



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF AXBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL  
HELD ON MONDAY 12 AUGUST 2024  
IN AXBRIDGE TOWN HALL**

**Meeting commenced:** 7.30pm

**Meeting concluded:** 9.09pm

**Present:** Councillor Page (Mayor), Ham (Deputy Mayor), Browne, Jordan, Taylor, Thomas (from minute 66.24(d)), Wells and Willis

**Also in attendance:** Mrs V Brice (Town Clerk) and Mrs K Weir (Assistant Town Clerk)

**59.24 Apologies for absence**

**RESOLVED:** that apologies from Councillor Faulkner (personal commitment), Councillor Jenkins (personal commitment), Councillor Mitton (personal commitment) be received and approved.

**60.24 Draft Minutes of the Council Meetings held on 8 July 2024**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 8 July 2024 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman subject to the date of the minutes of the previous meeting being amended to read 10 June 2024 (minute 26.24 refers).

**61.24 Declarations of Interest**

**Declarations of Interest:**

**Councillor Browne** – declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to the reserved matters planning application 02/22/00021 for up to 53 dwellings on land to the south of Houlgate Way - living close to the site (minute 65.24(b) refers) and would leave the meeting should this item be discussed.

**Councillor Taylor** – declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to the reserved matters planning application 02/22/00021 for up to 53 dwellings on land to the south of Houlgate Way - living adjacent to the site (minute 65.24(b) refers) (see below for dispensation).

**Councillors Wells** – declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the grant request as Chairman of the Heritage Trail Group (minute 65.24(h) refers) leave the meeting

**Councillor Willis** – declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to the reserved matters planning application 02/22/00021 for up to 53 dwellings on land to the south of Houlgate Way - living close to the site (minute 65.24(b) refers) and would leave the meeting should this item be discussed.

**Dispensations:**

**Councillor Taylor** had a dispensation to speak and vote on applications relating to this site (02/22/00021 for up to 53 dwellings on land to the south of Houlgate Way) and indicated he wished to use this dispensation at this meeting (minute 65.24(b) refers).

**62.24 Public Participation** – no members of the public were in attendance.

**63.24 Reports from Police and Somerset Councillors**

**Police** – Information received on Rogue Traders had been shared on social media.

**Somerset Councillors** – County Councillor Ham gave a brief update on Somerset Council including roadside collections and road works. The Council Tax Reduction Support Consultation would be raised on social media.

#### **64.24 Written Reports – Outside Bodies**

**Axbridge and District Museum Trust** – Members had received the report of the meeting held on 17 July 2024.

**Axbridge Sports and Social Community Association** – the Fun Day had been an enjoyable event. A quiz would take place shortly and arrangements were in hand for Father Christmas night. The small trees had been ordered and there would be a replacement programme for the lights. The Association would be happy to consider grant requests from local groups.

#### **65.24 Planning**

##### **a. Minutes of the Planning and Licences Committee meetings**

Members received the minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2024 and the draft minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2024. The next meeting would be held on 19 August 2024 and would include consideration of an application for an extension at 22 Orchard Road (planning application 02/24/00012).

##### **b. Houlgate Way – update**

**At this juncture, Councillors Browne and Willis, having declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in this item, left the meeting.**

The Police would be in contact with the developers regarding the need to reinstall the 20mph sign. A resident had queried the time restrictions for operating machinery and had raised her concerns directly. These had been addressed. The developers had also put additional dust control measures in place.

**At this juncture, Councillors Browne and Willis re-joined the meeting.**

##### **c. Planning Application**

**Planning application number:** 02/24/00010/JMS

**Proposal:** Installation of a free- standing barrel sauna and the retrospective installation of a timber retaining wall

**Location:** 7 Hillside, Axbridge, Somerset, BS26 2AN

**RESOLVED:** that Somerset Council be advised that Axbridge Town Council has no observations to make on this application.

#### **66.24 Administration and Finance**

##### **a. Report of the Group**

Members received the report of the group. The key items are set out below.

