



Axbridge Town Council

Council Policies

(Appendix D of Standing Orders)

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Policy 1 Axbridge Town Council

Policy for Accessible Public Rights of Way.

This policy states that Axbridge Town Council will, by working with Somerset Council, relevant landowners and any other relevant parties, endeavour to ensure that all public Rights of Way are fully accessible where they access key services, e.g. GP surgeries, pharmacist, schools, post office, and where denial of access subjects the disabled and families with small children to a significant disadvantage.

Lawful users on public paths include people of all ages and abilities including users of mobility vehicles (wheelchairs and pushchairs) and walkers with dogs.

Where it has been drawn to the attention of Axbridge Town Council that a public right of way is not accessible, the Town Council will engage with Somerset Council and other relevant parties as appropriate to try to improve access to that public right of way insofar as it is needed and justified. Where the public right of way provides access to key local services, the Town Council will take this into account in its dealings with other parties to try to ensure that access meets the reasonable expectations of lawful users.

Adopted by Council: 14 August 2023 (minute 66.23(b) refers)

Reviewed by Highways Advisory Group: 24 June 2024

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Policy 2 Axbridge Town Council

Charging Policy for Ad Hoc use of the Changing Rooms/Furlong

The charging policy for the ad hoc use of the changing rooms/furlong is as follows:-

- £50 for any one day period
- £25 for any half day period
- The Council, on advice from the Leisure and Recreation committee, has the discretion to reduce or waive the fee for community activities or minimal use of the facility.
- Use for the Furlong alone cannot be charged as it is a public facility, unless such use is for a substantial organised event that restricts use of the field by members of the public.

Adopted by Council: 17th February 2014 (minute 169/13(d) refers)

Reviewed by Leisure and Recreation Advisory Group: 15 July 2024

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Policy 3 Axbridge Town Council

Axbridge Town Council Affordable Housing Policy

Axbridge Town Council accepts that, as a Tier 2 community within the Sedgemoor Local Plan, it has a duty to meet assessed affordable housing need by 2032.

Current Policy

1. Any housing should have regard to the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan.
2. Tier 2 settlements (along with higher tier settlements) are expected to accommodate the majority of the District's identified strategic housing growth requirements. Qualifying sites will be expected to provide affordable homes and allocated in accordance with the homefindersomerset housing system (or any subsequent replacement).

Qualifying sites within the settlement boundary, including the site topography and the percentage of new units to be affordable are detailed in the Sedgemoor Local Plan.
3. Underpinning the Axbridge Affordable Housing policy is the justification that affordable housing is needed in Axbridge and that this should be available in the first instance to residents and people with a strong connection with the Axbridge area and are in housing need.
4. A household is considered to be in housing need if they are assessed as being an emergency, gold or silver band household in accordance with Homefindersomerset housing policy and rules (or any subsequent replacement), plus applicants with no dependent children and are lodging with friends or family or living in accommodation with shared living facilities.
5. Properties built as affordable should remain affordable whatever tenure (where legally possible).
6. Affordable properties should not only be affordable to rent, including affordable homeownership housing (such as part-own or buy), but affordable to run. Homes should be built to the highest possible energy efficient standards. Examples of Energy saving measures such as solar panels, ground source heat pumps and adequate insulation should be installed.
7. Any development must take into account the infrastructure necessary to support both the buildings themselves and their residents. The impact of new developments stretches beyond Axbridge as they

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include schools, doctors' surgeries, parking, travel, sewerage and drainage systems.

8. As a Tier 2 community under the Sedgemoor Local Plan, Axbridge Town Council accepts the delivery of the minimum housing requirement. Once the minimum requirement (currently 70 homes) has been met any further housing should be sited on brownfield/ infill sites in the first instance and only outside the settlement boundary (see definition below) in exceptional circumstances.

If building outside the settlement boundary the Council would expect the requisite number of affordable rented properties to be included in the scheme.

9. Axbridge Town Council should be appraised of any outline negotiations or discussions between landowners/developers and Somerset Council whenever possible.
10. The Council will seek to be consulted on who will be allocated affordable housing in Axbridge. (It should be noted that in all Affordable Housing Assessments carried out to date, the vast majority needed were smaller rented properties.)
11. Any new affordable housing units provided in Axbridge should be allocated to eligible households in accordance with the priorities given in paragraph 12, having regard to the Homefindersomerset housing policy and rules (or any subsequent replacement) and the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan.
12. For any new affordable housing unit in Axbridge, initial priority (and subsequent future allocation of the affordable home) will be given to eligible households who are in housing need (as defined above) and who have the following local connection with the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan area:
 - Currently live in (and have done so for 5 years or more) the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan area.
 - Previously lived for 5 years or more (within the previous 10 years) in the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan area.
 - Work 16 hours or more a week in the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan area.
 - Have immediate family (who currently live in, and have done so for 5 years or more) the Axbridge Neighbourhood Plan area - means grandparent(s), parent(s), child(ren) or sibling(s)
 - Provides or received care for immediate family in the parish (immediate family as defined above)

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Should any affordable homes be left unallocated after exhausting the above list, the unallocated affordable homes will be allocated in accordance with the Homefindersomerset housing policy and rules (or any subsequent replacement).

Aspiration

The Town Council would look to enable the formation of Axbridge Community Land Trust to retain affordable housing for young people, young families and older people, providing a variety of types and tenures.

Definition

Settlement Boundary is defined in the Sedgemoor Local Plan as “the existing built up area of the settlements identified in the settlement hierarchy. For the avoidance of doubt new allocations for development identified in this plan which have been subsequently built out should be judged to fall within the settlement boundary until such time as the boundaries are extended through the next Local Plan review.”

Adopted by Council: 3rd August 2020 (minute 106/20(b) refers)

Reviewed by the Planning and Licences Committee: 10 June 2024 (minute 8.24PL refers)

Agenda Item 9.2 Policy 4 Axbridge Town Council

COLD WEATHER POLICY

This policy outlines the actions which the Town Council will undertake to counteract the effects of severe (cold) weather in the Axbridge.

These measures are intended to complement road gritting and salting carried out as a matter of course by Somerset Council, and it is not the intention of the Town Council to replace services which are currently provided by other councils.

In the following text “grit” refers to the salt and grit provided by Somerset Council to grit the road network.

A Coordinator will be nominated by the Town Council to act as the administrator of this policy. This will normally be the Town Clerk, although a deputy will be available to take the Clerk’s place when necessary. Whoever acts as Coordinator will ensure that a deputy is in place when they are not available.

Grit supplies

The bus route through Axbridge is part of Somerset’s Precautionary Salting Network. However, the Town Council will ensure a stock of grit sufficient to treat key points in the road infrastructure within the town at residents’ request. At least nine 20kg bags or equivalent are recommended.

The stock of grit will be stored at the Lengthsman’s property, with his kind permission.

The Town Council also provides grit bins at the bottom of Chestnut Avenue, opposite the bottom of Horn’s Lane on High Street/West Street and at the junction of Hillside/Fennel Lane, of which will be filled by Somerset Council.

The Coordinator will check the quantity of grit in stock in October/November, and any new supplies will be requested and picked up as necessary from Somerset Council. The Coordinator will arrange transportation to Axbridge either by Somerset Council or by local volunteers.

Distribution of grit

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When supplies of grit are requested by residents, the Coordinator will gain the agreement of a Town Councillor, and request that local volunteers (including Town Councillors) move the supplies as necessary, but will not be directly responsible for the physical transportation, distribution or spreading of grit.

The grit will be put in place to be distributed by volunteers/residents as and when required, and is only to be spread on public highways/footways (i.e. not private land).

The Coordinator will not be responsible for monitoring weather conditions. When severe weather has passed, the Coordinator will request that volunteers move any remaining supplies back into storage.

Communication & Coordination

The Coordinator will be the Town Council's main point of contact, and will coordinate the supply and distribution of grit on behalf of the Town Council.

The website will contain details of the Town Council's role and emergency contact numbers for the Coordinator and Somerset Council.

