fairlands Middle School	Photocopying and paper - Aug/Sept	26.29	
	Somerset County Council*	Allotment Rent (Mar - Sept 09)	77.50	
	Hemini PLC	Purchase of laptop - Clerk	668.15	
	Mr G Bailey	Hedgetrimming at Cemetery	46.00	
	Staples Delivery	Laptop case & stationary	50.08	
	G B Sport and Leisure*	Works to play area	97.75	
	West Country Groundcare Ltd*	Grass Cutting (Mar-Jul) (2nd pt of inv)	523.25	
	Royal British Legion	Poppy and donation (wreath £16.50)	75.00	
	Vodafone	Council's telephone (November)	28.09	
	(Changing rooms a/c)			
	EDF Energy	Electricity	20.00	

	* on receipt of invoice	Total:	3,691.18	

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the expenditure detailed above be approved, with payments being made on receipt of outstanding invoices, as indicated;

- 2) that the insurance for the AED be paid when the revised invoice is received, in accordance with the previous decision of Council; and
- 3) that, if the direct debit has not already been taken, the Council pay the cost of the course in 20 payments (if taken, the Clerk would ensure that the direct debits for the remainder of the course are taken monthly starting at a later date).

123/09 Leisure and Recreation Advisory Group

a) Report of the Leisure and Recreation Advisory Group

Members received this report - the key issues being set out below. Various organisations would be asked to make a donation towards the fencing on the Furlong. Members noted that the Changing Room Manager would be having an operation in the near future and would be unable to clean the changing rooms. It was hoped that the Town Maintenance Contractor would be able to cover these cleaning duties within his allocated hours.

b) Hire of Skip

A skip was needed to clear the BMX area, ditch and related work on the Furlong at a cost of approximately £100. This work would help improve the drainage of the field and pitches.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk be authorised to hire a skip accordingly.

c) Play Area

Maintenance work would shortly be carried out on the Furlong, to repair the roundabout and gate. This work was required for health and safety and would be funded from the maintenance budget.

RESOLVED: that the quote from G B Sport and Leisure in the sum of £97.75 be approved and the works carried out accordingly.

d) Youth Shelter

It was recommended that a concrete base be put under the youth shelter to make it more secure and easier to maintain. A local businessman was willing to undertake the work. The cost of the concrete would be minimal. Efforts to contact the company providing the youth shelter regarding repairs had been unsuccessful and would now need to be pursued in writing.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the Clerk be delegated to place an order for the concrete, in consultation with the Chairman of the Leisure and Recreation Advisory Group to ensure the cost is considered reasonable; and
- 2) that a letter be sent to the Company regarding the damage to the shelter and the need for repair.

e) Goal Mouth/Sports Wall

The Chairman of the Group suggested that it may be best to purchase a Sports Wall for the Furlong, which would include a goal, rather than just buy goal posts at the present time. It was likely that grant funding could be obtained for a Sports Wall. She detailed several quotes in the region of £4,000 - £6,000. Some members expressed concern at the cost and questioned the need for such a facility. It was generally considered that a sports wall, incorporating a goal, would provide an area for older children to play, thereby protecting the land around the existing goal mouth and the changing room building.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the Council supports, in principle, the acquisition of a Sports Wall and investigates funding opportunities which would enable the project to be largely grant funded; and
- 2) that, in the meantime, the consideration of the purchase of a goal mouth be put on hold.

124/09 Highways Advisory Group

a) Report of the Highways Advisory Group – November 2009

Members received this report - the key issues being set out below. The Chairman of the Group advised that a meeting would need to be held between interested parties to discuss the improvement of access to a property, and the Council's field, off the bypass. In relation to the bus stop along Cheddar Road, it was understood that the resident had requested the matter to be reviewed by the Chief Executive and, as such, the works at this site remained on hold. Information on road closures affecting Draycott and Wells would be included within OYEZ.