##### **b. External Audit**

The External Audit had been signed off by the Auditors who had concluded that the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 was in accordance with Proper Practices and no other issues of concern had been raised. The Clerk

was arranging for the closure of the audit in line with the requirements. The Council thanked the Clerk for her hard work.

**c. Monthly Internal Audits**

The audits for April, May and June 2024 had been completed and there were no problems to report to Council.

**RESOLVED:** that the completion of these monthly audits be noted.

**d. Unity Bank Application - update**

**During this item, Councillor Thomas joined the meeting.**

A Savings Account and a Business Current account had been opened at the Unity Trust Bank so that all the cash held by the council could be protected. The £500.00 required to open the accounts had appeared on the online statement. Councillors appointed to authorise transactions were in the process of setting up their email addresses and login details. It was noted that Councillors Page, Ham and Taylor had been set up to view and authorise payments. The Clerk and Assistant Clerk would view and submit payments (whilst authorised to make payments from the banks' perspective, officers would not authorise any payments in line with financial regulations). The Clerk and Chairman would liaise with a view to arranging a transfer to check all systems were in place.

**RESOLVED:** that the Clerk be delegated to manage the amounts kept in each account and organise on-line transfers between the Council's two banks (Lloyds and Unity Trust) (payments from bank accounts still needing to be approved by two authorised payment signatories as per financial regulations).

**e. VAT refund – Sports Facilities**

It was suggested that the VAT refund of £722.61 received be ring-fenced for use to support football on the Furlong.

**RESOLVED:** that refund be ring-fenced accordingly.

**f. Delegation Scheme for The Clerk**

The group had considered this document. The reference to the District Council would need to be updated and reference to Oyez removed.

**RESOLVED:** that the Delegation Scheme be updated to incorporate these revisions and to add that the Clerk is also delegated to deal with matters as outlined in the financial regulations.

**g. Risk Assessment and Management Document**

The group had considered this document and proposed that no changes be made apart from updating the references to the District Council.

**RESOLVED:** that the Risk Assessment and Management Document be reviewed and agreed, subject to this minor change.

#### **h. Website**

The council had agreed to investigate the purchase a new compliant website (WCAG2.2AA compliance) which would need to be in place by October 2024. Members considered a report prepared by the Assistant Clerk. Several possible suppliers and sites had been investigated. The Group recommended that the Council sets a budget for the creation and installation of a new website and authorises the clerk to obtain quotes for the supply of these items based on the report. A maximum of £2000.00 for the budget was proposed.

**RESOLVED:** that officers obtain quotes from the two suppliers best considered to meet the needs of the Council, having good reviews and a council focused approach; that the quotes, when received, be circulated to the group members and a recommendation made to the next Council meeting.

#### **i. Heritage Trail – grant request**

**At this juncture, Councillor Wells, having declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in this item, left the meeting.**

The group had considered a request from the Heritage Trail Group (part of Axbridge Action Group) to donate towards the printing costs of leaflets and had recommended a grant of £200.00 be made from the local community groups grants budget. Member discussed this matter, supported the projected and wished to donate £250 to cover the remaining cost for the printing of the leaflets. Members felt it would be interesting to know how many people scan the QR codes.

**RESOLVED:** that a grant of £250 be made to Axbridge Action Group accordingly.

**At this juncture, Councillor Wells re-joined the meeting.**

#### **j. Community Table**

The bus group would be using the community space at the September market.