The Coordinator will verify emergency contact details for Somerset Council (or equivalent body) before placing on the website

Relevant contact details to be shared on the Town Council social media platforms.

END

Adopted by Council: 8 July 2024 (minute 51.24(b) refers

Reviewed by Highways Advisory Group: 24 June 2024

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Policy 5 Axbridge Town Council

Complaints Procedure

The following procedure, as adopted by the Council, should be followed if a complaint is received about the administration of the Council, or its procedures.

Before the Meeting

1. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the council's procedures or administration in writing to the clerk or other nominated proper officer.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the clerk or other proper officer, they may be advised to put it to the chairman of the council.
3. The clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the council or by the committee established by the council for the purposes of hearing complaints.
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish.
5. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting and the identity of the representative, if any, to attend with them and the capacity in which that representative will be attending. The council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

At the Meeting

6. The council or the established complaints committee shall at any point consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council or complaints committee meeting in public.
7. Chairman to introduce everyone.

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8. Chairman to explain procedure.
9. Complainant (or representative) to outline grounds for complaint.
10. Members to ask any question of the complainant.
11. If relevant, clerk or other proper officer to explain the council's position.
12. Members to ask any question of the clerk or other proper officer.
13. Clerk or other proper officer and complainant to be offered opportunity of last word (in this order).
14. Clerk or other proper officer, complainant and representative and the press and members of the public to be asked to leave room while Members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. Alternatively, if more convenient, the Members will withdraw to a meeting room to consider the matter. (If a point of clarification is necessary, all parties to be invited back to reconvene the meeting).
15. Clerk or other proper officer and complainant and representative and the press and members of the public return to hear decision, or to be advised when decision will be made.

After the Meeting

16. Decision confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.
- 17 Minutes will be agreed at the next meeting of the Council or the Complaints Committee.

Adopted by Council: 21st March 2011 (minute 189/10(c))

Reviewed by Admin and Finance Advisory Group: 3 June 2024

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Policy 6 Axbridge Town Council

Data Protection Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The 1998 Data Protection Act has been in force since 1 March 2000. Axbridge Town Council supports the objectives of the Act and will comply with it.

1.2 The purpose of this policy statement is to state the Town Council's commitment to maintaining the confidentiality of personal information within its record systems, which is required by the Act.

1.3 The Data Protection Act 1998 also allows individuals to make a data subject access request. In such a case an individual is entitled to receive, in an intelligible form, all information held relating to them. There is an application form, which must be completed, and the maximum fee that can be charged is £10.00. For further information contact the Data Protection Officer.

1.4 The obligations contained in this policy statement apply to both Council Members and employees.

2. Policy

2.1 Axbridge Town Council is committed to maintaining the strictest level of confidentiality for any personal data it is responsible for processing. The Town Council will only process or disclose personal data for purposes necessary for Town Council business and for purposes that have been notified to the Data Protection Commissioner. The Town Council will adhere to the Principles outlined in the Data Protection Act 1998.

2.2 The eight principles are:

- i) Personal data shall be processed fairly and lawfully and, in particular, shall not be processed unless:-
 - ◆ at least one of the conditions in Schedule 2 is met, and
 - ◆ in the case of sensitive personal data, at least one of the conditions in Schedule 3 is also met.

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- ii) Personal data shall be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes, and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes.
- iii) Personal data shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose or purposes for which they are processed.
- iv) Personal data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date.
- v) Personal data processed for any purpose or purposes shall not be kept for longer than necessary for that purpose or those purposes.
- vi) Personal data shall be processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects under this Act.
- vii) Appropriate technical and organisational measures shall be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data.
- viii) Personal data shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside of the European Economic Area, unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection for the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data.

2.3 The Town Council carries out its affairs in an open manner. Apart from exceptional circumstances as outlined in the Act, the Town Council will provide information about a data subject on request. Where a data subject asks the Town Council for access to data, the request must come on a [Subject Access Request Form](#) and with the fee set by the Council in accordance with the Act. The Subject Access Request Form, which has been made available on the Town Council website (www.axbridge-tc.gov.uk), must be returned to the Data Protection Officer.

2.4 The Council will try to hold only the minimum data necessary to perform its business and will erase or destroy the data in such a manner that confidentiality is maintained. The Council will try to ensure that data is accurate and up to date and will correct inaccuracies without unnecessary delay.

2.5 Axbridge Town Council reserves the right, in exceptional circumstances, to deviate from this policy, only after having taken the advice of the Monitoring Officer.

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3. Definitions

3.1 Personal Data: any data that relates to a living individual who can be identified from that data. This includes any expression of opinion about the individual and any indication of the intentions of the Town Council in respect of that individual.

3.2 Processing: in relation to information or data, means obtaining, recording or holding the information or data or carrying out set operations on it including disclosure.

3.3 Data Subject: an individual who is the subject of personal data.

Adopted by Council: 21st June 2010 (minute 26/10(f) refers)

Reviewed by Admin and Finance Advisory Group: 3 June 2024

Policy 7 Axbridge Town Council

AXBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

DATA PROTECTION ACT 1998

SUBJECT ACCESS REQUEST FORM

To enable Axbridge Town Council to deal with this request promptly and in accordance with its statutory obligations, please complete the following information and return with the fee to The Data Protection Officer, Axbridge Town Council, PO Box 1184, Axbridge, Somerset, BS26 2WJ

1. Applicant's Full Name			
Address			
Postcode		Tel. No	
Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)		Mobile	
2. Are you:			
a) the Data Subject?		Yes/No	
b) a representative of the Data Subject with written authority from them?		Yes/No	
If you answered "Yes" to a), please go to section 4. If you answered "Yes" to b), please attach a copy of the authority letter and fill in the Data Subject's details in section 3. If you answered "No" to b), please complete the following:			
Your relationship to the Data Subject			
What evidence you have to confirm your entitlement to act for the Data Subject			
3. For use by representatives of the Data Subject ONLY			
Data Subject's Full Name			
Address			
Postcode		Tel. No	
Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)		Mobile	

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<p>4. Please enclose TWO documents that clearly show your name, date of birth and address. E.g. a birth/adoption certificate, driving licence, medical card or passport. Failure to provide this proof of identity may delay your application. I hereby formally apply for a copy of personal data (as defined by the Data Protection Act 1998 under Section 7(1)) held by the Town Council for:-</p>			
a) Myself		{Please delete as	
b) the Data Subject (shown in Section 3)		{appropriate	
<p>I am aware that the fee for applications is £10 and enclose the fee to cover this application (cheques to be made payable to Axbridge Town Council)</p>			
<p>5. I understand that it may be necessary for the Council to obtain more information from me before the extraction of the personal data can start and until the Council has all the necessary information the statutory response period does not commence.</p>			
Signed:		Date:	

Adopted by Council: 21st June 2010 (minute 26/10(f) refers)

Reviewed by Admin and Finance Advisory Group: 3 June 2024

Policy 8 Axbridge Town Council

Document Retention, Storage and Destruction Policy.

Currently this is a working document to be altered and expanded from experience and the increase in knowledge during the implementation and establishment of the policy.

This policy will be agreed by council and implemented by the clerk to the council as and when updated.

Scope.

For the purpose of this policy a **document** is a generic term and covers:

all correspondence, i.e. paper letters, emails on electronic media, and all other paper records and files held on electronic media.

Some documents may be held as both as paper copies and electronic files.

The policy covers documents belonging to the council or needing to be retained by the council.

Grouping of Documents and storage.

The policy will refer to various groups of documents which are stored together.

The method of storage of a group of documents will depend on some or all of the following factors:

- Importance of the document
- Business area of document
- Paper based or electronic
- Length of retention
- Physical size of paper items.

Paper documents: will be stored in folders within Fire Proof filing cabinets or Metal filing cabinets

Electronic documents: emails and other documents will be stored on the hard drive of the council's computer in electronic folders (and backed up on-line)

Areas of Business.

All documents should be filed within specified areas of council business. These areas of business will reflect the committee and advisory group structure of the council. This policy will follow the same business structure.

