



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF AXBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2024
IN AXBRIDGE TOWN HALL**

Meeting commenced: 7.30pm

Meeting concluded: 9.13pm

Present: Councillor Page (Mayor), Ham (Deputy Mayor), Browne, Jenkins, Jordan, Wells and Willis.

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

75.24 Apologies for absence

The Police had been unable to attend.

RESOLVED: that apologies from Councillor Taylor (personal commitment) be received and approved.

76.24 Draft Minutes of the Council Meetings held on 12 August 2024

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 12 August 2024 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman

77.24 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 81.24(b) refers) and would leave the meeting should this item be discussed.

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 81.24(b) refers) and would leave the meeting should this item be discussed.

Dispensations: no dispensations were required.

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

79.24 Reports from Police and Somerset Councillors

Police – The crime statistics for July 2024 had been received. The Council was aware of a few recent burglaries which would presumably be recorded in the September figures.

Somerset Councillors – Somerset Councillor Ham gave a brief update on Somerset Council finance, roadside collections and planning matters. The gigafactory development in Puriton was progressing.

80.24 Written Reports – Outside Bodies

Governor's Report – Axbridge First School – a report would be made next month.

Axbridge Sports and Social Community Association: A quiz would be held on 19 October 2024. Father Christmas in The Square would take place on 21 December 2024. The small trees had been ordered and there was a replacement programme for the lights. The request for the grant from the Town Council would be submitted in due course.

81.24 Planning

a. Draft Minutes of the Planning and Licences Committee – 19 August 2024

Members received the draft minutes of the meeting held on 19 August 2024.

b. Houlgate Way – There was no update.

c. Planning Application

Planning application number: 17/24/00044/SBN

Proposal: Variation of Conditions 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 24, 27, 31, 32 & 34 of Planning Permission 17/18/00073 (Outline application with some matters reserved for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of a mixed-use scheme comprising up to 100 residential units (Class C3), up to 60 bedspaces care/retirement facility (Class C2), up to 12 bedspaces extra care facility (Class C2), up to 250 sqm nursery use (Class E (f)), up to 750 sqm business use (Class E (g)), and up to 5 live/work units (Class C3/E (g)), with ancillary works including landscaping, access, parking and circulation space.) to amend the approved plans listed in schedule A (condition 3), to amend the approved wording of conditions 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 24, 27, 31, 32 & 34.

Location: Yeo Valley Farms Blagdon Ltd, Axbridge Road, Cheddar, Somerset, BS26 2DP

The Planning and Licences Committee had considered this application and recommended that no observations be made. Members noted the key contents of the letter from Homes England.

RESOLVED: that Somerset Council be advised that Axbridge Town Council has no observations to make on the above-mentioned application.

82.24 Administration and Finance

a. Report of the Group

The group had not met but members had received the accounts until 31 August 2024. No issues had been raised. The Cyber Security report had been received following the review and would be shared with the group.

b. Website

Members considered the quotes and information received on a proposed new website for Axbridge Town Council.

RESOLVED: that the Council accepts the quote from Aubergine in the sum of £899 for initial set up plus the appropriate on-going costs to get the new website up and running and to meet the compliance requirements coming in in October 2024.

c. Handbell Repairs

The Council had previously agreed to arrange and pay for the repair of the handbells, and to seek a donation from the Group towards the costs. The Handbell Group had, in fact,

proceeded with the repairs at a cost of £330. The group had requested a donation of £165 towards the cost.

RESOLVED: that a grant of £165 be made to reimburse the handbell group accordingly.

d. Community Table

The bus group had used the community space at the September market.

e. Monthly Financial Report

Members received a monthly financial report for September 2024 setting out the payments for ratification and authorisation (including recent invoices) together with the receipts, direct debits and standing orders received/paid in August 2024. Member noted, in particular, the invoice for the refurbishment works which had included some additional work and were happy for this to be paid.

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 August be ratified and the receipts for August 2024 noted (Appendix B)

83.24 Highways Advisory Group

a. Report of the Group

Members received a report of the Group. A reply from Somerset Council was awaited regarding the proposed position of the sign for the disabled bay in The Square. The group was looking at various issues at the lay-by. Various signs had been installed on the furlong and in the car park, as previously agreed. The key items are set out below.

b. Gateway Signage

The gateway signage was due to be installed as soon as the weather improved.

c. Speed Indicator Device

An updated Memorandum of Understanding had been received from Somerset Council which had required certain details to be agreed before signing – including the locations (four sites) and device details. Members of the Speed Watch group had worked hard to liaise with the Police, Somerset Highways and residents regarding the locations and to enable the Council to shortly sign the agreement.

RESOLVED: that the Council complete and sign the new Memorandum of Understanding when all the information is available.

d. Dog Bin – Strawberry Line

Somerset Highways had confirmed that they would be willing to empty a bin placed near the Axbridge end of the Strawberry Line (on a post just inside the entrance to that section of cycleway which runs from the layby to the cemetery - on the left hand side of the slip road between Townsend and A371). The Clerk had sought information on the cost of the bin. Members understood that the group would be willing to meet the cost of the bin if the Council would be willing to add it to its bin emptying contract.

RESOLVED: that the group meet the cost of the bin and that the Council add the bin to its contract to be emptied twice a week (should the group be unable to meet the cost, the Council would purchase the bin up to a cost of £200).

e. Volunteer Work

A letter had been sent to the key volunteer regarding health and safety in relation to the volunteer work undertaken. He had replied with some information requested. Officers were asked to contact the insurance company to establish the insurance implications relating to this work. The Chairman of the group was looking at the training available.

RESOLVED: that a “Work in Progress” sign be purchased at a cost of around £20 to display when works are taking place.

f. Highways Matters

Moorland Street Car Park: National Grid would be looking at the issue with the damaged wall by the sub-station in Moorland Street Car Park. A barrier had been placed in front of the wall in the interim. Alternative options may be available rather than the repair of the wall. The smaller alternative car park sign had been placed on the wall around the garden area and the Clerk would contact the resident to express regret that the council did not approach him before replacing the sign on his wall.

Road works, A371: road works were taking place - a container had been sited on Cheddar Road.

School Hedge – Officers were asked to follow up the overgrown hedge with the school to seek confirmation on the extent and timescale for the works – which were now urgent – impacting on access for residents and having caused issues at the Fun Day.

Footpath AX1/26 was overgrown (it didn't lead anyway) but was affecting a resident's garden fence. The Mayor offered to look at the issue.

Bus Stop - Townsend – the owner of the property had responded to the Clerk regarding maintaining the visibility of the bus stop and had considered this to be the responsibility of the bus company. This would be discussed by the group.

Road Closure, Houlgate Way: this closure which is due to start on 23 September 2024 would result in the bus being diverted to the bypass. The Clerk would put notices on the bus stops to warn bus users.

84.24 Cemeteries, Allotments and Open Spaces

a. Report of the Group

Members received the report of the Group. The key items are set out below. An allotment inspection would be held later in the week which would also review the work undertaken to shore the path following correspondence with the tenant. The Town Maintenance Contractor had the “No Parking” sign to install. The next meeting would be held on 16 September 2024.

b. Allotment Plots 10A and 10B

Councillor Ham had a meeting with the Quarry shortly and hoped to find out how to organise a Quarry Volunteer Day. If that 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. This would be further considered at the inspection.

d. Open Spaces Matters

Starrs Close/Houlgate Way – members did not wish to provide rat boxes in this location but felt a more regular strim would be beneficial. The Assistant Clerk had carried out research with a view to writing to Permissions to clarify ownership/responsibility of this area of land before any other options could be considered.

Dead Trees – A371 – there appeared to be a few dead trees on the A371 opposite the Cheddar Road junction. These had been reported to Somerset Highways but were apparently in private ownership. Contact details for the owner were being sought.

85.24 Leisure and Recreation

a. Report of the Group

The Council received the report of the Chairman. The key items are set out below. The Council had won an award from Somerset Playing Fields Association which would need to be collected at the Annual General Meeting in October 2024. The back door of the changing rooms (from the kitchen) may need attention

b. Play Area and Public Conveniences Logs

The logs for August 2024 had been completed and were circulated to members. The play area and furlong looked lovely.

