

PENISTONE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on March 7th 2017 in the Council Chamber
Shrewsbury Road Penistone.

Present: The Deputy Mayor Cllr. Millner (In the Chair), Cllrs. Hinchliff, Mrs. Hinchliff, Mrs. Millner, Hayler, Kimberley, Cutts, Saunders, Stanley, Rusby and Cllr. Griffin (who was invited to sit at the table)

Also present Dr. Alan Billings, (South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner), Tracey Webster (Engagement Officer) 15 members of the public and press officer

Before opening the meeting a member of the public asked the right to record the meeting. The Deputy Mayor referred to the Town Council's rules for the management of recording at its meetings, particularly where members of the public may wish not to be recorded. He reiterated this comment when more members of the public arrived. Members of the public did not have a problem with their comments being recorded.

1) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from the Town Mayor Cllr. Hand – Davis, Cllrs. Ogle, Chadburn and Unsworth
RESOLVED - The apologies were accepted.

2) Declarations of personal or prejudicial interests

None.

3) Dr. Alan Billings

The Deputy Mayor introduced Dr. Billings who in turn introduced his P.A. and a Special Constable and addressed the audience firstly by explaining his role within the Police Authority. He wished foremost to state that he is not responsible for Police decisions. He admitted that in the past South Yorkshire Police had got it wrong with Neighbourhood Policing and it was one of the priorities of the new Chief Constable to sort out Neighbourhood Policing and get it right again. Unfortunately all public services are facing cuts and a combined service with Fire and Rescue may be considered. The new Chief Constable is anxious to meet groups and to make the new Police and Crime plan work. