



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF AXBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2024
IN AXBRIDGE TOWN HALL**

Meeting commenced: 7.30pm

Meeting concluded: 9.32pm

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

Also in attendance: Mrs V Brice (Town Clerk) together with Somerset Councillor Ferguson and 8 members of the public (for part of the meeting)

108.24 Apologies for absence

RESOLVED: that apologies from Councillor Jenkins (personal commitment) and Thomas (ill-health) be received and approved.

109.24 Draft Minutes of the Council Meetings held on 14 October 2024

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 14 October 2024 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman subject to minute 97.24 being amended to reflect that Councillor Browne left the meeting (not Councillor Wells) and minute 99.24 being altered to show the potholes (rather than the white lining) still needed to be repaired where the lane joins the A371.

110.24 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 114(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 114(b) refers) (see below for dispensation).

Councillor Willis – declared a Personal Interest in relation to a update on Shortlands Field due to personal connections (minute 125.24 refers) and a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to the reserved matters application 02/22/00021 for 53 dwellings, Houlgate Way, living close to the site.

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 (114.24(b)).

111.24 Public Participation

Several members of the public spoke in relation to the Boxing Day Hunt. A petition was presented addressed to the Town Council and Town Trust.

112.24 Reports from Police and Somerset Councillors

Police: No update.

Somerset Councillors: Somerset Councillor Ferguson had represented Tessa Munt MP at the Remembrance Day Service. The financial report would be forwarded to members when available. Somerset Councillor Ham gave a brief update on the Highways Working Group meeting which had included topics of speeding and works to the junction at Cross/A38.

113.24 Written Reports – Outside Bodies

Axbridge Sports and Social Community Association: The Fun Day would now be held on 5 July 2025 on the Furlong. Arrangements for Father Christmas night were progressing. The Council thanked those involved in the inclusive Remembrance Day Service, including the Sports and Social members for putting up the Remembrance flags.

114.24 Planning

The Clerk would contact Bristol Water to seek an update on Cheddar Two reservoir.

a. Draft Minutes of the Planning and Licences Committee – 28 October 2024

Members received the draft minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2024.

b. Houlgate Way

The Clerk advised that the street names originally proposed by the Town Council had been incorporated into the development with streets being named Homefield Avenue and Plough Grove.

c. Local Plan Engagement

The Council had a survey to complete as part of this process.

RESOLVED: that completion of this survey be delegated to the Clerk in consultation with the Committee members and considered at the next meeting of the Committee if timings allow (this would be included on the agenda of the meeting to be held on 18 November 2024.)

115.24 Administration and Finance

a. Report of the Group

Members received the report of the Group.

b. Review of System of Internal Control, Financial Regulations and Audit

The report set out how the council carried out its internal controls and checks.

RESOLVED: that the review of the systems be noted and approved accordingly.

c. Tree Works

The tree survey had been completed and a number of Priority 1 tree works had been recommended. The cost of these works would be £3680.00. These works were on-going following the survey and necessary on health and safety grounds. The quotes for the various works were considered to be reasonable.

RESOLVED: that the quote from Chris Groves Associates in the sum of £3,680 (plus VAT) be approved and the works ordered accordingly.

d. Website update

The template for the council part of the website had been set and colours put forward so that the website could be constructed. The Clerk and Councillor Wills had attended training and the Clerk would continue to work on the format of documents to send to the company.

e. Pay Agreement 2024

An agreement had now been made by the NJC in regards the NALC Pay Scales effective from 1st April 2024. PATA would be able to increase the employees hourly rates in line with this and calculate the arrears due from April 2024. There would be a cost of approximately £10 per calculation.

RESOLVED: that the Council adheres to the NJC agreement with the new Pay Scales and confirms that it wishes PATA to make the calculations accordingly.

f. Society of Local Council Clerk - Membership

The Clerk's and Assistant Clerk's membership of the Society of Local Councils was due at a combined cost of £430.

RESOLVED: that the Clerks and Assistant Clerks membership be renewed accordingly.

g. Community Table

The Pageant Committee had made use of the community space at the November market.

h. Monthly Financial Report

Members received a monthly financial report for November 2024 setting out the payments for ratification and authorisation (including recent invoices) together with the receipts, direct debits and standing orders received/paid in October 2024. The Clerk advised that she had received a reminder from Somerset Council for the payment of the speed indicator posts. The Council had wished to wait for receipt of grant funding but this was not likely to be received until the new year. Invoices from PC Rescue and Display Wizard had not yet been received and would be presented to the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the list of payment of invoices be ratified and approved (Appendix A) subject to the Town Maintenance Contractor invoices for September and October 2024 being paid, on receipt (as long as they are in accordance with the contract);
- 2) that the invoice to Somerset Council in the sum of £1000 be paid now; and
- 3) that the Direct Debit and Standing Order payments for November and the receipts for October 2024 be noted (Appendix B)

116.24 Highways Advisory Group

a. Report of the Group

The Chairman gave a brief update on highways matters. Correspondence had been received regarding the stop sign at Townsend and this would be discussed by the group together with a reply regarding the signage for the disabled parking bay in the Square. The potholes in Jubilee Road appeared to be getting worse but they had already been identified with road markings, by Somerset Highways. The 48 hours plaques for the car park signs would be ordered.

b. Highways Matters

Post outside the co-op: the bollard outside the Co-op had been hit and was at an angle. The Chairman would raise this with the Town Trust

Bollard near Cheshire Homes – this had been damaged and left on the side of the road. The Chairman would check that this was still the case.