#### **k. Monthly Financial Report**

Members received a monthly financial report for August 2024 setting out the payments for ratification and authorisation (including recent invoices) together with the receipts, direct debits and standing orders received/paid in July 2024. Members noted the invoice from the Town Maintenance Contractor included the reimbursement of expenses of materials for the shoring up of a path at the allotments. Members also noted that a section of the cemetery fence had fallen forward and needed repair. The cost of the works would be £120 and members supported the decision to undertake this work at the earliest opportunity. The payment to Amazon was a debit card payment, not a bank transfer. The Sport and Social Community Association had paid £50 for the use of the changing rooms on the Fun Day.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) that the list of payment of invoices be ratified and approved (Appendix A);
- 2) that the Direct Debit and Standing Order payments for July be ratified and the receipts for July 2024 noted (Appendix B)

## **67.24 Highways Advisory Group**

### **a. Report of the Group**

Members received a report of the Group. The key items are set out below. The Chairman had asked whether the 20mph sign at Townsend could be re-located but Somerset Highways had advised that this would not be possible. The Clerk had contacted the owners to point out residents' responsibilities for the maintenance of vegetation under relevant legislation. The Chairman would chase up the cutting back of the foliage in Moorland Street Car Park. A further contractor would be asked to look at the repair of the wall.

### **b. Gateway Signage**

The Group proposed to leave the Axbridge sign that is on the A371 in its current location and get a new one for the Gateway at the Cheddar Road end of Town. The signs would include, as previously discussed, the Lamb and Flag emblem with "Welcome to Axbridge" "Please drive safely through our town" on one side and the Lamb and Flag emblem and "Thank You for visiting Axbridge" on the other side. The total cost for both signs, post and installation would be £650 plus VAT. Members wished to progress this work and considered the costs to be reasonable from a local company who could carry out the installation. Somerset Traffic Management would be contacted regarding the provision and cost of relevant white road markings.

**RESOLVED:** that the gateway signs and associated works be purchased accordingly.

### **c. Chapter 8 Training**

The Town Maintenance Contractor would be willing to complete Chapter 8 training to enable him to carry out additional tasks adjacent to the roadway. It was proposed that this cost be met by the Council.

**RESOLVED:** that the Council meet the cost of the training (approximately £190) to assist in his role for the benefit of the community.

### **d. The Square**

Members had contacted Somerset Council suggesting a site for the positioning of the Disabled Bay sign (on a post close to and between the residential properties known as Old Market Shop and Old Forge). Members had further discussed the enforcement of parking just outside of lines and concluded that this should be left to parking enforcement team.

### **e. Speed Indicator Device**

The Clerk had signed and returned the Memorandum of Understanding to Somerset Council. The signed copy back was awaited and would be chased up.

### **f. Dog Bin – Strawberry Line**

The Clerk had previously contacted Somerset Council to advise that the Council was considering a request for a dog bin to be placed near the Axbridge end of the Strawberry Line. A reply had been chased but was still awaited.

## **g. Highways Matters**

**Signage** – the signage previously agreed for the car parks and allotments had been produced. Members noted that it had been necessary to also order the posts for the sign at the Furlong car park. The height of the posts was being confirmed (any surplus section of post would be retained for future use).

**Volunteers and grass cutting** – the key volunteer would meet with the Group to discuss the work undertaken and various measures to ensure requirements were met.

**Road Ahead Closure signs** - members expressed concern that the road ahead closure sign at Cross had been badly positioned but had also given no indication that the road closure was actually through Easton (some 8 miles away). Whilst it was appreciated that signing was needed on A roads, officers would contact Somerset Highways to say that when they are that far in advance, the signs should indicate where the closure starts.

**Recycling collections** – the recycling had been missed at some properties in Moorland Stret, which was probably related to the road closure and efforts had been made to return.

**Recycling and Road Sweeping** - a resident had contacted Somerset Highways regarding the timing and co-ordination of the recycling and road sweeping services.

**Electric Charging points** – it was understood that houses could advertise their electric charging points for use by others.

## **68.24 Cemeteries, Allotments and Open Spaces**

### **a. Report of the Group**

Members received the report of the Group. The key items are set out below. The next meeting would be held on 16 September 2024. The works needed to the cemetery fence would be undertaken by the Town Maintenance Contractor. New allotment tenants were coming forward – some feedback was that the plots were too big. The “No Parking” sign would be installed.

### **b. Allotment Plots 10A and 10B**

Councillor Ham was finding out how to organise a Quarry Volunteer Day and, if it was possible, the group proposed that the two plots be cleared, the car park be extended into plot 10A and plot 10B then become two smaller plots.

### **c. Trees at the allotments**

A tenant has raised a possible issue with two trees at the back of his plot. The Town Maintenance Contractor would be asked to take a look.

### **d. Open Spaces Matters**

**Access over allotments to field gate** – it was thought that the main path may be being used for vehicular access to the field adjacent to the allotments. There was no right of vehicular access and this may need to be made clear/be monitored.

**Dead Trees – A371** – there appeared to be a few dead trees on the A371 opposite the Cheddar Road junction. These would be reported to Somerset Highways.

**Fly-tipping in Layby** – This would be reported to Somerset Highways.

## **69.24 Leisure and Recreation**

### **a. Report of the Group**

The Council received the report of the Chairman. The key items are set out below. The hard wiring electrical works at the changing rooms and public conveniences were due to take place

on 13 August 2024. The annual Play Area Inspection report had been considered and the height of the swing seat addressed immediately. Various works would be undertaken by the Facilities Manager. Discussions were taking place regarding the possible relocation of the Sports Wall, but this may not be feasible. The majorettes wished to use the changing rooms just prior to the carnival.

**b. Remit**

The group suggested minor changes to the remit to refer to the Furlong as the Recreation Field and to ensure that the Facilities Manager title was referred to correctly. Reference to Sedgemoor District Council would be updated.

**RESOLVED:** that the remit, as revised, be approved accordingly.

**c. Various Signs**

The group proposed the purchase of 8 laminated adhesive dog signs and 2 dibond signs (as shown in the accompanying report) at a cost of £66; two “Shelter. Do not climb” adhesive signs for the Youth Shelter and one or two adhesive signs for the swing seat saying “Please fasten the safety chain at all times”. The cost of the adhesive signs was likely to be in the region of £4.50 each. The football clubs may erect a banner on the fence or container regarding dogs.

**RESOLVED:** that the signs be ordered from Arien Signs accordingly.

**d. Report of the meeting with the Football Clubs**

Members received the report of the meeting with football representatives. The key items are set out below. An external defibrillator had been obtained by the footballers and the siting of the box would be agreed with them.

**e. Changing Rooms invoice for 2023-24 season**

Payment for the last season was due. It was proposed that the best way forward would be to continue to issue one invoice for the clubs to decide how that is broken down internally. It was proposed that a fixed annual of £800 be agreed (no VAT to be charged) and that this price be fixed for the 2024-2025 season.

**RESOLVED:** that the invoice for the 2023-2024 season be £800 and that this price be held for the next two seasons.

**f. Security of Tenure – Football Use**

The football clubs advised that grant funding was available but sometimes linked to the security of tenure for football.

**RESOLVED:** that the Council confirms that use of the recreation field for football is confirmed for the next 10-year period.

**g. Posts to Secure Football Goals**

The football clubs had asked permission to fix 2 short posts at the bottom corner of the field, in the vicinity of the former cricket nets area to fix the football nets. They would then weld (or similar) a chain to each post and the nets could then be secured at both ends. The posts would be visible to the grass cutter (or anyone else). A second set would be fixed behind their container.

**RESOLVED:** that permission be granted for the two posts accordingly.

#### **h. Play Area and Public Conveniences Logs**

The logs had been completed but not yet received. Various works had taken place including a deep clean of the changing rooms.

#### **i. Town Maintenance Report**

The Town Maintenance Contractor had worked 16 hours during July 2024. This included 7 hours working on the retaining wall at the allotments, 7 hours repairing the damaged fence at the allotments and 2 hours litter picking.

### **70.24 Personal and Protocol**

#### **a. Draft Minutes of the Personnel and Protocol meeting held on 22 July 2024**

Members received the draft minutes of the above meeting. The next meeting would be held on 19 August 2024.

#### **b. Handbells**

The handbell group had advised that some repairs were needed to the handbells. A specialist quote had been received for the works which would be in the region of £270 - £330 depending on the cost of the leather. Members considered the quote to be reasonable and the group had indicated that it may be able to contribute. The Committee recommended the acceptance of the quote to Council. The group had also indicated that they would be happy to play the handbells at the Mayor Making ceremony next year.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:** that the quote from Mr and Mrs Hill in the sum of £270 - £330 be accepted and a purchase order made to enable the repair works to take place, with any donation from the group being welcomed.

#### **c. Other Personnel matters**

The Methodist Service was being held on Sunday 18 August and the Carnival (with the celebration of 50 year of Axbridge Town Council) taking place on 21 September 2024. The Risk Assessment would be considered by the Personnel and Protocol Committee and sashes and a banner were being sourced. This would be a minimal cost (approximately £3.95 a sash) and members were happy to proceed with this. The Clerk would ask that the works to the chain be completed and the chain returned by the 1<sup>st</sup> week in September 2024.

### **71.24 Report of the Strategic Planning Advisory Group**

#### **a. Report of the Group**

Members received the report of the Group. The key items are set out below. The group would arrange for someone to look at the two plots of grass in Chestnut Avenue when looking at the possible extension of the furlong car park.

#### **b. Axbridge Town Council Vision, Misson, Values and Strategic Objectives**

The Group reviewed this document. No changes were needed.



**c. Axbridge Children’s Centre – land option**

The Council had an option to purchase this land. Contact would be made with Somerset Council regarding both this land and the furlong field.

**d. Axbridge Methodist Church – future**

The church representative would be happy to meet with members to clarify details regarding the future of the building, the potential for community use and coordinating ideas and approaches. It was intended to hold a meeting during August 2024.

**e. Electric Charging Points**

Councillor Wells was looking into Electric Charging options.

**72.24 General Correspondence, Consultation and Diary Dates**

Members received the correspondence page. The Clerk drew attention to several consultations. The consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework would be considered by the Planning and Licences Committee in the first instance. The flood warden newsletter would be shared on the website (Councillor Willis to share the link on social media). The diary dates are set out below.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Monday 12 Aug	Council	7.30pm	Axbridge Town Hall
Monday 19 Aug	Personnel and Protocol Planning and Licences (if needed) Highways	TBC (likely 6.45) TBC (likely 7.30) TBC (likely 8pm)	Personnel and Protocol Planning and Licences Highways
Monday 26 Aug	Bank holiday		
Monday 2 Sept	(No meetings – Admin and Finance to correspond by email)		
Monday 9 Sept	Planning and Licences (if needed) Council	6.45pm 7.30pm	Axbridge Town Hall Axbridge Town Hall
Monday 16 Sept	Leisure and Recreation Cemetery, Allotments and Open Spaces	6.30pm 8.00pm	The Lamb Zoom
Sat 21 Sept	<b>CARNIVAL</b>		
Monday 23 Sept	Personnel and Protocol Planning and Licences – if needed Highways	TBC (likely 6.45) TBC (likely 7.30) TBC (likely 8pm)	Personnel and Protocol Planning and Licences Highways
TBC	Strategic Planning	7.30pm	15 Hippisley Drive

**73.24 Exclusion of Press and Public –** there was no need to exclude the press as there were no confidential updates.

**74.24 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM: Leisure Recreation**

**a. Confidential Item: Recreation Field**

No further update.

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Chairman

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Date

## Appendix A

Agenda item 8.11a Payments for Ratification (R) and Authorisation - August 2024						
Voucher No.	Date	Supplier	Description	Net	VAT	Total
141	12.08.2024	QSS IT Ltd	Web Hosting	£60.00	£12.00	£72.00
142	12.08.2024	A1 Gardening and Tree Surgery Limited	Open Spaces Contract - various	£183.33	£36.67	£220.00
143	12.08.2024	Greenslades Grounds Maintenance	Grass cutting - Furlong	£216.00	£43.20	£259.20
144	12.08.2024	PATA UK	Payroll - monthly service	£37.90	£0.00	£37.90
145	12.08.2024	Arien Signs Ltd	Various signs	£505.40	£101.08	£606.48
146	12.08.2024	Somerset Association of Local Councils	Subscriptions	£551.27	£0.00	£551.27
147	12.08.2024	PKF Littlejohn LLP	External Audit	£420.00	£84.00	£504.00
148	12.08.2024	W C Maunders Ltd	Furlong maintenance	£16.31	£3.26	£19.57
149	30.07.2024	Amazon (R) - paid by card	Norton Anti Virus	£12.49	£2.50	£14.99
	25.08.2024	Payroll - August 2024	Staff salaries and associated payroll organisations	4341.63	0.00	4341.63
		Mr A Laken	Town Main. Cont -July (£240) & reim materials for retaining fence - allotments (£201.39)	441.39	0.00	441.39
		Axbridge Action Group	Grant towards the printing of the Heritage Trial leaflets	250.00	0.00	250.00
			<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7035.72</b>	<b>282.71</b>	<b>7318.43</b>
<b>NOTES:</b>						
Spending Powers - the Council has the General Power of Competence						
Bank Reconciliation as at 31 July 2024 is £149,467.02						
The internal monthly audits for April - June 2024 (inclusive) have been carried out.						

## Appendix B

Agenda Item 8.11(b) Direct Debits and Standing Orders - July 2024						
Voucher No.	Date	Supplier	Description	Net	VAT	Total
121	01.07.2024	Water2Business	Water and Sewerage - Public Conveniences	£38.50	£0.00	£38.50
122	01.07.2024	Water2Business	Sewerage - Town Car Park	£10.71	£0.00	£10.71
123	01.07.2024	Water2Business	Sewerage - Moorland Street Car Park	£10.71	£0.00	£10.71
124	01.07.2024	Water2Business	Water and Sewerage - Changing Rooms	£53.50	£0.00	£53.50
125	01.07.2024	Axbridge Parochial Church Council	Office rent	£600.00	£0.00	£600.00
130	03.07.2024	O2	Telephone - Assistant Clerk	£6.96	£1.39	£8.35
131	10.07.2024	Somerset Council	Business Rates - Council Office	£56.00	£0.00	£56.00
132	17.07.2024	Npower	Electricity - Moorland St Car Park	£10.79	£0.54	£11.33
134	22.07.2024	Somerset Council	Business Rates - Town Car Park	£104.00	£0.00	£104.00
135	22.07.2024	Somerset Council	Business Rates - Moorland Street Car Park	£120.00	£0.00	£120.00
136	22.07.2024	BT	Broadband	£21.72	£4.34	£26.06
137	22.07.2024	Public Works Loan Board	Loan Repayment - Town Car Park	£5,201.03	£0.00	£5,201.03
138	25.07.2024	Vodafone	Telephone - Clerk contract	£14.39	£2.88	£17.27
139	31.07.2024	Zoom	Video Conferencing	£12.99	£0.00	£12.99
			<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£6,261.30</b>	<b>£9.15</b>	<b>£6,270.45</b>

### Agenda Item 8.11c Receipts July 2024

Voucher No.	Date	Customer	Description	Total
43	31.07.2024	Lloyds Bank - savings	Bank Interest	£36.02
42	30.07.2024	Allotment tenant	Allotment rent and deposit	£76.45
41	26.07.2024	Wales and West Utilities	Use of land as a compound	£975.00
40	25.07.2024	Wales and West Utilities	Use of land as a compound	£0.00
39	11.07.2024	Mark Sheppard (M J Sheppard Funeral Directors)	Cemetery fees	£75.00
38	10.07.2024	Individuals - reserve plot	Cemetery fees	£120.00
37	09.07.2024	Lloyds Bank	Bank Interest	£142.92