

**AXBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF AXBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON**  
**MONDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2010 IN THE TOWN HALL, THE SQUARE, AXBRIDGE**

Meeting commenced: 7.30pm

Meeting concluded: 9.03pm

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

**Apologies for absence:** Councillors Mrs P Ham and Mrs E Scott

**Also in attendance:** Mrs V L Brice (Town Clerk), County Councillor Mrs Hill and one member of the public

**151/09 Minutes of the Council Meeting – 18<sup>th</sup> January 2010**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the council meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to minute 142/09d being amended to read “The lane from Townsend...” and the last word in minute 150/09 being amended to read “Byrne”.

**152/09 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Mrs Browne - declared a personal and prejudicial interest, if appropriate, in the item on Affordable Housing depending on the locations being discussed (minute 168/09 refers)

Councillor Gall– declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the changing rooms, being a parent of a child attending Axbridge Saxons Football Club.

Councillor Hamblin – declared a personal interest in the item relating to Meadow Street Car Park (minute 161/09 refers) being Chairman of Axbridge Chamber of Commerce, an organisation discussing parking matters in the Town.

Councillor Mrs Isaac - declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Cricket Club being involved with the club and a personal and prejudicial interest in the item on co-option, being related to one of the candidates (min 164/09 refers).

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

**153/09 Reports**

County Councillor Mrs Hill	<p><u>Policing</u> - a presentation would be made to all local councils on the local effect of new policing arrangements in Bridgwater</p> <p><u>Budgets</u> – The County Council’s budget, if agreed, would result in a 0% increase in its element of the council tax. The Police and Fire and Rescue Service elements would increase.</p> <p><u>Street Lighting</u> – the trials were taking place in Westbury Sub Mendip. The lights could go ahead, but could not be timed. County Councillor Mrs Hill would meet with the Clerk, prior to a meeting with the portfolio holder and officers.</p> <p><u>County Councillor Grant</u> –the outstanding grant application to the Town Council should be awarded before the end of the financial year. This grant fund would not be available next year.</p> <p><u>Somerset Aggregates Levy Fund</u> – this would remain next year, for communities affected by quarrying</p>
District Councillor Mrs Hill	<p><u>Budget</u>- the District Council’s budget, if agreed, would result in an increase in its element of the council tax by 3%.</p> <p><u>Museum</u> – in response to a question, she felt that the curator services could be picked up by Somerset County Council. She was unaware of the grant situation.</p> <p><u>Funding</u>- the District Council was still seeking funding from local councils. All councils would be invited to a meeting in March.</p>
Police	No report.

**154/09 outside Representative Reports**

Group	Report
Axbridge Action Group	Pursuing Streets and Parking Improvement Plan
Axbridge & District Museum Trust	Funding concerns and efforts

Chamber of Commerce	Considering ticket systems for parking in Meadow Street Car Park and The Square.
Cheddar Valley Cluster Group	Key issues included Sedgemoor District Council funding and the organisation and work of the Cluster Groups
Farmers Markets	No report
Pageant	This fund raising update had been part of the Chamber of Commerce report
School Governor	Process to recruit Head teacher was in hand. Interviews anticipated to be held during March.
Somerset Assoc. of Local Councils	Key issues included cheque payments, code of conduct for members (revised code likely to be in force on 6 <sup>th</sup> May) and Association fees (no change to SALC element)
Somerset Market Towns Forum	Network event to be held on 24 <sup>th</sup> March – Volunteer sought to attend.
Sports and Social	No report
Town Trust	The Town Hall had been spring cleaned
Other Representative Reports	Carnival – committee volunteers were sought (OYEZ) <u>Help Make Poverty History</u> – a two week campaign on this would include wine tasting at the Oak house on 4 <sup>th</sup> March (fundraising for the Variety Club Children's Charity and the Pageant). A lunch would be held on 28 <sup>th</sup> Feb (contact – Mr Tallack)

**The meeting adjourned at 7.50pm.**

[No members of the public wished to speak]

**The meeting resumed at 7.51 pm**

#### **155/09 Planning and Licences Committee**

##### **a) Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2010**

Members received the above minutes for information. A Town Design Statement meeting would be held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2010.

