

AXBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL
DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF AXBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON
MONDAY 15TH MARCH 2010 IN THE TOWN HALL, THE SQUARE, AXBRIDGE

Meeting commenced: 7.30pm

Meeting concluded: 8.47pm

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

Apologies for absence: Councillor B Hamblin, Mrs E Scott and County Councillor Mrs Hill

Also in attendance: Mrs V L Brice (Town Clerk)

171/09 Minutes of the Council Meeting – 15th February 2010

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the council meeting held on 15th February 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

172/09 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Browne – declared a personal interest in the item relating to land at Houlgate Way, living adjacent to the site (minute 179(b)/09 refers)

Councillor Mrs Isaac - declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Cricket Club being involved with the club (minute 177/09 refers).

Councillor Lukins – declared a personal interest in the item relating to the cricket club, being president of the club (minute 177/09 refers).

173/09 Reports

County Councillor Mrs Hill	Would confirm the amount of the grant allocation for Meadow Street Car Park by 19 th February 2010
District Councillor Mrs Scott	No report
Police	The Police had confirmed the rules for parking near junctions (Oyez) The Clerk would report anti social behaviour in Moorland Street Car Park

174/09 outside Representative Reports

Group	Report
Axbridge Action Group	Forming a project team re: Streets and Parking Improvement Plan
Axbridge & District Museum Trust	Awaiting outcome of grant application from Sedgemoor District Council and seeking additional funding. Curatorial support was still available.
Chamber of Commerce	Holding networking and fund raising events
Cheddar Valley Cluster Group	Nothing to report
Farmers Markets	The community table was being used
Pageant	Nothing to report
School Governor	Interviewing for headship
Somerset Assoc. of Local Councils	Met on 11 th February – key issues being changes to Standing Orders and a likely increase in subscription fees next year (following withdrawal of funding from Somerset County Council). New financial regulations were awaited which would assist with electoral banking
Somerset Market Towns Forum	Councillor Taylor would be attending the Networking event on 24 March 2010.
Sports and Social	The Annual General Meeting would be held on Friday 19 th March at 7.30pm in The Lamb
Town Trust	Nothing to report
Other Representative Reports	Town Design Statement– comments expected from Sedgemoor District Council by end March 2010. The Council had expected to have input into this document and wished for a copy to be made available to the Planning and Licences Committee.

Public Participation - no members of the public were present.

175/09 Planning and Licences Committee

a) Meeting held on 1st March 2010

Members received the above minutes for information.

b) General Planning

Correspondence had been received regarding a strategic approach to the National Grid pylons campaign and about a recent planning application. A meeting of the Committee would be arranged accordingly.

176/09 Administration and Finance

a) Report of Administration and Finance Advisory Group – March 2010

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

b) Appointment of Internal Auditor

The Clerk advised that Mrs P Pollard would be willing to audit the Town Council's accounts for 2009/10. Her fees remained at £15 per hour (with ancillary costs). Members had been happy with her previous audits, which also represented good value for money.

RESOLVED: that Mrs Pollard be appointed as the Council's internal auditor for the accounting period 2009/10, at a cost of £15 per hour.

c) Changes to Standing Orders

Members were advised that a number of proposed changes were being made to the Model Standing Orders. It was considered prudent to implement three of these changes prior to the May council meeting to assist with committee appointments and council business. These changes would be to appoint a Staffing Committee (to replace the Appeals Panel and the Grievance and Disciplinary Panel), to move approval of cheque signatories and reconciliation checkers to June in the Financial Regulations diary sheet and to ensure all group reports recorded the names of those attending and giving apologies and the name of the report author and date written.

RESOLVED: that these three changes be agreed, in principle, and the changes be presented in detail to the next meeting.

d) Risk Assessment

The Council considered the risk assessment, following an annual review by the Group.

RESOLVED: that the Risk Assessment be approved accordingly.

e) Direct Debit list

Members received a list of direct debits to be paid during the year 2010/11-

Month	To	For	Amount
January and August	Public Works Loan Board	Loan repayment for changing rooms	£3900.05
January and August	Public Works Loan Board	Loan repayment for Meadow Street Car Park	£5,201.03
Monthly	Vodafone	Town Council's telephone	Variable amount – usually £20 - £30
Monthly	EDF energy	Electricity for Changing Rooms	Currently £36 per month – will be notified of any changes
Monthly from 1 st Oct 2010 – 1 st July 2011 inc.	University of Gloucestershire	Clerk's course	£161.25

RESOLVED: that that direct debit list be approved and signed by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor accordingly.

f) Somerset Association of Local Councils - Membership

This membership was due for renewal. Members considered that this organisation provided an invaluable source of advice to the Council. The payment should be made after 31st March 2010, for membership in 2010/11.

