

**AXBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF AXBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON**  
**MONDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2010 IN THE TOWN HALL, THE SQUARE, AXBRIDGE**

Meeting commenced: 7.30pm

Meeting concluded: 9.13pm

**Present:** Councillors Mrs J Trotman (Mayor), D Bratt, Mrs K Browne, Mrs P Ham, B Hamblin, J Gall (Deputy Mayor), J Lukins, P Passey and M Taylor

**Apologies for absence:** Councillors Mrs V Isaac and Mrs E Scott

**Also in attendance:** Mrs V L Brice (Town Clerk), County Councillor Mrs Hill, PC Tom Pether and 2 members of the public.

#### **134/09 Apologies for absence**

Councillor Byrne – The Clerk advised that Councillor Byrne had been disqualified from being a councillor at relevant authorities (including Axbridge Town Council) for an 18 month period, commencing on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2010. There was a 21 day appeal period and, whilst Councillor Byrne was not a member of the council at the present time, a vacancy could not be declared until the expiration of the appeal period (see minute 138/09)

Councillor Matthews – The vacancy for Councillor Matthews had been declared and he was no longer a member of the Town Council (see minute 138/09)

Councillor Mrs Scott – she was recovering well from her accident and would attend council meetings as soon as she was well enough to do so.

#### **135/09 Minutes of the Council Meeting – 16<sup>th</sup> November 2009**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the council meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **136/09 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Mrs Browne – declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item relating to proposed development in Axbridge, living in close proximity to the site, and would leave the meeting during consideration of this matter (minute 139(b) /09 refers)

Councillor Mrs Ham – declared a personal interest in the item relating to the Christmas Trees being Chairman of the Sports and Social Committee (minute 140(i)/09 refers)

Councillor Taylor – declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item relating to proposed development in Axbridge, living in close proximity to the site, and would leave the meeting during consideration of this matter (minute 139(b) /09 refers)

#### **137/09 Reports**

County Councillor – County Councillor Mrs Hill updated members on the setting of the budget at both the County and District Councils. She gave a brief update on the Hinkley Point and National Grid consultations. Members noted that Sedgemoor District Council had expressed its concerns regarding the consultation process, the impact of proposed pylons and the need to consider all options for energy transmissions.

District Councillor – District Councillor Mrs Scott had submitted a written report. The Electoral Review process had been completed, with no changes to the Axbridge ward. The Mendip Hills AONB Partnership would investigate the cost of preparing the necessary documents to apply for GeoPark status. Mrs Scott referred to changes in the Aggregates Fund, which meant it would no longer be specifically aimed at communities disadvantaged by quarrying. She also suggested making an application for funding to the Sustainable Development Fund to improve the picnic area on the bypass, however this couldn't be achieved in the timescale available.

Police – There had been a few incidents in Axbridge over the Christmas period. Susan Venn-Adams was the Police Community Support Officer covering Axbridge and members expressed appreciation for her work in addressing parking issues in The Square. Unauthorised parking was also evident in several other locations. The Clerk reported receipt of a letter from Inspector Tolley on a review of staffing levels, reduction in crime statistics and on plans to open the Police Station to the community on specific dates.

Pageant – Auditions were taking place. A Valentines Disco would be held on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2010 as a fund raising event. It was not intended to hold the Showcase this year, with all support being directed at the Pageant.

Town Trust – the next Town Council/Town Trust meeting would be held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2010 – items for the agenda would be welcome

Farmers' Markets – District Councillor Mrs Scott asked members to consider a request to have free car parking in Meadow Street Car Park on the mornings of Farmers' Markets to encourage shoppers and to also assist in freeing up the Square for the Market.

**RESOLVED:** that Councillor Mrs Scott be advised that, in principle, the Town Council supports free parking on these mornings, but that the decision at the moment would rest with Sedgemoor District Council who is currently managing the car park.

Sports and Social Committee – Father Christmas night had been very successful and the Chairman of the Committee thanked the Mayor, and those concerned, for their efforts. Funds should be available to support local groups.

**RESOLVED:** that a letter be sent to the Sports and Social Committee thanking the members for their hard work both during the build up to Christmas and on Father Christmas night in particular.

Written reports had been received from the Axbridge Action Group, Axbridge and District Museum Trust, Chamber of Commerce and Somerset Market Towns Forum. There was nothing to report from the Cheddar Valley Cluster Group, School Governor or Somerset Association of Local Councils.

#### Other Representative Reports

Help Make Poverty History – A report sought support for Fairtrade Fortnight.

**RESOLVED:** that a flyer on Fairtrade Fortnight be circulated with OYEZ free of charge, as an exception to Council Policy, as the Council is a Fairtrade Council.

Pulse Community Radio – A report outlined plans for a community radio station.

**RESOLVED:** that the Council writes to Pulse Radio expressing support for their aim to introduce a community radio station to cover the Cheddar Valley area.

A written report had been received on the Somerset Waste Partnership.

#### **The meeting adjourned at 7.56pm.**

[An agent representing a developer briefly spoke in support of development proposals making reference to core strategy policy objectives (a copy of his response to the Core Strategy was circulated to members). A local resident expressed concern at the lack of progress in improving street lighting along Cheddar Road. Members clarified the situation regarding street lighting projects]

#### **The meeting resumed at 8.07pm**

#### **138/09 Councillor Vacancy**

The Clerk confirmed that an election had not been called to fill the vacancy left by Councillor Matthews and that the Council was now free to co-opt. It may be possible, should a second vacancy be declared (minute 134/09 refers), to co-opt to fill both vacancies together. It was anticipated that co-option would take place at either the February or March meeting, depending on the situation at that time.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- 1) that an advert be placed on the notice board, on the website and in OYEZ to seek applications for persons interested in being co-opted on to the Town Council, with a closing date of 8<sup>th</sup> February 2009; and
- 2) that the Clerk be authorised, if it becomes necessary to do so, to declare a second vacancy on the expiration of the appeal period

#### **139/09 Planning and Licences Committee**

- a) **Meetings held on 16th November 2009, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2009 and 11<sup>th</sup> January 2010**

Members received the above minutes for information.

**b) Proposal for Mixed Use Development – Houlgate Way**

**At this juncture, Councillors Mrs Browne and Taylor, having declared a personal and prejudicial interest, left the meeting.**

Members considered the recommendation from the Planning and Licences Committee meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009 not to support the proposal for development of this kind on land to the south of Houlgate Way. Members considered the accompanying information and noted the views expressed by the agent during public participation.

**RESOLVED:** that the Council do not support the proposal for mixed use development (housing and employment) on land to the south of Houlgate Way, which is outside/against the proposed Core Strategy and outside the development boundaries.

**At this juncture, Councillors Mrs Browne and Taylor, returned to the meeting.**

**140/09 Administration and Finance**

**a) Report of Administration and Finance Advisory Group – January 2010**

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

**b) Summary of Receipts and Payments – Third Quarter report**

Members received the above report. The Committee would look at the future allocation of some items currently within the administration heading.

**RESOLVED:** that the Summary of Receipts and Payments to December 2009 be approved and adopted.

**c) Opt to Tax**

The Clerk had now obtained the necessary paperwork to apply to Opt to Tax Meadow Street Car Park, as previously agreed.

**RESOLVED:** that that Council re-affirms its decision to opt to tax the car park, with effect from 18<sup>th</sup> January 2010, and that the Clerk be authorised to complete the necessary paperwork.

**d) Automated External Defibrillator**

A further reply had been received from the Insurance Company and would now need to be considered by the Group. A recommendation would be made to the next meeting of Council.

**e) Grants**

Members considered several grant requests.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) that a grant of £1,000 be awarded to the Axbridge and District Museum Trust to assist in the running of the King Johns Hunting Lodge, in accordance with the budget
- 2) that a grant of £100 be awarded to the Cheddar Valley Railway Work Society in support of their work in maintaining this route; and
- 3) that the Council does not support the request for grant funding from Team Somerset 500 Club, which is not of direct benefit to Axbridge residents.

**f) Funding – Sedgemoor District Council**

Members considered the request from Sedgemoor District Council for a significant contribution towards services, together with the recommendation from the Group that the Council do not provide financial support - given the current level of precept, the number of electors, the support already given and the need to have some control of the services paid for at a local level.

**RESOLVED:** that the Council does not contribute to services, as suggested by Sedgemoor District Council, at the present time and that a letter be sent to Sedgemoor District Council explaining this Council's decision (as set out in the report and outlined above)

**g) Society of Local Council Clerks**

This membership was due for renewal and was felt to be of benefit to the Council.

**RESOLVED:** that the Council renew its membership to the Society of Local Council Clerks for 2010, at a cost of £135.

**h) Somerset Playing Fields Association**

This membership was now due for renewal. Members noted that this organisation carried out the play area inspection on behalf of the Council. Members felt that this subscription represented good value for money.