Large tyre by Shute Shelve – the Chairman would check if this tyre was still there.

School Hedge – this had not been cut during half-term. Officers would re-raise this.

Trees by Cheshire Homes – contact was being made with the owners.

117.24 Cemeteries, Allotments and Open Spaces

a. Report of the Group

Members received the report of the Group. The next meeting would be held on 18 October 2024. The Town Maintenance Contractor had done an excellent job gilding the cemetery sign. The key items are set out below.

b. Cemetery Layout

It was clear that the interment of ashes was surpassing full burials. The group was considering the layout of the garden of remembrance area to better manage this (with a view to possibly also dedicating the second row of plots to the garden of remembrance) and had contacted the funeral directors and memorial mason. A meeting would be held with the grave digger on 18 November 2024 to ensure any proposals did not impede access to plots etc.

c. Open Spaces Matters

Churchyard “clean up” – this would take place on Saturday 16 November.

118.24 Leisure and Recreation

a. Report of the Group

Members received an update from the Chairman including works to be undertaken by the Facilities Manager/Town Maintenance Contractor. The fence would be repaired but a longer-term solution may need to be considered. Somerset Council had recently advised that they would be ending the cleaning contract for the public conveniences on 31st March 2025. A meeting was being arranged with them to discuss the issues and implications arising. The next meeting would be held on 18 November 2024 [this date was subsequently changed].

b. Play Area and Public Conveniences Logs

The logs for October 2024 were made available at the meeting.

c. Recreation Field

The transfer of the field was complete and the social media post had received very positive responses.

d. Maintenance of the Changing Rooms Showers

There was no update on this matter.

e. Additional Handrail – Public Conveniences

The rail on the back of the door had been moved to facilitate the locking of the door. A suitable handrail was being sourced and consideration given to installing a hand drier.

f. Signage in the Changing Rooms

The signage had been discussed with the footballers.

g. Signage for the Field

It was proposed that signs be purchased to show that the field is a recreation field and to please pick up after your dog. The Clerk would enquire whether Somerset Council would be willing to empty a dog bin, if placed at the bottom of Knightstone Close. This would be discussed by the group.

h. Siting of Container

The Chairman had prepared an agreement for the siting of the container on the newly acquired land, based on earlier discussions. The Pageant Committee were happy with the agreement.

RESOLVED: that the agreement be ratified and counter signed by the Clerk.

i. Town Maintenance Report

The Town Maintenance Contractor had not been able to provide a written report in time for the meeting.

119.24 Personnel and Protocol

a. Draft Minutes of the Personnel and Protocol meeting held on 28 October 2024

Members received the draft minutes of the above meeting.

b. Civic Service

The Civic Service would be held on Sunday 2 March 2025. The poster seeking nominations would be further promoted on social media.

120.24 Strategic Planning Advisory Group

a. Report of the Group

A meeting of the Group would be held on 20 November 2024.

b. Axbridge Methodist Church – future

The public meeting regarding the Methodist Church would be held in the Town Hall on 25 November 2024. Several councillors would attend. The church would be open to the public to view on Sunday 24 November between 2pm and 4pm.

121.24 Draft Budget and Precept 2025/26

In accordance with the last meeting, the group had reviewed the budget figures following the setting of the National Budget. It had been proposed that a further £1,000.00 be added to the budget following increased employer costs. Members discussed the budget requirement/ level of the precept.

RESOLVED: that the budget and precept for 2025/26, as previously circulated, be approved subject to an increase of £1000 and that the precept requirement of £134,000 be approved accordingly (2.29% increase).

122.24 General Correspondence, Consultation and Diary Dates

Members received the correspondence page and noted, in particular, the following;

Boundary Commission Review: this would be considered at the next meeting of Council.
Somerset Day Survey: this had been received as part of the Somerset Conference invitation.
Dorset and Somerset Fire and Rescue – Precept Consultation
Butterfly conservation – promotion of new fence