b) Trees, Meadow Street Car Park

The Clerk updated members on correspondence received from Sedgemoor District Council, following an objection from a local resident to the removal of trees on the inside boundary of Meadow Street Car Park. The removal of the trees had been approved (planning application 02/09/00012 refers) as they were damaging, or would be likely to damage, the wall. Members had visited the site and, after careful consideration, the Group had recommended the removal of the four trees, as per the planning application. Some damage to the wall and fencing was already evident and it was considered that the roots would damage the car park surface and drainage system. The Town Council would be liable for any expenses caused by such damage.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that Sedgemoor District Council be advised that the Town Council recommends the felling of the trees, as per planning application 02/09/00012; and
- 2) that a letter (drafted by Councillor Mrs Ham) be sent to both residents wishing to retain the trees to advise of the Council's decision and the reasons for it.

c) Footpath – Old Butchers' Yard

A meeting with all interested parties would be held on Tuesday 8th December at 2pm. Councillors Hamblin, Passey and Taylor would attend on behalf of the Council. The Council felt it would be necessary to compromise on a grander scheme, given the restrictions by the width of the road, but wished to see a clearly defined, safe, secure and tidy pedestrian route where possible.

125/09 Cemeteries, Allotments and Open Spaces Advisory Group

The Clerk advised that she had ordered a bag of free bulbs from Sedgemoor District Council. Suggested locations included the verges around the Town Markers, the Furlong and the cemetery. It was hoped that the Guides may plant the bulbs, as in previous years.

a) Allotment and Town Maintenance Contractor report

The Town Maintenance Contractor had worked his full 16 hours this month. He would be asked to tidy up footpaths linking estates, the area in Houlgate Way and carry out works to the trees, in particular, at the cemetery.

b) Headstone Check

A headstone safety inspection had been carried out on 31st October 2009 and a significant number had been identified as unstable. The owners of the graves were being contacted accordingly. It had been suggested that the rules and regulations governing the cemetery should be revised.

RESOLVED: that the Rules and Regulations be referred to the Administration and Finance Advisory Group for consideration and recommendation to Council in due course.

126/09 Personnel

a) Report of the Personnel and Protocol Advisory Group – November 2009

Members received the above mentioned report – the key points being set out below.

b) Changing Room Manager - Appraisal

The Council considered the recommendation from the Group to approve an incremental pay rise (one point within his current scale) for the Changing Room Manager, who did an excellent

job. It was also noted that he may still be able to undertake light duties in the period following his operation.

RESOLVED: that the Changing Rooms Manager receive a salary increase of one incremental point, taking him to point 25 on the salary scheme.

c) Use of Town Clerk's time

The Council considered proposals put forward by the Group in an effort to reduce the Clerk's current workload. It was felt that the Clerk should be the first point of contact for website correspondence. A member's page on the web was also suggested.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that, where possible, investigative work be carried out by group members;
- 2) that Groups are mindful of the Clerk's work when considering work to be done.
- 3) that the Group, and Clerk, consider how best to deal with general correspondence received ; and
- 4) that the Group reviews the Clerk's workload on a regular basis.

d) Funding of Town Events

The Council considered the proposal put forward by the Group, not to fund town events. A large number of events took place in the town, providing entertainment, which were organised by other organisations and self funded. Some members felt that the council could provide a grant to such events as they promoted the town. However, the majority of members did not feel it appropriate to precept to enable grants to be paid to the running of the events. It was indicated that any decision of the council would become a policy, which would be reviewed on an annual basis.

RESOLVED: that the Council does not fund events organised by independent town groups but would consider the funding of one-off specific items

127/09 Meadow Street Car Park Management Group

a) Report of the Management Group

Members received the above report for information.

128/09 Green Issues/Recycling – a member highlighted an ongoing problem with the non-collection of waste from a property. It was suggested that his neighbours may be able to help to ensure the waste was collected.

129/09 Draft Future Proposal – Beach at Cheddar Reservoir

The Clerk updated the Council on correspondence received about this proposal. Members had supported the idea of a beach, in principle, and would be willing to send a representative to meetings arranged on this subject.

RESOLVED: that Councillor Passey be appointed as the Council's representative on this matter.

130/09 Consultation Documents

Electoral Review of Sedgemoor District Council – members had received an update on this (minute120/09 refers)

RESOLVED: that the Electoral Commission be advised that the current warding arrangements for Axbridge should remain, as it is a unique entity which is easily identifiable.

Hinkley Point C – Initial Proposals and Options and Corridor Route Study - Further information had been received on these studies.

RESOLVED: that the documents be referred to Councillor Mrs Isaac for consideration and that the Clerk be authorised to respond to the documents, following consultation with Councillor Mrs Isaac.

Road Closures – Santa in the Square - 19th December 2009- this had been received, as per last year.

RESOLVED: that the Council has no objections to the temporary road closures for this event.

131/09 General Correspondence and Diary Dates

The Council had received a list of correspondence, including diary dates. It was noted that the Highways Advisory Group meeting would be held on Monday 30th November 2009. Leisure and Recreation Advisory Group would meet at 6pm on Monday 23rd November 2009.

132/09 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED: that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted which relates to items which may form part of a contract.

133/09 Confidential Item - Affordable Housing Project

Members received a brief update on this matter.

Chairman

Dated

Axbridge Town Council – Budget 2010/11 (as agreed by Council on 19th November 2009)	
General Account	
PAYMENTS	
Revenue Expenditure	
Clerk's Salary & Tax	17000.00
Additional Salary - Quality Status	0.00
Additional Salary - Data project	0.00
Admin. Expenses	2000.00
Insurance	2200.00
Emergency Planning	0.00
Changing Rooms loans repayments	7800.10
Car Park loan repayments	10402.06
Promoting Axbridge	1000.00
Education	200.00
Town Hall Charges	1500.00
Allotments (rent & maintenance)	400.00
Auditors' Fees	1225.00
Adverts	0.00
Mayor's Allowance and functions	1350.00
Town Crier's Allowance	125.00
Carers' Allowances	0.00
Cemetery maintenance	1900.00
Furlong grass & hedge cutting	4000.00
Changing Rooms Manager	2300.00
Changing Rooms Build Fund	
Changing Rooms Maintenance	1000.00
Play area & Furlong repairs maint.	2500.00
Play area & Furlong litter bins	1300.00
Town Maintenance Contract	3100.00
Cycleway bin emptying contract	800.00
Meadow Street Car Park purchase	
Subscriptions	550.00
Elections	100.00
Furlong lease	165.00
Sundry	200.00
Total:	63117.16
Capital expenditure	
Play area equipment fund	500.00
Play area seats and bins	
Play area safety surface fund	0.00
See-Saw	
Street Lights fund	500.00
Back Lane lighting and safety proj.	0.00
Allotments car park	0.00
Allotments Water	
Axbridge Design Statement	0.00
Footpath to cemetery	
War Memorial Cleaning	200.00
Jubilee Hedge planting	0.00
Notice Boards	0.00
Town Marker stones	0.00

Storage cabinet - fireproof	
Youth Shelter	300.00
Cricket Nets	0.00
Kissing Gate	
Containers	
Regalia-refurbishment/replacement	200.00
Office Equipment Fund	250.00
Hearing Loop and Acoustic Panels	300.00
Clerk's training course	2490.00

Total:	4740.00
Grants	
Town Trust planters	300.00
Town Hall grant	3640.00
Axbridge and Museum District Trust	1100.00
Xmas lights & trees	1200.00
British Legion	75.00
Youth Fund	0.00
Various - Regular (Type A)	350.00
Various - Misc.(Type C)	200.00
Total:	6865.00
VAT paid	
Total Payments:	74722.16
RECEIPTS	
Precept	57,000
Lloyds Bank Interest	30.00
Cemeteries	400.00
Allotments rent	400.00
Amenities grant	0.00
C. Rooms loan grant	7800.10
Donations to Newsletter (Oyez)	40.00
Play area grants	0.00
Youth Shelter grants	0.00
SAWP grant (Church Steps safety)	
Church Clock grant	
Container donations	
RLT2 fund grants to play area	0.00
County Council Community Grant	
Cricket Nets Grant	0.00
Shortlands rent	60.00
Sundry	0.00
VAT refunds	
Total Receipts:	65730.10