RESOLVED: that the Council renews its membership of the Somerset Association of Local Councils for 2010/11 in the sum of £426.61.

g) Financial Monthly Report and Payment of Invoices

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

To	For	Value	Power
Secol	Archivist Material	91.33	
Mrs V Brice	Clerks salary (March)	893.10	S.112(2) LGA 1972
Mr D Hogarth	Furlong Manager (March)	178.96	S.112(2) LGA 1972
Post Office	NI and Tax (March)	157.46	
Somerset County Council	Pension contribution (March)	236.99	LG Pension Scheme Regs 1997
Mr R Hembrow	Grass Cutting (Feb)	349.21	S.10 Open Spaces Act 1906
Mr A Laken	Town Maint. Cont.	345.00	
Lloyds TSB Commercial Finance	Printing of OYEZ (Feb)	45.50	
Society of Local Council Clerks	Cemetery Management Course	223.25	
Sedgemoor District Council	Installation of dog bin, Cycleway	169.61	
Sedgemoor District Council	Emptying of bins 28/09/09-31/03/10	702.65	
Aspen Joinery Ltd	Notice Boards	646.25	
W C Maunders Ltd	Hinges (<i>shed</i>)	6.98	
Somerset Ass. of Local Councils	Membership 2010/11	426.61	
Vodafone (DD)	Council's telephone (Feb)	24.78	
EDF Energy	Electricity	36.00	
	TOTAL	4,533.68	

RESOLVED: that the expenditure detailed above be approved.

h) General Administration and Finance Matters

Bin Emptying on Furlong - Sedgemoor District Council had provided a quote for emptying the bins on the furlong at £23.46 per week and had requested a response by 25th March, prior to the next council meeting. The District Council would be advised that members had indicated a wish to continue with the bin emptying and felt the increase to be reasonable but that the matter would need to be formally considered at the next meeting of Council on 19th April 2010.

Sedgemoor District Council Parish Survey – completion of this survey, relating to services paid for by local councils was delegated to the Group.

Annual Return- the form would need to be submitted by 1st June 2010.

Somerset County Council- pension rate details for 2010/11 had been received.

177/09 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 Chairman drew attention to the youth shelter, defibrillator and sports wall application as outlined in her report. The Cricket Nets were progressing and, once the cold weather had finished, the carpet would be fitted on a permanent basis. The contractor would submit his bill, with a 10% retention which would not be paid until the council was satisfied that the project was fully complete, in liaison with the cricket club.

b) Grass Cutting contracts

The Chairman advised on the receipt of quotes in relation to the grass cutting and grounds maintenance contracts. Members discussed this matter and noted, in particular, the excellent work carried out by the existing contractors, one of which had maintained his price, whilst the other had included a reasonable increase. It was intended to award the contracts on a 3 year basis.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the grass cutting contract for the children's play area and the cemetery be awarded to Mr R Hembrow, as per the schedule of works, for the sum of £4,190; and
- 2) that the grass cutting contract for the main part of the Furlong field be awarded to West Country Groundcare Ltd, as per the schedule of works, for the sum of £36 per cut.

178/09 Highways Advisory Group

a) Report of the Highways Advisory Group – March 2010

Members received this report - the key issues being set out below. Reference was made to the triggers to start the contingency plan process.

b) Transport and Parking Policies

Members had received a draft version of the amalgamated Transport and Parking Policies with minor amendments.

RESOLVED: that the Highways Advisory Group Policies document be approved.

c) Lighting – Church Steps and Back Lane

County Councillor Mrs Hill intended to meet the Clerk on site during the week commencing 22nd March 2010. She was aware that the lights needed to be timed for the project to proceed.

d) General Highways Issues

Parking in Square – members discussed a suggestion that the time restriction in The Square be reduced, to assist with enforcement and increase parking opportunities. If the council wished to pursue this, it may be included as part of the yellow lining review. This matter would be considered by the Group, with any recommendation being made to Council. It was noted that tickets were now being issued to owners of vehicles parked illegally within in the Town and that poor parking in The Square, especially in the evenings, sometimes forced the buses to use the High Street.

A38 Cross meeting – members indicated their support, in principle, for a project to improve the verge at bottom end of cross lane.