RESOLVED: that the Play Area and Furlong Safety Check Log and the Public Convenience for August 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

c. Various Signs

The various signs had been displayed.

d. Defibrillator for the Changing Rooms

An external defibrillator had been obtained by the footballers and the siting of the box agreed.

RESOLVED: that CNE electrical contractors install the defibrillator - with the Council meeting the any cost charged for the installation (cost to be allocated from the ring-fenced funds).

e. Additional Handrail – Public Conveniences

It had been suggested, following correspondence with a resident, that an additional handrail be sited in the disabled cubicle to further assist those using these facilities. Members agreed to this, in principle, and would source a suitable handrail, for consideration at the next meeting.

f. Town Maintenance Report

The Town Maintenance Contractor had worked 10.5 hours during August 2024. This included installation of car park and furlong signs, litter picking, removing cemetery rubbish and investigating and preparing to repair the cemetery fence.

86.24 Personnel and Protocol

a. Draft Minutes of the Personnel and Protocol meeting held on 19 August 2024

Members received the draft minutes of the above meeting. The next meeting would be held on 23 August 2024. The Mayor's Chain had been refurbished and delivered. Members were delighted with the work undertaken and wished to pass on their appreciation to all those involved in the refurbishment of the chain.

b. Axbridge Blackberry Carnival and Civic Lunch

The Carnival, with the Civic Lunch, would take place on 21 September 2024. The Council would be taking part in the carnival with a walking entry to celebrate 50 years of Axbridge Town Council. Sashes and a banner had been provided. Council also considered the draft Risk Assessment for the civic lunch, together with a risk assessment for the procession itself to accompany the entry form. The template, as provided by the Carnival Committee, met the needs of the council.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: that the Risk Assessment Document for the Civic Lunch, as drafted, be approved accordingly and circulated to interested parties and that the Risk Assessment for the procession be agreed as per the template and submitted with the entry form.

c. Jury Service

The Assistant Clerk had been summoned to attend Jury Service which would be for a minimum of 10 working days. The Clerk had received a letter setting out the options for payment of salary during this period. Members were under the impression that there would not be a cost to the council. Further consideration was needed.

RESOLVED: that this matter be delegated to the Personnel and Protocol Committee.

87.24 Report of the Strategic Planning Advisory Group

a. Report of the Group

A meeting was not needed at the present time.

b. Axbridge Children's Centre – land option

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

c. Axbridge Methodist Church – future

Members hoped to meet the church representative on 7 October to clarify details regarding the future of the building, the potential for community use and coordinating ideas and approaches. The Clerk would arrange the meeting accordingly.

d. Electric Charging Points

Councillor Wells was looking into Electric Charging options and had contacted the company directly. Councillor Ham hoped to attend the webinar on 18 September 2024.

88.24 General Correspondence, Consultation and Diary Dates

Members received the correspondence page. Information on the opening hours for the waste recycling centre and for pension credit would be made available on social media. The Art Road Trip, if local to Axbridge, would also be publicised. The diary dates are set out below. A Strategic Planning meeting would not be needed this month. The Leisure and Recreation Advisory Group would also not need to meet.

Date	Meeting	Time	Venue
Monday 9 Sept	Council	7.30pm	Axbridge Town Hall
Monday 16 Sept	Cemetery, Allotments and Open Spaces	7.30pm (as not Leisure and Recreation meeting)	Zoom
Monday 23 Sept	Personnel and Protocol Planning and Licences (if needed) Highways	TBC (likely 6.45pm) TBC (likely 7.30pm) TBC (likely 8pm)	Personnel and Protocol Planning and Licences Highways
Monday 7 Oct	Admin and Finance	7.30pm	By Zoom
Monday 14 Oct	Planning and Licences (if needed) Council	6.45pm 7.30pm	Axbridge Town Hall Axbridge Town Hall
Sat 21 Sept	CARNIVAL		

89.24 Exclusion of Press and Public

There was no need to exclude the press and public as they were no further updates on the following item.

90.24 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM: Leisure Recreation

a. Confidential Item: Recreation Field

No further updates.

Chairman

Date

Appendix A

Agenda Item 8.5a Payments for Ratification (R) and Authorisation - September 2024

Voucher	Date	Supplier	Description	Net	VAT	Total
172	04.09.2024	PATA UK	Payroll - monthly service	£37.90	£0.00	£37.90
171	04.09.2024	Mrs P A Ham	Carnival Expenses Sashes	£40.00	£0.00	£40.00
170	02.09.2024	Somerset Playing Fields Association	Play area inspection	£85.00	£0.00	£85.00
169	02.09.2024	Chris Norman Electrical	Electrical inspections - remedial works. Public Conveniences	£1,500.00	£300.00	£1,800.00
168	02.09.2024	Greenslades Grounds Maintenance	Grass cutting - Furlong	£216.00	£43.20	£259.20
167	02.09.2024	A1 Gardening and Tree Surgery Limited	Grass cutting - Furlong	£183.33	£36.67	£220.00
173-177	25.09.2024	Payroll - September 2024	Staff salaries and associated payroll organisations	£4,341.63	£0.00	£4,341.63
178	09.09.2024	Mr A Laken	Town Main Contract - August (£157.50) plus £73.39	£218.66	£12.23	£230.89
179	09.09.2024	W C Maunders	Furlong sign - materials to install	£38.75	£7.75	£46.50
180	09.09.2024	Rance Regalia	Refurbishment works to the Mayor's Chain	£800.00	£0.00	£800.00
181	09.09.2024	PC Rescue	Cyber Security review - comp maintenance and support	£200.00		£200.00
182	09.09.2024	Mrs P Clark	Grant - Repair of the hand bells	£165.00	£0.00	£165.00
			TOTAL	£7,826.27	£399.85	£8,226.12

Notes: Spending Powers: The Council has the General Power of Competence
Bank Reconciliation as at 31st August is £143,133.14

Agenda Item 8.5c Direct Debits & Standing Orders August 2024

Voucher No	Supplier	Description	Net	VAT	Total
164	Vodafone	Telephone - Clerk contract	£14.39	£2.88	£17.27
163	Zoom	Video Conferencing	£12.99	£0.00	£12.99
162	BT	Broadband	£21.72	£4.34	£26.06
161	Somerset Council	Business Rates - Moorland Street Car Park	£120.00	£0.00	£120.00
160	Somerset Council	Business Rates - Town Car Park	£104.00	£0.00	£104.00
159	Npower	Electricity - Moorland St Car Park	£11.14	£0.56	£11.70
158	Somerset Council	Business Rates - Council Office	£56.00	£0.00	£56.00
157	SSE Southern Electric	Electricity - Changing Rooms	£107.01	£5.35	£112.36
156	SSE Southern Electric	Electricity - Public Conveniences	£69.88	£3.50	£73.38
149	O2	Telephone - Assistant Clerk	£6.66	£1.33	£7.99
129	Water2Business	Water and Sewerage - Changing Rooms	£53.50	£0.00	£53.50
128	Water2Business	Sewerage - Moorland Street Car Park	£10.71	£0.00	£10.71
127	Water2Business	Sewerage - Town Car Park	£10.71	£0.00	£10.71
126	Water2Business	Water and Sewerage - Public Conveniences	£38.50	£0.00	£38.50
		TOTAL			£655.17

Agenda Item 8.5b Receipts August 2024

Voucher				
No	Date	Customer	Description	Total
50	31.08.2024	Lloyds Bank - savings	Bank Interest	£32.87
48	21.08.2024	Tenant – Plot 7C	Allotment rent and deposit	£73.43
47	14.08.2024	Axe Valley Men's Shed Charity	Shortlands	£100.00
46	13.08.2024	Pauline Ham, Chairman (Axbridge Sports and Social Club Association)	Hire of changing rooms	£50.00
49	09.08.2024	Lloyds Bank	Bank Interest	£125.17
45	08.08.2024	Owner of property	Car park licence	£150.00
44	05.08.2024	HMRC VAT	VAT repayment	£843.46
			TOTAL	£1,374.93