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**Administration & Finance
Office)**

(CRO = County Records

Document Group	Filing	Retention Period (Minimum) or Policy	Destruction or Disposal Policy	Reason/Notes
Council and committee minutes, signed (including all attached papers)	Paper: Fire proof cabinet – folder per year	12 years	CRO every 4 years	
	Electronic copies. – folder per year	3 years	Delete	
Leases	Fire proof cabinet	6 years after end.	CRO	
Reference Documents				
Paid Invoices and their Cheques Recorded Receipts Bank Statements	Paper: File per financial year. Current year and previous year in Fire Proof Cabinet	6 years after year end	Shred	
General Correspondence	Paper: File per calendar year.	2 years plus current year.	Shred	
	Email & Electronic copies -folder per year	2 years plus current year	Delete.	

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Allotments Cemeteries and Open Spaces

Document Group	Filing	Retention Period (Minimum) or Policy	Destruction or Disposal Policy	Reason/Notes
Allotment holders and accounts books	Fire proof cabinet	Current and Previous Book	CRO of earlier books	
Allotment Map	Fire proof cabinet	Retain	-	
Correspondence	Paper: Filing cabinet – folder per year	4 years	Shred	Contains Names etc.

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Highways (including Car Parks)

Document Group	Filing	Retention Period (Minimum) or Policy	Destruction or Disposal Policy	Reason/Notes
Correspondence on current issues		Retain	n/a	
Correspondence on closed issues	Filing Cabinet – folder for year of closure	3 years	Shred	
	Emails – folder for year of closure	3 years	Delete	
	Electronic docs. – folder for year of closure	3 years	Delete	
Reference items (Maps, plans etc.)	Filing Cabinet or Electronic folder	Retain latest	Rcycle or delete	
Councillors' group meeting reports	Filing Cabinet or Electronic folder (Folder for each year)	3 years	Shred or delete	

Leisure and Recreation (including Changing Rooms and Public Toilets)

Document Group	Filing	Retention Period (Minimum) or Policy	Destruction or Disposal Policy	Reason/Notes

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Personnel and Protocol

Planning and Licensing.

Document Group	Filing	Retention Period (Minimum) or Policy	Destruction or Disposal Policy	Reason/Notes
Planning Applications and associated documents.	Papers: Filing Cabinet by Reference Number (List to be kept for quick reference.)	Retain for one year after final decision except for controversial or large developments. (Destruction of these decided individually by committee)	Shred	Contain names etc. Documents may be viewed on-line at Somerset Council

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Notes.

All rough notes made at meetings should be destroyed(shredded) after minutes have been approved.

All voting papers from meetings to be shredded as soon as possible after meeting.

Taylor (07/04/2014)

Councillor M

Adopted by Council:

Reviewed by Admin and Finance Advisory Group: 3 June 2024

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Policy 9 Axbridge Town Council

Policy for the Control of Dogs on the Furlong

The Policy for the control of dogs on the Furlong is as follows:

- No dogs in the play area
- Dogs to be on a lead at all times on the Furlong/recreation field.

Adopted by Council: 17th February 2014 (minute 169/13(e) refers)

Reviewed by Leisure and Recreation Advisory Group: 15 July 2024

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Policy 10 Axbridge Town Council

Dress Code Policy

“All members and officers are required to wear smart casual dress when attending public meetings and events in their capacity as a representative of the Town Council.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor to wear Chains of Office at public council meetings”.

Adopted by Council: 8 July 2024 (minute 54.24(b) refers)

Reviewed by Personnel and Protocol Committee: 24 June 2024 (minute 8.24 PS refers)

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Looking
forward to your
retirement

Axbridge Town Council POLICY 11 Discretions Policy

The LGPS Regulations 2013

and

The LGPS Regulations 2014

(Transitional Provisions and Savings)

and

The LGPS Regulations 2008

(Benefits, Membership and Contributions)

Employer name: Axbridge Town Council

Policy effective from: 20th June 2016 (minute 36/16(b) refers)

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These policies may be subject to review from time to time. Affected employees will be notified of any subsequent change to this Policy Statement.

Signed on behalf of: Axbridge Town Council

Signature of authorised officer: V Brice

Date: 20th June 2016

Print name of authorised officer: Victoria Leah Brice

Job title: Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

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LGPS 2013 & 2014 discretions

Regulation R16 (2) (e) and R16 (4) (d)

Shared Cost Additional Pension Scheme

An employer can choose to pay for or contribute towards a member's Additional Pension Contract via a Shared Cost Additional Pension Contract (SCAPC)

Policy decision

The Council would always consider the possibility – following consultation with the Personnel and Protocol Committee/Council.

Regulation R17 (1) and TP15 (1) (d) and A25 (3) and definition of SCAVC in RSch 1

Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution Arrangement

An employer can choose to pay for or contribute towards a member's Additional Voluntary Contribution arrangement entered into on or after 1 April 2014 through a shared cost AVC.

An employer can choose to pay for or contribute towards a member's Additional Voluntary Contribution arrangement entered into **before** 1 April 2014 through a shared cost AVC.

Policy decision

The Council would consider the possibility but would take advice before opting and following consultation with the Personnel and Protocol Committee/Council.

Regulation R30 (6) and TP11 (2)

Flexible Retirement **

Employers may allow a member from age 55 onwards to draw all or part of the pension benefits they have already built up while still continuing in employment. This is provided the employer agrees to the member either reducing their hours or moving to a position on a lower grade.

In such cases, pension benefits will be reduced in accordance with actuarial tables unless the employer waives reduction on compassionate grounds or a member has protected rights.

Policy decision

The Council does not give blanket consent for staff in the LGPS aged 55 or over to flexibly retire and draw immediate payment of pension benefits. Requests will be referred to the Personnel and Protocol Committee/Council and assessed on their merits taking into account such factors as cost and service delivery.

Regulation R30 (8) , TP3 (1), TPSch2, Para 2(1), B30 (5) and B30 (A) (5)

Waiving of actuarial reduction

Employers have the power to waive, on compassionate grounds, the actuarial reduction (in whole or part) applied to members' benefits paid on the grounds of flexible retirement.

Employers may also waive, on compassionate grounds, the actuarial

Policy decision

This may be exercised by the Personnel and Protocol Committee/Council in individual cases on compassionate grounds. Individual circumstances will be looked at according to the dictionary definition of compassion – “inclined to pity or mercy”.

reduction (in whole or part) applied to members' benefits for deferred members and suspended tier 3 ill health pensioners who elect to draw benefits on or after age 60 and before normal pension age.

Employers also have the power to waive, in whole or in part, the actuarial reduction applied to active members' benefits when a member chooses to voluntarily draw benefits on or after age 55 before age 60.

Regulation TPSch 2, para 2 (2) and 2 (3)

Power of employing authority to 'switch on' the 85 year rule

An employer can choose whether to switch on the 85 year rule for members who voluntarily retire on or after age 55 and before age 60.

An employer can also choose to waive, on compassionate grounds, the actuarial reduction applied to benefits for a member voluntarily drawing benefits on or after age 55 and before age 60.

Policy decision

This may be exercised by the Personnel and Protocol Committee/Council in individual cases on compassionate grounds. Individual circumstances will be looked at according to the dictionary definition of compassion – "inclined to pity or mercy".

Regulation R31

Power of employing authority to grant additional pension

An employer can choose to grant additional pension to an active member or within 6 months of ceasing to be an active member by reason of redundancy or business efficiency (by up to £6,500* per annum). (*the figure of £6,500 will be increased each April under Pensions Increase Orders)

Policy decision

The Council will not exercise this discretion either in addition to or as an alternative to augmentation.