Pot Hole in Old Church Road/Meadow Street – this large pothole had been white lined but had not yet been filled.

Moorland Street Car Park – it was noted that a metal base, which used to hold the second ticket machine, was a trip hazard and an obstruction to cars. The Clerk would contact Sedgemoor District Council to request its removal.

179/09 Cemeteries, Allotments and Open Spaces Advisory Group

a) Town Maintenance Contractor report

The Town Maintenance Contractor had worked 23 hours – which had included litter picking, works at the layby, in the car park, at the cemetery and on the allotments. He had also been asked to remove some broken glass on the footpath between the school and Mill Stream Close. The Notice Boards would be put up over the coming month.

b) Spare Land off Houlgate Way

The Town Maintenance Contractor had carried out some work to this site and it was hoped to clear the area and to spread some of the compost to encourage a grassed area which could be better used by the community. The ownership of the land was discussed and it was thought that it may be owned by Persimmons. Members were keen to tidy up this area.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the Clerk contacts Persimmons to establish whether they own the land; and
- 2) that, in the meantime, the Town Maintenance Contractor continues to remove the rubbish and improve this area of land.

c) Open Spaces Matters

Mendip Hills AONB – this organisation had requested a copy of the Parish Plan to establish whether any references had been made to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

180/09 Personnel

a) Report of the Personnel and Protocol Advisory Group – March 2010

The February meeting had been cancelled due to insufficient business. The next meeting would be held on 22nd March 2010, if required.

b) Chairman's Award

The Council was pleased to note that Councillor Lukins had received an award from Somerset County Council's Chairman for his service to the community. Members felt this was very well deserved and congratulated Councillor Lukins, who would be attending an event to receive his award.

181/09 Green Issues/Recycling

a) Display of Fair Trade Town Certificate

Members understood that it had been intended to display this Certificate in the porch of the Town Hall, until the new notice boards were available.

RESOLVED: that the Axbridge Promotions Advisory Group be reconvened to consider the framing and display of the certificate (to be obtained by the Clerk)

b) Recycling

The Clerk was asked to contact Somerset Waste Partnership to find out whether they collect, or could collect, recycling from the flats at St Johns Court, as residents had indicated that they would appreciate a recycling collection. The Clerk would also request a site meeting to enable councillors to see how the materials collected were recycled.

182/09 Town Council/Town Trust – 26th January 2010

Members received the above mentioned report.

183/09 Casual Vacancy/Co-option

Sedgemoor District Council had confirmed that no election had been required and that, as there was no evidence of an appeal being lodged and as the appeal periods had expired, the Council was now in a position to co-opt.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the Council proceed to co-opt to fill this vacancy, using the same procedure when co-opting earlier this year; and
- 2) that the candidates who were unsuccessful on this previous occasion be invited to apply.

184/09 Mayor and Deputy Mayor 2010/11

The Chairman sought nominations for Mayor and Deputy Mayor for 2010/11

RESOLVED:

- 1) that Councillor Gall be nominated as Mayor for 2010/11 (Councillors Mrs Trotman and Councillor Passey and); and

2) that Councillor Hamblin be nominated as Deputy Mayor for 2010/11 (Councillors Gall and Mrs Ham)

185/09 Consultation Documents – there were no consultation documents.

186/09 General Correspondence and Diary Dates

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

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

Somerset Assoc. of Local Councils	Chairmanship training – 19 th April or 22 nd April
Sedgemoor District Council	Civic Heads' Training Seminar – 11 th June
Somerset Waste Partnership	Workshops 25 th March, 14 th May, 19 th May and strategy review website – www.somersetjmwms.info
Sedgemoor District Council	Somerset West Community Energy Consultation – 10 th April. The information would be made available to Mr Parkin (Sustainable Axbridge Network)

187/09 Car Park Management Temporary Advisory Group

a) Report of the Management Group

Members received the above report for information.

b) Meadow Street Car Park

Members noted the outcome of the Annual Assembly meeting – whereby electors had supported the Town Council in its proposal that no charge be made for parking for an experimental period of 18 months and that the Council aims to take responsibility for the car park from April 1st 2011. Voting was 21 in favour, 2 against and the Council would now proceed on that basis.

188/09 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.

189/09 Confidential Item – Meadow Street Car Park

The Council noted that a proposal had been received for a small development on Meadow Street Car Park.

RESOLVED: that this proposal be referred to the Car Park Management Temporary Advisory Group in the first instance to establish whether the proposal is feasible and to make any recommendations to Council at a future meeting.

Chairman

Dated