**RESOLVED:** that the above membership be renewed for 2010, at a cost of £10.00

**i) Christmas Trees**

The Sports and Social Committee had spent £1,098.25 (including VAT) on the Christmas Trees this year and sought a donation from the Town Council. Members noted that £750 had been included within the budget. Members expressed support for the work undertaken by the Committee but did not feel that they could make a donation which would exceed the amount allocated in the budget.

**RESOLVED:** that the Council make a donation of £750 to the Sports and Social Committee towards the cost of the Christmas Trees

**j) Financial Monthly Report and Payment of Invoices**

The detailed financial report for January 2010 including all payments agreed during the meeting is set out below.

<b>Payments for ratification</b>			
<b>To</b>	<b>For</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Power</b>
Mr D Hogarth	Furlong Manager (December)	178.96	S.112(2) LGA 1972
Post Office	NI and Tax (December)	146.13	
Somerset County Council	Pension contribution (December)	229.32	LG Pension Scheme Regs 1997
Mr A Laken	Town Maint. Cont.	240.00	
LTSB Commercial Finance Ltd	Printing of OYEZ (November)	45.00	
Somerset County Council (prev agreed)	Allotment Rent (Mar - Sept 09)	77.50	
Society of Local Council Clerks	Cemetery Management CD	29.00	
G B Sport and Leisure (prev agreed)	Works to play area	97.75	
W C Maunders LDT	Timber and Nails	11.95	
Staples Delivery	Memory stick and stationary	48.10	
West Country Groundcare Ltd	Grass Cutting (Mar-Jul) (2nd part of inv)	523.25	
Vodafone	Council's telephone (November)	26.32	
Society of Local Council Clerks	Local Council Clerks Guide	11.40	
EDF Energy (Changing Room a/c)	Electricity	31.00	
<b>Payments for authorisation</b>			
Mrs V Brice	Clerks salary (January)	970.56	S.112(2) LGA 1972
Mr D Hogarth	Furlong Manager (January)	178.96	S.112(2) LGA 1972
Post Office	NI and Tax (January)	192.23	
Somerset County Council	Pension contribution (January)	260.03	LG Pension Scheme Regs 1997
Mr R Hembrow	Grass Cutting (Nov and Dec)	698.42	S.10 Open Spaces Act 1906
Mr A Laken	Town Maint. Cont.	217.50	
Fairlands Middle School	Photocopying and paper (Oct - Dec)	56.81	
Staples Direct	Inks	90.40	
Somerset Assoc. of Local Councils	Power of Well Being Training (5 cllrs)	77.60	
West Country Groundcare Ltd	Cricket nets, carpets, run ups & labour	9303.26	

Sedgemoor District Council	Underlease - Furlong Dec 09 quarter	41.25	
Vodafone	Council's telephone (December)	27.30	
Public Works Loan Board	Loan - changing rooms	3900.05	
Public Works Loan Board	Loan - car park	5201.03	
Society of Local Council Clerks	Membership 2010/11	135.00	
Somerset Playing Fields Assoc.	Membership 2010/11	10.00	
Axbridge Sports and Social	Christmas Tree donation	750.00	
Mrs E Channon	Reimbursement of OYEZ materials	5.57	
Cheddar Valley Railway Walk	Donation to maintenance	100.00	
EDF Energy (changing rooms a/c)	Electricity	31.00	
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>22,246.97</b>	

**RESOLVED:** that the expenditure detailed above be approved (see minute 144/09 for payments associated with the Town Clerk)

#### **141/09 Leisure and Recreation Advisory Group**

##### **a) Report of the Leisure and Recreation Advisory Group**

The Group would be meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2009 – several issues were ongoing. The Changing Rooms Manager had had his operation.

#### **142/09 Highways Advisory Group**

##### **a) Report of the Highways Advisory Group – January 2010**

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

##### **b) Snow and Ice**

Following the recent spell of bad weather, and experiences in addressing the problems created, it was recommended that the Council has a plan of action to cover points such as who collects salt/grit, where it is stored, how it is distributed, involvement of other authorities or committees and how the whole scheme can be coordinated to the benefit of the Town. Councillor Lukins offered to store the materials. It was felt essential that the bus route be gritted by the Highways Authority as this was key to enabling residents and businesses to get on with day-to-day life. The bus route had been gritted as a one off, which was appreciated, and it had been flagged up for future consideration by the highways authority but due to restrictions on the supply of salt this could not be guaranteed as part of the salting network. Members praised residents for the community spirit shown in helping each other through this difficult time.