***** Flexible Retirement – Please note that if you wish to offer your members the option of flexible retirement, you will need to formulate a separate policy (please see Guidance Notes)***

Policies not required but recommended:	
R22 (8) (b) - Whether to extend the 12 month option period for a member to elect that post 31st March 2014 deferred benefits should not be aggregated with a new employment	
R22 (7) (b) - Whether to extend the 12 month option period for a member to elect that post 31st March 2014 deferred benefits should not be aggregated with an ongoing concurrent employment	
R100 (6) - Extend normal time limit for	The Council will allow an option to

<p>acceptance of a transfer value beyond 12 months from joining the LGPS</p>	<p>transfer-in previous pension rights except in cases involving potential early retirement and consequent capital costs.</p>
<p>R9(1) & R9(3) - Determine rate of employees' contributions and when the contribution rate will be assessed</p>	<p>The Council will allocate employees to the appropriate contribution rate according to pay band at 1 April each year and adjust only where there is a contractual change during the year.</p>

LGPS 2008 discretions

To cover scheme members who ceased active membership on or after 1 April 2008 and before 1 April 2014 (no need to complete if not applicable).

Regulation B18

Flexible Retirement **

Employers may allow a member from age 55 onwards to draw all or part of the pension benefits they have already built up while still continuing in employment. This is provided the employer agrees to the member either reducing their hours or moving to a position on a lower grade.

In such cases, pension benefits will be reduced in accordance with actuarial tables unless the employer waives reduction on compassionate grounds or a member has protected rights.

Policy decision

Regulation B30

Choice of early payment of pension

B30 (2) Employers can also allow the early payment of deferred benefits to former members of the LGPS between the ages of 55 and 59.

Please note where a deferred member left the LGPS before 1 April 2008 the employer policy under the 1997 regulations will apply.

B30A(3) Employers may also grant an

Policy decision

application for reinstatement of a suspended tier 3 ill health pension on or after age 55 and before age 60.

B30 (5) and B30A (5) In such cases, pension benefits will be reduced in accordance with actuarial tables unless the employer waives reduction on compassionate grounds or a member has protected rights.

Adopted by Council: 20th June 2016 (minute 36/16(b) refers)

Reviewed by Personnel and Protocol Committee: 24 June 2024 (minute 8.24 PS refers)

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Policy 12 Axbridge Town Council

Equal Opportunities Statement

“The Council operates a policy of non-discrimination with equal opportunities for all.

Axbridge Town Council uphold equality and respect for all residents and visitors to the town. As a town we actively reject any form of intolerance”

Adopted by Council: 12 June 2023 (minute 35.23(c) refers)

Reviewed by Personnel and Protocol Committee: 24 June 2024 (minute 8.24 PS refers)

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Policy 13 Axbridge Town Council

Council policy on Farmers' Market Community Stall

Background.

Somerset Farmers' Markets have kindly let the Town Council have space for a stall to display information about the Council and space where the public can meet with councillors (without charge). The stall may also be shared with other organisations who wish to inform the local community of their activities.

The market day manager is keen that there is control over the use of the community stall so that the spirit of the market is maintained. "The Market is about giving customers and traders the chance to meet and to enjoy the products and to avoid conflict (e.g. two traders selling the same products)."

The Town Council has therefore set the following guidelines for organisations wishing to share the stall. These guidelines will be issued to all users and potential users of the stall.

Guidelines.

Organisations wanting to use the community stall should contact the Town Council giving details when and why they wish to use the stall (e.g. for selling tickets for the next theatre production). The Town Council will give permission if there is room and if the conditions given below are met.

The Town Council will need to consider whether the aims of organisations wishing to share the stall are in line with council policy as it will be automatically assumed by the public that the council supports any organisation sharing its stall.

If the Town council has any concerns about use of the stall it will liaise with the market management. The Town Council will inform the market management which organisations will be sharing the community stall each month.

Organisations should be local voluntary bodies or charitable bodies represented locally.

Local Government, the Emergency or Health Services would be allowed space to disseminate information relevant to local people.

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No purely political or religious organisations can use the stall.

Generally, only one organisation would be allowed to share the stall with the council. Also, organisations would not normally be allowed to share at two consecutive markets. Leaflets from other organisations not attending the stall may be allowed, space permitting.

There will be no sale of goods from the stall. Raffle tickets, or tickets for events from local organisations may be sold.

Surveys and handing out of leaflets are acceptable at the stall. Petitions on behalf of bodies other than Axbridge Town Council are not allowed.

Members of the public cannot be approached or harassed in anyway by those running the community stall.

The market management and the Town Council, have the right, before or at the market, to stop an organisation using the community stall.

Adopted by Council: 15th February 2016 (minute 164/15(c) refers)

Reviewed by Admin and Finance Advisory Group: 3 June 2024

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Policy 14 Axbridge Town Council

Financial Reserves Policy

Introduction.

This document outlines the procedures to identify financial reserves and actions to be taken if the Town Council finds itself in the situation where planned income is not received (e.g. the precept) or there is a large overspend for whatever reason. General advice is that the council should be able to call on reserves which would allow revenue payments to be made for at least three months and for a maximum of one year.

Policy.

The council policy is that reserves to cover six months expenditure should be identifiable by the following procedure which also indicates the priority for the items to be used if required.

Procedure.

Establish the Financial Position.

Add the budgeted revenue payments for the current financial year for:

	General Ac.	
	Changing Rooms Ac.	
	Car Parks Ac.	Giving a total of
£R		

The aim is to identify reserves of at least half of this total (6 months revenue expenditure).

Identify sources of funds.

Emergency funding should be taken from the identified sources in the following sequence if available:

Unallocated reserves

Start of year unallocated funds (underspend previous year)
Working capital (budgeted in precept)

Total: £X

Allocated reserves

Long term Maintenance funds
Funds allocated to Long Term Projects not started
Funds allocated to Short Term Projects not started

Total: £Y

Grants to be made

Total: £Z

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Sufficient sources should be identifiable such that
 $Z) > \text{£}R/2$

$\text{£}(X +Y +$

Reliance on allocated reserves will be reduced by increasing working capital and/or setting aside specific funds as unallocated reserves in future budgets.

Adopted by Council: 19th June 2017 (minute: 39/17(d) refers)

Reviewed by Admin and Finance Advisory Group: 3 June 2024

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Policy 15 Axbridge Town Council

Freedom of Information Policy

1. Introduction

Axbridge Town Council has adopted the Model Publication Scheme with effect from 1st December 2008. This scheme will enable members of the public to view and access information held by the Town Council.

2. Obtaining Information and Information held

There are three ways to obtain the information:

- Town Council web site (www.axbridge-tc.gov.uk)

The web site holds the type of information which the Council routinely publishes e.g. minutes and agendas. The information you want may already be included in the publication scheme – so please check the documents on the website first.

- Inspect Documents held by the Clerk

If you wish to view certain documents, you should contact the Clerk, either via the facility on the web site or by telephone, or in writing. Some documents require some time to locate, so it may be necessary to make an appointment.

- Individual Written Request

If the information is not included in the publication scheme or on the web site, you may send a written request to

- The Town Clerk, Axbridge Town Council, PO Box 1184, Axbridge, Somerset, BS26 2WJ
- Your request must include your name, address for correspondence, and a description of the information you require.

3. Town Council's Response to a Written Request

Within 20 working days of receipt of your written request the Town Council will:

- confirm to you whether or not it holds the information
- advise you if a fee will be charged

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- provide you with the information (after any relevant fee has been paid) unless an exemption applies (see 'Exemptions' paragraph below).

4. Fees

The Act only allows the Town Council to charge for answering Freedom of Information requests in the following circumstances:

1. Disbursement costs such as printing, photocopying and postage; and
2. When estimated staff costs involved in locating and or compiling the information exceed £450. Under these circumstances, the Town Council can refuse the request on the grounds of cost, or charge the applicant £20 per hour, plus disbursements for the estimated work.

For the majority of requests, or a series of requests from the same applicant within a 12 month period, it is expected that the charge for locating and compiling information will be less than £450 and therefore, except for disbursement costs, no reimbursement can be sought. However, where costs are estimated to exceed £450 (based on an hourly charge-out rate of £20), the Town Council can decide to:

- refuse the request; or
- comply with the request and charge for allowable costs as prescribed in the regulations; or
- comply with the request free of charge.

If the estimated cost of a request is more than £450, and it is decided to release the information and make a charge for the information then:

- A fee notice will be sent to the applicant requesting the appropriate fee.
- The request will not be answered until the fee has been received.
- If the actual cost of completing the request is more than the estimate then the Town Council will incur the additional cost.
- Where the cost is less than the estimated cost then the difference will be refunded to the applicant.

For disbursements costs, the Town Council will charge as set out in the [Guide to Information available under the Publication Scheme](#) on the website.

5. Exemptions

Some information may not be provided by the Town Council as there are 23 exemptions in the Freedom of Information Act, for example, personal data about individuals which is protected by the Data Protection Act 1998, or commercially confidential information.

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6. Further Help

If you need help in accessing information from the Council under the Freedom of Information Act, please contact the Town Clerk (address as before).

You will also find more detailed guidance on the website of the Information Commissioner.

7. Complaints

If you are dissatisfied with the response from the Town Council then you should put your complaint in writing to the Town Clerk at the address above. If you are still dissatisfied, you may contact the Information Commissioner via the website at www.ico.gov.uk or write to:

Customer Services Team
Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545700

Adopted by Council: 21st June 2010 (minute 26/10(f) refers)

Reviewed by Admin and Finance Advisory Group: 3 June 2024

Policy 16 Axbridge Town Council

Funding of Town Events

It is the policy of the Council that it does not fund events organised by independent town groups but would consider the funding of one-off specific items.

This policy to be reviewed annually.

Adopted by Council: 16th November 2009 (min 126/09(d) refers)

Reviewed by Personnel and Protocol Committee: 24 June 2024 (minute 8.24 PS refers)

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Policy 17 Axbridge Town Council

HIGHWAYS POLICY

HIGHWAYS MISSION STATEMENT

Roads, transport and parking are probably one of the most visible and actively discussed aspects of our town and as such shape how local people feel.

In recent years the council has collaborated with local action groups as well as Somerset Council to ensure our town meets our residents' needs. Certain issues are not within our powers, but we voice residents' concerns to Somerset Council.

We have commissioned highways consultants to recommend improvements and seek funding from Somerset Council to make our streets safer for pedestrians, drivers and cyclists. The council's ambitions are to :-

- *Pursue gateway installations at both Townsend and Cheddar Road junctions*
- *Improve cycling routes through the town.*
- *Improve access to the open spaces around Axbridge*
- *Facilitate pedestrian safety when crossing the bypass.*
- *Retain and improve parking within the town*
- *Support any efforts to reduce carbon emissions*

With your help we can improve our town by reporting any issues to the Town Council, or by offering your support to local community groups. Information about community groups can be obtained from the Town Clerk.

*Town Clerk Vicky.Brice@axbridge-tc.gov.uk
Report traffic incident to town council [here](#)*

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS

The council has agreed that there should be:

- a) Improvements to the pedestrian route from Axbridge Town Car Park to the Square to direct and encourage visitors along a safe route.
- b) A speed limit of 40mph on the Axbridge by-pass.

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OFF-STREET PARKING

Parking provision for developments

- a) The Town Council requests that Somerset Council ensures that the minimum parking spaces for new developments should be;
 - 1 Bedroom property, 2 Parking Spaces
 - 2 Bedroom property, 2.5 Parking Spaces
 - 3 Bedroom property 3 Parking Spaces
 - 4 Bedroom property 3.5 Parking Spaces

Where more than half the spaces are unallocated then there is no requirement for visitor parking. Where less than half are allocated visitor parking must be provided at 0.2 spaces per dwelling

These figures correspond to those stipulated in the Somerset Council Transport Policies Parking Strategy September 2013 .

- b) Developers of existing sites should be requested to take every opportunity to reduce the need for on-street parking, e.g. by considering the inclusion off-street parking for the development and for properties neighbouring the site.

ON-STREET PARKING

Parking in the Square

The Town Council requests the appropriate authorities to support the following principles:

- a) Parking in the Square should be primarily for shopping and short-term business visits.
- b) The layout of the parking in the Square should minimise the need for people to walk in front of parked vehicles. People and vehicles should be separated as far as possible.
- c) A single disabled bay should be provided in the Square.
- d) The layout of parking should provide an easy route for buses and safety for those using the buses.
- e) Lorries and vans delivering to businesses should be encouraged, where possible, not to park and unload in the Square.
- f) All vehicles must park inside the existing marked bays.

Parking (generally)

The Town Council requests the appropriate authorities to support the following principles:

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- a) Take note of the Town Council's regular review of opportunities to increase parking provision in the Town.
- b) Street parking should be allowed where it does not cause a hazard and the available road width is not reduced such that emergency vehicles encounter access problems.
- c) Street parking should be allowed to act as a traffic calming measure except where adjoining footways are narrow.
- d) Car parking should not be allowed where this would hinder public transport services.
- e) Verge and footway parking should be discouraged.
- f) Road side parking bays should be introduced where physically possible.
- g) Parking is discouraged adjacent to dropped kerbs and areas of dimpled pavement.

Enforcement of On-Street Parking (including the Square)

The enforcement officers should act on illegal parking, including verge and footway parking, throughout the Town on a regular basis.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The Town Council's view is:

In General

- a) Currently buses provide the only practical public transport system but the council would support any others that could be provided.
- b) Residents and visitors to the town should be encouraged to use the bus services.
- c) The route for the buses through the town should provide easy access for all residents wishing to use them.
- d) The council will endeavour to see that the bus route is kept clear of congestion.
- e) The council will take every opportunity to have the number of bus routes and the frequency of services increased.

The Bus Route

The primary bus route (eastbound) will be:

Townsend -> Houlgate Way -> Old Church Road -> Meadow Street
->The Square -> St Mary Street -> Jubilee Road -> Cheddar Road.

Westbound buses will use the same route in reverse.

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Ideally request stops in both directions should be located at:

- a) **Houlgate Way** between the junctions with West Street and Starrs Close with raised kerbs and bus shelters on both sides of road.
- b) **Houlgate Way** outside the Health Centre with raised kerbs and bus shelters in both directions.
- c) **Old Church Road** between Meadow Street car park and The Square with raised kerbs and bus shelters both sides of the road.
- d) **The Square**. No raised kerbs. No bus shelters.
- e) **Jubilee Road** just west of the junctions with Parkfield Road and Hippisley Drive with raised kerbs and bus shelters both sides.
- f) **Cheddar Road** east of Wood Lane and the road to the reservoir with raised kerbs and bus shelters both sides.

Adopted by Council: 14 August 2023 (minute no. 66/03(b) refers)

Reviewed by Highways Advisory Group: 24 June 2024

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Policy 18 Axbridge Town Council

Lone working policy (in conjunction with the H&S policy)

The Council will:

- Be aware of safety issues relating to working alone.
- Assess lone working risks systematically and regularly.
- Ensure that the clerk is able to recognise potential risks.
- Report and record any incidents that relate to working alone.

Any employee of the Council will, where relevant:

- Be aware of safety issues relating to working alone.
- Take reasonable care.
- Consider and assess the need for closing the office door when the downstairs venue is in use and, if the door is closed, to use the spyhole to establish who is there before opening the door.
- Keep someone, either at home or on the Council, as appropriate, aware of location, meetings, contact detail etc.
- Report any dangers, or potential danger, as they arise.
- Report and record any incidents that relate to working alone

Site security

- A chain on the front door, to be connected before opening the front door to anyone calling.
- A chain on the inside of the office door to be connected when the ground floor of the premises is in use by church personnel or other hirers
- Mobile phone to hand at all times.

Adopted by Council: 12 June 2023 (minute 35.23(c) refers)

Reviewed by Personnel and Protocol Committee: 24 June 2024 (minute 8.24 PS refers)

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Policy 19 Axbridge Town Council

Petition Guidance

Petitions to Axbridge Town Council should:-

- Address Axbridge Town Council, and on completion be delivered to the Clerk
for presentation to Full Council
- Clearly state the problem or issue which the petition is about
- Use the phrase: 'We the undersigned...'
- Clearly request what you would like done
- Indicate who has organised the petition
- Include the signature of each individual petitioner
- Include the name and address including postcode of everyone who signs
- Have the request written at the top of each sheet of signatures before signing

Example petition:

It has been noted by many residents of Axbridge that the town has neither a bridge nor an axe.

We the undersigned therefore ask that Axbridge Town Council construct a bridge
in the Square and purchase an axe for the use of the town's residents.

(signature) Emily Troak, ORGANISER, 63 High Street, Axbridge BS26 1XY

(signature) Paula Sypes, 73 West Street, Axbridge, BS26 2XZ

(signature) Rabbi R Hymnal, Old Town House, The Square, Axbridge, BS26
3XX

(signature) Marge Jelly, 53 Moorland Street, Axbridge, BS26 5XV

(signature) Tristan Bend, 37 Jubilee Road, Axbridge, BS26 4XW

Adopted by Council: 21st January 2008 (min 136/07(b) refers)

Reviewed by Admin and Finance Advisory Group: 3 June 2024

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Policy 20 Axbridge Town Council

Planning and Licences Committee

Town Council policy on Planning Enforcement matters

Case 1.

Planning permission has been given by Somerset Council. Possible non-compliance with submitted plans and/or planning conditions.

Items will be considered by the committee if

- a) a member of public reports an issue to the clerk or to a councillor verbally or in writing and agrees to the issue being raised at the planning meeting and that it may be reported to Somerset Council on their behalf, or,
- b) a councillor reports the issue

The clerk or a councillor will need to check that plans and planning conditions in question appear to be correct and valid. If so, the matter must be put on the agenda of the Town Council committee meeting.

The committee should refer all issues to Somerset Council unless the members feel that there has not been a reasonable time for the developer to comply with the plans/conditions or wishes to give the developer the opportunity to respond with relevant facts.

Any item not referred to Somerset Council must be considered again at the next committee meeting or a reason for no referral should be given to the complainant.

The name of the complainant will not be forwarded to Somerset Council.

Generally, the accuracy of any report of non-compliance will not be investigated by the Town Council.

The progress of all referrals to Somerset Council of non-compliance will be monitored and reported to committee.

Case 2.

Development has apparently commenced or taken place without the required planning permission.

Items will be considered if

- a) a member of public reports an issue to the clerk or to a councillor verbally or in writing and agrees to the issue being raised at the planning meeting and that it may be reported to Somerset Council on their behalf, or,
- b) a councillor reports the issue

All matters will be referred to the clerk in the first instance. The clerk will check whether or not there appears to be a planning application for the development

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and if not whether the type of development requires planning approval. If it is certain that planning permission exists or is not required then this will be reported back to the complainant without consideration by the committee.

If there is doubt that the necessary permissions have been acquired for the development in question the item must be placed on the agenda for committee members to consider.

All reports will be referred to Somerset Council unless the committee agrees to defer the decision to refer to Somerset Council to the next meeting to give the opportunity to consider the item further.

The name of the person raising the issue will not be forwarded to Somerset Council.

The progress of enforcement will be monitored and reported to the committee.

Adopted by Council: 8 July 2024 (minute 32.24(c) refers)

Reviewed by Planning and Licences Committee: 10 June 2024 (minute 8.24PL refers)

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Policy 21 Axbridge Town Council

Press and Media Policy

All responses to the press by the Town Council shall relate to policies of the council or items discussed by the Town Council and will be dealt with in the first instance by the Town Clerk. The Chairman, and in his absence the vice-chairman, are also authorised to give the views of the Council to the press on any non-confidential subject agreed by Council.

Whenever possible any information given to the press shall be given in writing so as not to leave interpretation open to misunderstanding and misreporting.

At no time shall the personal views of either members or officers of the Council be given to the press in a way which could be interpreted as a view of the Council as a whole.

If a response is made to the press in an emergency situation, then the response should be ratified at the next council meeting.

Adopted by Council: 21st November 2011 (minute 130(e)/11 refers)

Reviewed by Admin and Finance Advisory Group: 3 June 2024

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Policy 22 Axbridge Town Council

Planning and Licences Committee

Policy on the process of publicising and considering very large planning applications.

Background.

Generally small applications are considered and decided by the Committee without reference to Council. Large applications are considered by the committee and recommendations passed to Council for a decision. This policy relates to very large applications where the Council would want to gauge public opinion before making a response to the planning authority.

The policy is required because the three weeks response period that will be available after receipt of a very large application may not be long enough to decide on and set up public consultation processes and organise council meetings. The following process is agreed in readiness.

Definitions.

Small application. Relating to one dwelling and/or its curtilage or one Small business premises. or trees and TPOs

Large application Relating to more than one dwelling or a significant alteration to a business use or business property

Very large application Plans for mixed or extensive developments, particularly those on which the Council would wish to consult the general public.

Process.

1. The clerk in consultation with the Mayor and the Chairman of the Planning and Licences Committee will decide that an application is “very large”.
2. For a “very large” planning application a public meeting from say 6.30pm to 8.00pm followed by a Council meeting at say 8.15pm will be arranged. (The application would not be considered by the Planning and Licences Committee.)

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3. The only business at the Council meeting should be to make a decision on the planning application presented at the prior public meeting.
4. At the public meeting, the planning application would be presented and explained and interested parties would be invited, including the developer, and the public would be given an opportunity to express their views.
5. The fact that public meeting would be the main opportunity for the public to give their opinion to the Town Council should be publicised.
6. Councillors would be expected to attend the public meeting and to be familiar with the application before the Council meeting.
7. There would be no opportunity for public participation at the Council meeting that follows the public meeting.
8. Social media would be used, if possible, to inform residents of the application and this procedure.
9. Written comments from residents should be encouraged and accepted prior to the public meeting.

Adopted by Council: 18th July 2016 (minute 32.24(c) refers)

Reviewed by Planning and Licences Committee: 10 June 2024 (minute 8.24PL refers)

Policy 23 Axbridge Town Council

Information available from Axbridge Town Council under the model publication scheme

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Cost
Class1 - Who we are and what we do (Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts)	For Contact details see end of the schedule	
This will be current information only		
Who's who on the Council and its Committees	Hard copy – contact Town Clerk Website	10p per sheet Free
Contact details for Parish Clerk and Council members	Hard copy – contact Town Clerk Website Annual Report – summary hand delivered to all Axbridge	10p per sheet Free

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households annually.

Hard copy of Annual Report/Summary 10p per sheet

Website – Full Annual Report Free

Notice Board – Axbridge Square Website Free

Notice Board – Axbridge Square Website – within Annual Report Free

Location of main Council office and accessibility details

Staffing structure

Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it
(Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit)

Current and previous financial year as a minimum

Annual return form and report by auditor Hard copy – contact Town Clerk 10p per sheet

Finalised budget Hard copy – contact Town Clerk 10p per sheet

Website Free

Precept Hard copy – contact Town Clerk 10p per sheet

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	Website – within budget and minutes	Free
	OYEZ newsletter – hand delivered to all households in Axbridge. Precept information included (limited period)	
	Hard copy of OYEZ	10p per sheet
Borrowing Approval letter	Website – OYEZ Hard copy – contact Town Clerk	Free 10p per sheet
Financial Standing Orders and Regulations	Hard copy – contact Town Clerk	10p per sheet
	Website	
Grants given and received	Hard copy – contact Town Clerk	Free 10p per sheet
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract	Hard copy – contact Town Clerk	10p per sheet
Members' allowances and expenses	Hard copy – contact Town Clerk	10p per sheet

Please note that the Council do not pay any Members Allowances or

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Expenses other than the
Chairman's (Mayor's) Allowance.

Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing

(Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews)

Parish Plan

Hard copy – contact Town Clerk
for Full Plan or Summary Plan

10 per sheet

Annual Report to Parish or Community Meeting

Website
Hard copy – contact Town Clerk

Free
10 per sheet

Quality status

Website
Hard copy of Quality Status
information – contact Town Clerk

Free
10p per
sheet

Local charters drawn up in accordance with DCLG guidelines

Website – Minutes of Council
meeting regarding quality status
issues
N/A

Free

Class 4 – How we make decisions

(Decision making processes and records of decisions)

Current and previous council year as a minimum

Timetable of meetings

Hard copy – contact Town Clerk

10p per
sheet

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	Website	Free
Agendas of meetings	Notice Board – Axbridge Square Hard copy – contact Town Clerk	10p per sheet
	Website	Free
Minutes of meetings – nb this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	Notice Board – Axbridge Square (limited period) Hard copy – contact Town Clerk	10p per sheet
	Website	Free
Reports presented to council meetings - nb this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	File in Post Office – Axbridge Square Hard copy – contact Town Clerk	Free to view 10p per sheet
Responses to consultation papers	Website	Free
Responses to planning applications	Hard copy – contact Town Clerk	10p per sheet
	Hard copy – contact Town Clerk	10p per sheet
Bye-laws	Website – within minutes of the Planning and Licences Committee N/A	Free

Class 5 – Our policies and procedures

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(Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities)

Current information only

Policies and procedures for the conduct of council business:

Hard copy – contact Town Clerk,
or by visual inspection 10p per
sheet

Procedural standing orders

Committee and sub-committee terms of reference

Delegated authority in respect of officers

Code of Conduct

Policy statements

Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff:

Website – standing orders, terms
of reference and policy statements Free

Internal policies relating to the delivery of services

Equality and diversity policy

~~Health and safety policy~~

~~Recruitment policies (including current vacancies)~~

Policies and procedures for handling requests for information

Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme)

Hard copy – contact Town Clerk 10p per
sheet

Information security policy

Hard copy – contact Town Clerk 10p per
sheet

Records management policies (records retention, destruction and archive)

Data protection policies

Schedule of charges (for the publication of information)

Contact Town Clerk for details
Hard copy – contact Town Clerk 10 per sheet
This document

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Class 6 – Lists and Registers

Currently maintained lists and registers only

Any publicly available register or list

Copy of principal authority's electoral register is held

Visual inspection free
10p per sheet

Assets Register

Hard copy – contact Town Clerk

Disclosure log
Register of members' interests

N/A
Hard copy – contact Town Clerk

10p per sheet

Register of gifts and hospitality

Hard copy – contact Town Clerk

10p per sheet

Class 7 – The services we offer

(Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses)

Current information only

Allotments

Hard copy – contact Town Clerk

10p per sheet

Burial grounds and closed churchyards

Contact Town Clerk – visual inspection

Community centres and village halls
Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities

N/A
Hard copy – contact Town Clerk

10p per sheet

Seating, litter bins, clocks, memorials and lighting
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Hard copy – contact Town Clerk

10p per sheet

Bus shelters	Hard copy – contact Town Clerk	sheet 10p per sheet
Markets	N/A	
Public conveniences	N/A	
Agency agreements	N/A	
A summary of services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees (e.g. burial fees)	Hard copy – contact Town Clerk	10p per sheet
Additional Information		
This will provide Councils with the opportunity to publish information that is not itemised in the lists above		
OYEZ Newsletter for current year – currently issued to all households in Axbridge after each monthly council meeting (no meeting in December)	Hard copy – contact Town Clerk	40p per sheet
	Website	Free

Contact details:

Mrs V L Brice – Axbridge Town Clerk
Axbridge Town Council
PO Box 1184
Axbridge
Somerset
BS26 2WJ
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Tel – 07884 264033

Email – vicky.brice@axbridge-tc.gov.uk

Website – www.axbridge-tc.gov.uk – note – most of the website information referred to can be found under the residents section, then under Town Council

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SCHEDULE OF CHARGES

This describes how the charges have been arrived at and should be published as part of the guide.

TYPE OF CHARGE	DESCRIPTION	BASIS OF CHARGE
Disbursement cost	Photocopying @10p per sheet (black & white) Colour Photocopying – not available	Actual cost *
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 nd class
Statutory Fee		In accordance with the relevant legislation (quote the actual statute)
Other		

* the actual cost incurred by the public authority

Approved by Council:

Reviewed by Admin and Finance Advisory Group: 3 June 2024

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Policy 24 Axbridge Town Council

SEDGEMOOR CHARTER - DELETED

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Policy 25 Axbridge Town Council

Procedure for inspection and management of trees

- The Axbridge Town Council will be aware of the recommendations outlined in the National Tree Safety Group's publication 'Common sense risk management of trees'; through the Council's Cemetery, Allotment & Open Spaces advisory group.
- A register/maps will be kept identifying all trees on land owned or leased by Axbridge town council.
- The Cemeteries, Allotments and Open Spaces Group will oversee the inspection and management of trees.
- Each Committee or Advisory group should be aware of the trees on Town Council land falling within its remit.
- Each Committee or Advisory group, with trees on the land within its remit, should carry out an informal visual inspection in the Spring and Autumn of each year and where there are specific concerns (extreme weather). Any concerns should be raised with the Council/CAOS group
- A qualified formal inspection shall be undertaken every other year (or as dictated by the recommendations in the last inspection) for risk identification, analysis, evaluation and treatment.
- Trees will be inspected for health, disease and decay and in particular for exposed roots, low branches and damaged hanging branches.
- Notices will be placed where a hazard is identified until appropriate treatment is completed.
- Records will be kept following monitoring, reviews and treatment.

Approved by Council: 21st February 2022 (minute 167.21(c) refers)

Reviewed by Cemetery, Allotment and Open Spaces Advisory Group: 24 June 2024 (minute 8.24 PS refers)

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Policy 26 Axbridge Town Council

Local Business Directory

Local business directory - criteria for inclusion of businesses

Entries in the **Local Business Directory** are free-of-charge.

Inclusion in the **Directory** does not imply any endorsement by Axbridge Town Council (or Axbridge Chamber of Commerce).

Please ensure you keep the information we publish up-to-date by informing info@axbridge-tc.gov.uk of any changes as and when they occur.

Businesses requesting an entry in the Local Business Directory should meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Business trading from premises in Axbridge Postal District (BS26)
- Business owned by an Axbridge resident
- Business which is a member of the Axbridge Chamber of Commerce
- Business with a close association to the Town

Door-to-door or Direct Sales operations will as a rule not be allowed an entry.

The Town Council reserves the right to admit or refuse any entry to the **Directory** or vary the above guidelines at its sole discretion.

Adopted by Council: 21st January 2019 (minute 147/18(d) refers)

Reviewed by Admin and Finance Advisory Group: 3 June 2024

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Policy 27 Axbridge Town Council

Succession Planning and Training Policy

Process for Nominating Mayor and Deputy Mayor

- The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are elected annually.
- The Deputy Mayor usually becomes Mayor after spending a year as Deputy and this process works well.
- Nominations for both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are proposed, seconded and voted upon in accordance with standing orders at the March meeting of Council.
- This nomination in March is a practical step to enable the incoming Mayor (Mayor Elect) to plan for the Mayor Making ceremony and, in particular, to make the catering arrangements.
- The formal election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor takes place at the Annual Council Meeting and Mayor Making Ceremony in May. Again, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are proposed, seconded and voted upon in accordance with standing orders. They then take office immediately.
- At the January meeting of Council, an item will be included on the agenda to enable members to express an interest in the role of Deputy Mayor for the Mayoral year beginning in May.
- On request, The Clerk will forward members interested in the position the Information Pack and Mayor's Briefing Paper.
- Interested members are encouraged to discuss the position with the current Deputy Mayor.
- Members who still wish to be considered for nomination to the position of Deputy Mayor should complete the "Expression of Interest Form" and return to the Clerk by 1 March.
- Members expressing this interest should ensure that they have a proposer and seconder for the nomination procedure at the March Council meeting.

Information Pack

The Mayor has two main roles

- To chair the monthly full council meetings of the Council and the Personnel and Protocol Committee meetings;
- To represent Axbridge Town Council and the community of Axbridge, at events both within the Town and within Somerset

The Mayor's briefing paper (attached) sets out the key roles and expectations of the Mayor. All of the appendices are available from the Clerk upon request.