#### **156/09 Administration and Finance**

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

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

##### **b) Town Council Debit Card**

A debit card would enable payments to be made on the Town Council's current account, rather than using the Clerk's credit card. Financial regulations would need to be amended to safeguard against misuse.

##### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) that the Council agree, in principle, to having a debit card(s) on the current account, and that the Clerk submit the application accordingly; and
- (2) that the Group recommend changes to the financial regulations, to be agreed by Council, prior to use of the debit card.

##### **c) Insurance – Bus Shelter and Lap Top**

The Clerk had obtained quotes to insure the laptop and bus stop shelter (Jubilee Road).

**RESOLVED:** that that Council insures the laptop (all risks) at an annual cost of £26.72 and the bus stop shelter at an annual cost of £51.38 (both exclusive of Insurance Premium Tax).

##### **d) Standing Orders Workshop – 16 February 2010**

This workshop, organised by the Somerset Association of Local Councils, would be of interest to the Council.

**RESOLVED:** that Councillor Taylor and the Clerk be authorised to attend at a cost of £30.00

**e) Cemetery Course**

A course, by the Society of Local Council Clerks, would be held on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010 in Chepstow, covering many aspects of Cemetery Management. This course would be invaluable to the Council and both the Clerk and Councillor Mrs Browne had indicated a wish to attend.

**RESOLVED:** that Councillor Mrs Browne and the Clerk be authorised to attend this day course at a cost of £195.00

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

The detailed financial report for February 2010 including all payments agreed during the meeting is set out below. The Clerk would be querying the Vodafone bill which appeared to include an erroneous charge of £1.92. The electricity payment had increased for a second time to £36 per month – this would be raised with the Leisure and Recreation Advisory Group. An interim payment had been made to the contractor for materials and work to the cricket nets (authorised at the last meeting) and concern was expressed regarding the works being carried out. The group and Changing Rooms Manager had been in liaison with the contractor and the works were scheduled to be completed by the end of February 2010. The concerns would, however, be raised with the group.

Ref.	To	For	Value	Power
<b>Payments for authorisation</b>				
	Mrs V Brice	Clerks salary & exp. (inc course) (Feb)	991.44	S.112(2) LGA 1972
	Mr D Hogarth	Furlong Manager (Feb)	178.96	S.112(2) LGA 1972
	Post Office	NI and Tax (Feb)	157.26	
	Somerset County Council	Pension contribution (Feb)	236.99	LG Pension Scheme Regs 1997
	Mr R Hembrow	Grass Cutting (Jan)	349.21	S.10 Open Spaces Act 1906
	Mr A Laken	Town Maint. Cont.	240.00	
	LTSB Commercial Finance Ltd	Printing of OYEZ	45.00	
	Fairlands Middle School	Photocopying and paper (Jan)	27.26	
	Somerset Assoc of Local Councils	Two places Standing Order workshop	30.00	
	The Information Commissioner	Data protection registration	35.00	
	Secol*	Archivist Materials	92.35	
DD	Vodafone	Council's telephone (Feb)	31.31	
	<b>(Changing rooms a/c)</b>			
	<b>EDF Energy**</b>	Electricity	36.00	
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	*on receipt of invoice	Total:	2,450.78	

**RESOLVED:** that the expenditure detailed above be approved.

**157/09 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. The report updated members on many issues including the youth shelter, gate at Children's Play area, changing rooms maintenance, Defibrillator (now being arranged by Axbridge Saxons Football Club), football pitches and cricket nets. The Clerk advised that the Cheddar Valley Railway Walk Society had thanked the council for its donation and for the dog bin (now installed). It was suggested that all reports from group include a list of those present, those giving apologies and the name of the councillor preparing the report.

**b) Sports Wall**

The Group recommended that the Council make an application to Sedgemoor District Council under the RLT2 fund for a sports wall, as per quote and illustration (1404-OG Ball Wall – with

open sides). The cost of the sports wall would be £4,100. Confirmation of ground preparation costs was being sought. Applications were due by early March 2010.

**RESOLVED:** that, provided the costs of the whole project can be met by grant funding, the Council make an application to the RLT2 fund (and other grant applications if necessary) for the ball wall – the Clerk being authorised to determine the details of applications in consultation with the Chairman of the Leisure and Recreation Advisory Group.