##### **RESOLVED:**

- 1) that the Group devise a plan of action to be presented to Council for approval; and
- 2) that a letter be sent to Mr Currie, Landlord of The Lamb, to thank him for his assistance in the storage and distribution of salt.

##### **c) Lighting**

Members noted the difficulties in progressing the street lighting part of the scheme at Church Steps/Back Lane and also the need to pursue other schemes within the Town. County Councillor Mrs Hill would pursue this matter and report back to the next Council meeting.

##### **d) General Highways Issues**

Potholes – as well as the large pothole at the Townsend junction (which had been reported), there were also potholes in Orchard Road, Cheddar Road and Old Church Road. The land from Townsend to the bypass, pass Racurium Lodge, also needed attention. The Clerk would report these to the Highways Authority.

Street Light – the street light outside Saxons Court, Moorland Street was still not working. The Clerk would chase this up.

## **143/09 Cemeteries, Allotments and Open Spaces Advisory Group**

### **a) Town Maintenance Contractor report**

The Town Maintenance Contractor had worked 14.5 hours, mainly litter picking. There was no allotment report.

### **b) Cemetery Gate - Notice**

The gate was being left open and it was suggested that a notice be placed requesting visitors to close the gate

**RESOLVED:** that a notice be ordered from Maunders Ltd.

## **144/09 Personnel**

### **a) Report of the Personnel and Protocol Advisory Group – January 2010**

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

### **b) Town Clerk – Appraisal**

The Clerk had been appraised and the Group recommended approval of an incremental pay rise recognising her successful completion of the Certificate in Local Council Administration Certificate, in accordance with her contract.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) that the Town Clerk receive a salary increase of one incremental point accordingly, taking her to point 30 on the salary scheme, to be backdated to October 2009; and
- 2) that the payments relating to the revised salary and associated costs be paid accordingly (minute 140(j) refers).

### **c) Lamb and Flag Plaque**

It was understood that a local resident wished to make a Lamb and Flag plaque, to be hung on an inside wall of the Town Hall. Members appreciated the gesture, but pointed out that this would need the approval of the Town Trust and would, therefore, be included on the agenda of the next Town Council/Town Trust meeting.

## **145/09 Meadow Street Car Park Management Group**

### **a) Report of the Management Group**

Members received the above report for information.

### **b) “Walking Bus” Shelter – Meadow Street Car Park**

Members considered the recommendation from the Group in relation to the provision of a shelter to protect children from bad weather whilst waiting for the walking bus.

**RESOLVED:** that the provision of a “walking bus” shelter, to be erected in the North East corner of Meadow Street Car Park (near the entrance to the new development) be agreed, subject to agreement with the school on the exact location and design of the shelter and on it being installed at no cost to the Council.

## **146/09 Green Issues**

### **a) 10:10 sign up campaign**

This item was withdrawn, as requested by the Sustainable Axbridge Network.

### **b) Hinkley Point and National Grid Consultations**

Members received a brief update on this matter.

**RESOLVED:** that the Council responds to the National Grid Consultation to express concern over the consultation proposals for pylons in the surrounding area and to support its neighbouring parishes and Sedgemoor District Council regarding the need to consider other options to transfer energy from Hinkley Point (letter to be copied to relevant organisations/individuals)

**147/09 Storage Materials - Archivist**

Members noted that further storage materials were now required.

**RESOLVED:** that the materials be purchased from Secol at a cost of approximately £92.35

**148/09 Public Conveniences – Moorland Street**

Members noted that a volunteer was sought to lock the toilets every night at about 7pm (approximate pay of £10 per week). It was noted that Mr N Gall had offered to take this on.

**RESOLVED:** that the Council passes Mr Gall's details to Sedgemoor District Council accordingly.

**149/09 Consultation Documents** – there were no consultation documents.

**150/09 General Correspondence and Diary Dates**

The Council had received a list of correspondence, including diary dates. Reference was made to the update from Bristol Water, as preparatory work was being progressed. Members noted that a workshop on Standing Orders would be taking place on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2010 at a cost of £15 per person. This matter would be considered by the Administration and Finance Group, but members indicated that they would be happy for the Clerk and Councillor Taylor to attend this workshop, if able to do so, as it would be beneficial to the Council. The Clerk also drew attention to the decision notice and report from the Adjudication Panel relating to Councillor Bynre.

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Chairman

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Dated