To undertake this role, the Mayor, should have the following experience and skill

Being Mayor!

Time	To have sufficient time (and energy!) to devote to being Mayor which involves <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chairing meetings• Attending events both within and outside of Axbridge• Organising the Mayor's Banquet• Organising, alongside officers and members, the Civic Service taking the lead in the content of the service and arranging the entertainment to be provided• Close liaison with the officers (on a day to day basis)
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To have been the Deputy Mayor for a year, gaining first-hand knowledge and experience of the role• To have experience of chairing meetings and, ideally, attending a training session on being a good Chairman
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chairmanship skills – including giving sufficient time for discussion whilst still managing time well, to adhere to the agenda and to seek advice where needed• Professional and Presentable – as a representative of both the Town Council and Town of Axbridge• Listening to and being considerate of the needs and well-being of others – including members of the public, fellow members and officers• Discretion – dealing with sensitive matters carefully

Expression of Interest Form – Position of Deputy Mayor

I can confirm that, having read the information pack and Mayor's Briefing Paper, I am interested in the position of Deputy Mayor *and will seek a proposer and seconder prior to the Council meeting in March/have sought a proposer and seconder as set out below*

Name	
Address	
Tel no.	
Email address	
Why I am interested in the role of Deputy Mayor	
<i>Name of Proposer</i>	
<i>Name of Seconder</i>	

Please return the form to the Clerk by 1 March : Mrs V Brice, The Council Office, Church Rooms, Church Steps, The Square, Axbridge, Somerset, BS26 2AP

Signed:

Dated:

Adopted by Council: 12 June 2023 (minute 35.23(c) refers)

Reviewed by Personnel and Protocol Committee: 24 June 2024 (minute 8.24 PS refers)

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Policy 28 Business Continuity Motion - Deleted

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Policy 29 Axbridge Town Council

Bullying and Harassment Statement

“We treat everyone with courtesy and respect and ask for the same in return. We ask that you treat your councillors and council staff courteously without violence, abuse or harassment.

Councillors and council staff have the right to carry out their civic duties without fear of being attacked or abused. Any behaviour whether that be verbal, physical or in writing, which causes either councillors or council staff to feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, or threatened, is totally unacceptable.

The zero tolerance policy includes abuse, aggression or threats made in person, over the telephone or in written communication, including on social media. The council considers threatening behaviour to be:

- Attempted or actual aggressive, or physical actions made towards any councillor or member of staff;
- The use of aggressive, or abusive language, (including raising of the voice, swearing, shouting or in writing) which threatens or intimidates councillors or council staff”.

This policy applies throughout all council meetings, but it also applies to any councillor or council staff away from council meetings.

Adopted by Council: 12 June 2023 (minute 35.23(c) refers)

Reviewed by Personnel and Protocol Committee: 24 June 2024 (minute 8.24 PS refers)

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Policy 30 Axbridge Town Council Standing Order on Code of conduct and dispensations

- a All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.
- b Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he has a disclosable pecuniary interest. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.
- c Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he has another interest if so required by the Council's code of conduct. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.
- d **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- e A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by a meeting of the Council or committee for which the dispensation is required, and that decision is final.
- f A dispensation request shall confirm:
 - i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
 - ii. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
 - iii. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
 - iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.
- g Subject to paragraphs (d) and (f) of this order, a dispensation request shall be considered at the beginning of the meeting of the Council or committee for which the dispensation is required. The dispensation will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- h **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with this standing order paragraph (e) if having regard to all relevant circumstances any of the following apply:**

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- i. without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business;**
- ii. granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area; or**
- iii. it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

Adopted by Council: 21st February 2022 (minute 165.21(f) refers) Reviewed by Admin and Finance Advisory Group: 3 June 2024

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Policy 31 Axbridge Town Council

Procedure for Alarm Call

KEY INFORMATION.

Name of Company: – H&H Alarms

Address: Tutnell House, 44 Cliff Road, Worlebury, Weston-Super-Mare, North Somerset BS22 9SF

Tel: 01934 631509

This is the best number to call. They have a divert system in place so following the instructions on the phone will get you through to an engineer 24 hours a day.

Type of System: Wireless Pyronix burglar alarm system

What is alarmed: There is a door contact on the door coming in and a PIR sensor in the corner which covers the whole room.

What happens when the alarm goes off: Upon the alarm being triggered, the main panel and the bell box (Outside the Church Rooms) sound for a maximum of 15 minutes. (British standard only allows this time) Any mobile phones that has the ProControl+ app (with permission and subscription) will also receive a notification via the app to say the alarm has activated.

Which mobile phones are notified: A notification is sent to the Clerk's work and personal phones the Assistant Clerk's work and personal phone when the office is set or disarmed.

So in the event of a break in, the warning would be sent to these mobile phones.

PROCEDURE – SHOULD THE ALARM GO OFF

The Clerk to take the lead in responding to an alarm call.

In the daytime

- The Clerk, if close to the office, to carefully check the situation to verify whether a false alarm
- If there is any concern when approaching the office – the Clerk (or person in attendance) to call the police
- If not in the vicinity, the Clerk to liaise with the assistant clerk and/or Mayor
- The Clerk, Assistant Clerk and Mayor to be able to access the office and

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know password to cancel the alarm

In the night

If alarm call goes off in the night, the Clerk should call the Police in the first instance
The Clerk to then let the Mayor know of the issue and, if appropriate, both make their way to the office to meet with the Police

At no time should officers or members put themselves in any danger.

Adopted by Council: 13th February 2023 (minute 184.22(c) refers)

Reviewed by Admin and Finance Advisory Group: 3 June 2024

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Policy 32 – Axbridge Town Council Vision, Mission, Values and Strategic Objectives

Axbridge Town Council Vision, Mission, Values and Strategic Objectives

Vision

Axbridge Town Council (ATC) will strengthen Axbridge as an inclusive rural community that protects residential character and historic resources, and which promotes its development, and ensures respect for the environment.

Collaboratively working together to advance a resilient and robust economy which enhances a strong sense of community, successful businesses and a healthy environment.

Our vision is that we will work with creativity and drive for the benefit of the people that live and work in our town.

Mission

The Town Council provides a strong and independent voice to represent Axbridge and its residents to:

- Protect and improve the quality of life for the people of Axbridge, and for future generations.
- Develop the cultural and economic wellbeing of the town and its residents.
- Deliver professional public services to all residents in the Axbridge community, striving for high value and quality results.
- Enhance the attractiveness of the town as a community in which to live, work, visit and invest.

Values

To achieve our vision, we have committed to five values. These are: leadership, inclusivity, integrity and accountability, collaboration and stewardship.

LEADERSHIP To provide a central point for community engagement, to empower people to achieve their best, to promote continuous improvement, and to communicate openly and respectfully to achieve trust and accountability throughout our community.

INCLUSIVITY We cultivate an environment of trust, fairness and respect for all residents, businesses and visitors. We strive to ensure our actions are inclusive and

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reflective of our diverse community.

INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY We safeguard public trust through honest business practices and open communication. Our credibility with the public depends on our strong ethical stewardship and accountability.

COLLABORATION We promote transparent engagement and strive to understand and promote the needs and values of our community.

STEWARDSHIP We maintain and preserve our public assets. We protect our unique natural environment and the habitat it provides.

Strategic Objectives

These are how ATC will achieve its vision and mission. Any projects undertaken by ATC will always link directly to one or more of these nine strategic objectives.

1. To improve the environment of Axbridge.
2. To develop the cultural and economic well-being of the town.
3. To improve and maintain the health and recreational facilities.
4. To represent the needs of the community.
5. To provide a strong and independent voice for Axbridge.
6. To preserve and enhance the traditions, character and identity of the town.
7. To collaborate in the promotion of Axbridge as a clean, safe, welcoming and prosperous town for all.
8. To provide high standard and cost-effective services.
9. To work in partnership with other organisations and community groups to achieve more for Axbridge.

Adopted by Council: 13th March 2023 (minute 189.22(b) refers)

Reviewed by Strategic Planning Advisory Group: 19 June 2024

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