### **c) Grass Cutting Contracts**

The two grass cutting contracts for the Furlong, and for the Cemetery and Children's Play Area, had been awarded in March 2007 for a three year period. The Council should go out to tender in respect of these contracts, to satisfy audit requirements. The current contracts enabled the contractors to review their prices on an annual basis, subject to council agreement. Some members considered that a two year period may be more appropriate, that the wording of the current contracts may need to be altered and that a "get out clause" should be included for both parties to terminate the contract if appropriate. Members did not feel it necessary to advertise the contracts in the local press.

### **RESOLVED:**

- 1) that the current grass cutting/grounds care contractors be invited to quote, together with a third company expressing an interest and that a notice be placed on the Town Council notice board, on the website and in OYEZ inviting quotes for these contracts by 12<sup>th</sup> March 2010; and
- 2) that the Clerk, in consultation with the Leisure and Recreation Advisory Group, be delegated to determine the length and wording of the contracts.

### **158/09 Highways Advisory Group**

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

Members received this report - the key issues being set out below. The idea of a welcome pack was discussed and would be taken on by the members of the "former" Axbridge Promotions Advisory Group. The Chamber of Commerce asked to be kept informed. It was suggested that this pack could include information on who to contact in bad weather and could be distributed as a two sided document with OYEZ. Councillor Bratt would be involved in the Severe Weather Action Plan.

#### **b) Streets and Parking Improvement Plan**

Members noted that the Town Trust and Chamber of Commerce had expressed support for a preliminary trial and would nominate a representative to sit on a steering group. The Highways Group recommended that the Town Council accept the Action Group's offer to include a councillor(s) on this steering group but that this should not be construed as direct support for the proposed changes or trials at this stage.

**RESOLVED:** that Councillors Taylor and Mrs Trotman be nominated to join the steering group and report back to the Town Council accordingly.

#### **c) Lighting – Church Steps and Back Lane**

County Councillor Mrs Hill would be meeting with the portfolio holder next week.

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

Potholes – Members could report potholes directly (<http://www.fillthatthole.org.uk>). Councillor Mrs Browne referred to several potholes along A38 and also along Old Church Road. The pothole in Orchard Road had been filled.

Townsend Roundabout – one of supports to the arrows road sign was at an angle.

Street Light – the street light outside Saxons Court, Moorland Street was working and a faulty street light in Old Church Road had been reported. One of the orange lights outside the toilets in Moorland Street was permanently on.

A38 Cross meeting – will be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2010. Details to follow.

Hinkley Point meetings – A meeting would take place on the potential community benefits. The Council would be interested to know whether any money would be available for road improvements.

#### **159/09 Cemeteries, Allotments and Open Spaces Advisory Group**

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

The Town Maintenance Contractor had worked his full 16 hours – collecting and spreading salt, working at the changing rooms and litter picking. He had also recently worked at the allotments, cleared the hillside path, fixed the handrail and re-hung the doors on the shed at the cemetery. Councillor Bratt had spoken to the youth club leaders regarding the high amount of litter in the vicinity. Councillor Lukins and Mrs Browne would discuss the need to tidy/improve the area of land in Starr's Close on a regular basis.

##### **b) Allotment Report**

Two tenants had been contacted following an inspection of the allotments. One of these tenants had been requested to give back one of the plots he rented (plot 2A) as the two plots were not being properly cultivated. However, the tenant had not wished to do so and had agreed to ensure that the plots were being cultivated within the next two months (by 1<sup>st</sup> April). The situation would be reviewed again at this time

It was confirmed that the new owners of the field adjacent to the allotment site had made no decision as yet on the use of the land or whether it would be possible for the town council to rent part of the field to expand the allotment site.

#### **160/09 Personnel**

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

The January meeting had been cancelled due to insufficient business. The next meeting would be held on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2010.

##### **b) Town Bailiff**

The Town Bailiff, Mr McKay, wished to tender his resignation. Whilst he had enjoyed the role he now lived outside of Axbridge, and felt it was appropriate for this position to be filled by a local resident. A brief description of the role would be prepared.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- 1) that the Clerk writes to Mr McKay to thank him for his support during his time as Town Bailiff and advise that it is hoped that the role could be filled in time for Mayor Making; and
- 2) that an advert be placed on the notice board, on the website and in OYEZ seeking applicants for this vacancy in time for appointment at the Council meeting in April 2010.

