

Minutes of Axminster Chamber Management Committee

Held at 18:30 on Monday 14th April 2025 at The Whitty Bar, Silver Street, Axminster EX13 5AH

Present: Jane Rockett (Chair), Alison Hayward (Treasurer), Colin Hayward, Kate Ridout, Karen Hussey, Leigh Conley, Joely Hopkins (Minutes Secretary)

Minutes

1. Apologies

- a. Apologies were received from John McFadzean and Mark Dowdeswell.

2. Minutes

- a. The minutes of the meeting held on 17th February 2025 were approved as correct. Proposed by Colin Hayward and seconded by Alison Hayward.
- b. Please note that there was no meeting held in March.

3. Matters Arising

- a. There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

4. Treasurer's Report

- a. The Chamber's income and expenses report was presented to the Chamber. The general fund stands at £3,792.44 with the banners fund still the same as last meeting.

5. Membership Update

- a. Alison updated the Chamber on the status of membership fees with a good amount having been received.
- b. The Chamber will also follow up on a possible candidate for membership secretary.

6. Benches Update

- a. The Chamber has received permission from the PCC to place the benches on the green and agreement has been reached on the responsibilities of each party for maintaining and repairing them. The Chamber aims to have them put out by Easter.

7. Banners Update

- a. Colouring Books
 - i. Jane explained that Sarah Jackson is happy to create the colouring books and is aiming for the summer holidays to have them done.
- b. Physical Banners
 - i. Jane updated the Chamber on the status of the banners – as a few need repairs and a few need to be re-varnished. She said that she will also ring the leader of the painting team to discuss putting up the banners.

c. Banners Trail

- i. The Chamber considered ideas for the format and design of the information sheets and posters to go along with the trail with Jane agreeing to print A4 sheets for each banner and also check the trail's QR code. The Chamber will also work with Axminster Heritage to promote the printed copies as well as a downloadable PDF version.

8. Update on Leaflet and Town Map

- a. Kate updated the Chamber on the status of the leaflet and town map, which is to be discussed by the Axminster Town Council, and presented an estimate for the design costs to the Chamber. It is the Chamber's hope that the Town Council will help with funding the project.
- b. Aside from the £300 already allocated, the Chamber agreed that it is willing to use an additional £600 towards it. If the Town Council does not provide the additional funding, then the Chamber proposed only going ahead with the large town maps and not the leaflets.
- c. The Chamber was also informed that Mark has agreed to handle the list of retailers and collate the information for the map and leaflets.
- d. The Chamber also debated the different places to distribute the leaflets.

9. Scarecrow Competition

- a. The Chamber decided on 20th June as the end date for the competition with the scarecrows to be judged at the Axe Vale Show. Ideas for the prize were also discussed, including chocolates, tickets to Oktoberfest or a gift/voucher to a Guildhall event.

10. Gate to Plate

- a. Jane informed the Chamber that Paul has agreed to let the Chamber have its stand alongside the Town Council. The Chamber will ask the Heritage Centre for leaflets and trails to promote events in Axminster.

11. Social Media Update

- a. The Chamber considered various ideas for improving engagement on social media, including a member of the month.

12. Website update

- a. An idea for a networking social was put forward, which would include an informal 'Chamber Chat'. The Chamber also emphasised the need to make clear what the Chamber offers its members and whether the directory's listings should include all businesses and not just members.

13. Potential Awards

- a. The Chamber asked Leigh to help organising the awards with perhaps a tie in to community or charity awards or the Robin Cross award. The winning business could maybe receive a window sticker.

14. Annual General Meeting Planning

- a. The Chamber agreed on a date for the next AGM at the Guildhall and deliberated over the options for a speaker or entertainment.

15. Any Other Business

- a. The Chamber debated methods of promoting Axminster more, including a postcard scheme that the Guildhall is participating in, which could possibly link to the 200 Years of the Railway event.

The meeting closed at 20:38. The date of the next meeting, which is the Annual General Meeting will be Tuesday 3rd June subject to confirmation.