The diary dates are as follows

Date	Meeting	Time	Venue
COUNCIL MEETINGS			
Monday 11 November	Council	7.30pm	Axbridge Town Hall
Monday 18 November	Planning and Licences (if needed) Cemetery, Allotments and Open Spaces	7.15pm 8.00pm	Planning and Licences By zoom
Wednesday 20 November	Strategic Planning	7.30pm	15 Hippiisley Drive
Monday 25 November	Methodist Church meeting – see below		
Monday 2 December	Admin and Finance	7.30pm	By Zoom
Monday 9 December	Personnel and Protocol Council	6.45pm 7.30pm	Axbridge Town Hall Axbridge Town Hall
TBC	Highways Leisure and Recreation		
Other events			
Sunday 11 Nov	Remembrance Day Service	10.30am	Axbridge Town Hall
Wed 13 Nov	Somerset Parish Conference	9.30am – 4	Bridgwater
Tues 19 Nov	One.network Presentation / training session	6-7pm	Online
Mon 25 November	Axbridge Methodist Church – Public meeting (viewing of Church on Sun24 Nov 2-4pm)	7.30pm	Axbridge Town Hall

123.24 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED: that, in view of the special/contractual nature of the business about to be transacted which contains personal/confidential information, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw.

124.24 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM: Personnel and Protocol Committee

a. Confidential Item: Nomination of an Honour's Award

Members considered the proposed nomination of a resident for an Honor's Award

RESOLVED: that an application be made accordingly.

At this juncture, Councillor Willis, having declared an interest, left the meeting.

125.24 Confidential Item: Leisure and Recreation

a Confidential Item: Shortlands Agreement

Members noted a statement clarifying the terms and conditions of the agreement

Public session resumed. Councillor Willis re-joined the meeting.

126.24 Old Station Building

Temporary parking plans were noted.

Chairman

Date

Appendix A

Agenda Item 8.8a Payments for Ratification (R) and Authorisation - November 2024						
Voucher No	Date	Supplier	Description	Net	VAT	Total
216	18.10.2024	Ax Sport and Social Club Association (R)	Drinks - carnival	£88.20		£88.20
244	11.11.2024	Greenslades Grounds Maintenance	Grass cutting - Furlong	£144.00	£28.80	£172.80
245	11.11.2024	PATA UK	Payroll - monthly service	£37.90	£0.00	£37.90
246	11.11.2024	Chris Groves Associates	Tree Survey	£720.00	£144.00	£864.00
247	25.11.2024	Staff salaries and assoc. payroll organisations	Payroll - November 2024	£4,341.63		£4,341.63
209	11.11.2024	Somerset Council	SID posts	£1,000.00	£0.00	£1,000.00
253	11.11.2024	Mr G Page	Civic expenses	£63.90	£0.00	£63.90
254	11.11.2024	A1 Gardening and Tree Surgery	Open Spaces Contract	£183.33	£36.67	£220.00
255	11.11.2024	Society of Local Council Clerks	Membership for officers	£430.00	£0.00	£430.00
			TOTAL	£7,008.96	£209.47	£7,218.43
Notes		Spending Powers:				
		The Council has the General Power of Competence				
		Bank Reconciliation as at 31 October 2024				
		£124,289.30				

Agenda Item 8.8c Direct Debit and Standing Orders - October 2024						
Voucher No	Supplier	Description	Net	VAT	Total	
227	01.10.2024	Axbridge Parochial Church Council	Office rent	£600.00	£0.00	£600.00
228	01.10.2024	Water2Business	Water and Sewerage - Public Conveniences	£38.50	£0.00	£38.50
229	01.10.2024	Water2Business	Sewerage - Town Car Park	£10.71	£0.00	£10.71
230	01.10.2024	Water2Business	Sewerage - Moorland Street Car Park	£10.71	£0.00	£10.71
231	01.10.2024	Water2Business	Water and Sewerage - Changing Rooms	£53.50	£0.00	£53.50
232	03.10.2024	O2	Telephone - Assistant Clerk	£6.66	£1.33	£7.99
233	10.10.2024	Somerset Council	Business Rates - Council Office	£56.00	£0.00	£56.00
234	17.10.2024	Npower	Electricity - Moorland St Car Park	£12.14	£0.61	£12.75
235	21.10.2024	Somerset Council	Business Rates - Town Car Park	£104.00	£0.00	£104.00
236	21.10.2024	Somerset Council	Business Rates - Moorland Street Car Park	£120.00	£0.00	£120.00
237	22.10.2024	BT	Broadband	£21.72	£4.34	£26.06
238	25.10.2024	Vodafone	Telephone - Clerk contract	£14.39	£2.88	£17.27
239	28.10.2024	Zoom	Video Conferencing	£12.99	£0.00	£12.99
240	30.10.2024	Public Works Loan Board	Loan Repayment - Moorland St Car Park	£2,828.72	£0.00	£2,828.72
			TOTAL	£3,890.04	£9.16	£3,899.20

Agenda Item 8.8b Receipts - October 2024						
Voucher No.	Date	Customer	Description	Total		
61	31.10.2024	Lloyds Bank - savings	Bank Interest	£34.10		
60	31.10.2024	Wales and West Utilities	Use of land as a compound	£75.00		
59	21.10.2024	Axbridge Community Allotment Association	Allotment rent	£60.00		
58	09.10.2024	Lloyds Bank	Bank Interest	£92.38		