#### **161/09 Meadow Street Car Park Management Group**

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

Members received the above report for information.

##### **b) Meadow Street Car Park**

The Council considered a recommendation from the group regarding the future management of the car park. Members felt it should be clear that if charges were to be made, it would not be possible to take on responsibility until some time after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011. Members discussed this matter in some detail, wishing to make the most of the asset whilst bearing in mind the additional costs required to charge and enforce parking and the increased income needed to make this viable. The financial information would need to be available at the Annual Assembly (8<sup>th</sup> March 2010) to make the public aware of the situation. Reference was made to other facilities maintained by the council.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That, from the date that the Town Council takes over responsibility for the management of the car park, no charge be made for parking for an experimental period of 18 months as long as there is support for this decision from the electors of the Town at the Annual Assembly; and
- 2) That, following agreement that no charges be made for parking, the council aim to take responsibility for the Car Park from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2011

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

The Council had agreed to a shelter in principle and group members had discussed preferred locations and design with the school. However, the school had since advised that, due to difficulties obtaining the funding, they would not be pursuing the project at the present time, although other funding avenues may be considered.

**162/09 Capital Funding for Market Town Projects**

Members were advised of a new capital fund – Rural Services Fund – to help sustain and develop rural retail services and social enterprises during the difficult economic times. Members felt it would be worthwhile submitting an application for works to the car park. Particular reference was made to signage issues, footpath link, resurfacing and relining.

**RESOLVED:** that the Clerk, in consultation with Councillors Hamblin and Taylor (Chairman of the Group) be delegated to make an application for an appropriate amount to this fund accordingly.

**163/09 Green Issues**

Recycling and Refuse Collection- there had been issues on non-collection over the last month.

**164/09 Co-option**

The Chairman outlined the process of co-option, following advice from the Somerset Association of Local Councils.

**Councillor Mrs Isaac, having declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item, left the meeting.**

Members considered the applications received from residents wishing to be co-opted onto the Town Council. Each candidate was proposed and seconded, in accordance with standing orders.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) that Mr Ian Laken be co-opted on to the Town Council and be asked to sign his declaration of office before the start of the next Town Council meeting (to be held no 15<sup>th</sup> March 2010) (the Clerk to take the form to the Annual Assembly meeting);
- 2) that the Clerk writes to the unsuccessful applicants, thanking them for their interest and advising that they may wish to apply again in the event of a second vacancy or stand for election in May 2011.
- 3) that the Clerk be instructed to destroy the application papers (members to do so as well)

**At the juncture, Councillor Mrs Isaac returned to the meeting.**

**165/09 Consultation Documents** – there were no consultation documents.

**166/09 General Correspondence and Diary Dates**

The Council had received a list of correspondence, including diary dates. It was noted that the Annual Assembly would take place on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2010 to which all members were encouraged to attend. The Administration and Finance Advisory Group would meet on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February. The meeting of Somerset Association of Local Councils would be held on **Thursday** 11<sup>th</sup> March. The Cricket net review would be completed towards the end of the month. Members noted, with frustration, the on-going situation regarding the bus stop along Cheddar Road.

The Clerk drew attention to the following items of correspondence:-

Sedgemoor Community Support	Officer appointed to assist organisations. Passed to Councillor Mrs Browne
Somerset Cooperative Services	To be passed to Chamber of Commerce
NSPCC	That the Clerk does not respond to support the campaign but that the Council does promote the helpline number in OYEZ.
Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service	Home Alone article to be mentioned in OYEZ.

**167/09 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.

**168/09 Confidential Item - Affordable Housing Project**

The Council received an update on this matter. It was noted that the affordable housing project would be revisited in six months time.

**169/09 Open Session**

**RESOLVED:** that open session be resumed.

**170/09 Mayor's Report**

The Mayor reminded Chairmen to submit their reports to her as soon as possible, to enable her to prepare a report for the Annual Assembly meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2010. No suggestions for presentations were forthcoming. The Mayor's Banquet would be held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2010 – a few tickets were available.

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Chairman

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Dated