

Axmouth Parish Council - LDF Panel response

A. Jobs and the Local Economy

Tourism: It is important that EDDC supports measures to protect the distinctive, beautiful landscape and richly bio-diverse environment. Axmouth is within the East Devon AONB and the World Heritage Coast, and its holiday accommodation, pubs and cafes could benefit from the encouragement of more sustainable, green tourism based on walking, cycling, bird-watching and so forth. Furthermore Axmouth residents who work outside the village might benefit from an expanded tourist economy in Seaton or Axminster.

Small-scale businesses: Many Axmouth residents are self-employed or work in small businesses. It is important that this kind of employment is supported in the eastern side of the district for reasons of minimising travel to work and for local income levels. A strategy based on retail employment will not be sufficiently robust for a prosperous local community; other sectors such as food production should be included.

B. Housing and Affordable Housing

It is important that the integrity of the Axmouth and its surrounding landscape is protected as this is our 'capital' and heritage in terms of tourism. Thus Axmouth Parish Council opposes a loosening of the built-up area boundary.

However, the parish council will accept housing outside the village built-up area boundary where it includes a significant proportion of affordable housing for **people with a local connection**. The Village plan identifies a need for up to 8 "Affordable Homes" in Axmouth. This normally is assumed to equate to "Starter Homes", however, we believe this could look at this from a different perspective.

Axmouth has a number of elderly residents living alone or with a maximum of 2 in the household. They tend to live in smaller and older houses. They are also reluctant to leave Axmouth (not surprising). Therefore, we consider that any new Affordable Homes be a development of bungalows for the elderly who could move as part of a "House Swap". They would get a new, and easier to live in dwelling, whilst their old home could then be renovated, internally modernised and then sold as an "Affordable Home".

We suggest that new affordable housing should be bungalows as there are no stairs, easier to maintain externally and an attached garage with internal access. Consideration should be given to solar panels being fitted from new, a timber frame construction as these can be heavily insulated with an appropriate external finish. Other advantages of this idea are that the older members of the village would have known neighbours and affordable/Social housing would be spread around the village.

C. Community Facilities

The village of Axmouth has a village hall, a church, and two pubs; additionally there is a harbour and yacht club. These are well-used facilities though the strain of depending on volunteers is at times telling. There are no services or shops – hence the

need for the measures outlined in E. Transport below to access these in Seaton and beyond.

D. Education and Health

E. Transport

Axmouth Parish Council is strongly in favour of the development of an interconnected system of transport and travel modes. For Axmouth residents without a car, a small journey can be almost impossible, thus limiting employment, educational and recreational opportunities. A cycle path and safer footway for pedestrians linking Axmouth village to Seaton, and flexible bus or community transport schemes linking the village with the transport hubs of Seaton and Axminster are urgently needed.

The parish council supports initiatives which promote walking and cycling as healthier and lower carbon life-styles and is seeking to expand the possible routes which are accessible to walkers in the parish.

F. Safer Communities

The parish council has actively been pursuing improvements in the village centre to improve safety for pedestrians, by providing a continuous footway and a 20mph speed limit.

We operate a neighbourhood watch group and work closely with the local police.

G. Climate Change and Carbon Emissions

H. Green Networks and Green Infrastructure and Open Space

Axmouth Parish Council considers it essential that high quality green spaces are created and protected for local people and visitors to enjoy. This presupposes networks of footpaths and other sustainable means of accessing such green spaces such as cycle paths and an imaginative use of public transport to minimise car use. Any new development should incorporate this philosophy.

I. Coastal Areas

As a parish on the coast, Axmouth looks for local authority support of policies which safeguard the coastline from inappropriate development and protects the beaches and seas from pollution. As a parish with a harbour, Axmouth would favour more help for small local businesses benefiting from visitors to the harbour.

J. Landscape and AONBs

Axmouth parish is in an outstanding natural environment which enjoys high levels of protection. Axmouth Parish Council favours the continuance of such protection, while building on that environment to create sustainable forms of employment (landscape management, food production, green tourism).

K. Biodiversity and Geological Protection

Axmouth parish has a national nature reserve and two SSSIs (one entirely in the parish). The parish council supports the schemes through Natural England and the AONB, and the Habitat regulations which protect the natural environment, and supports small local initiatives which aim to promote local bio-diversity.

L. Design and Built Heritage

Axmouth Parish Council does not have a design statement but is very protective of the built heritage in the village, in Axmouth Harbour, and in the hamlets of Stedcombe Vale and Dowlands. It is seeking non-designated heritage asset status for the harbour, a historic setting which should not be allowed to succumb to inappropriate development. The historic village of Axmouth, with its many listed buildings, is currently under threat from the development of the Tesco superstore in Seaton and its future trade. Axmouth Parish Council had favoured a 7.5T ban on through traffic and continues to seek traffic mitigation measures and a solution to the traffic problems which are being created in the lower Axe valley by the regeneration of Seaton.

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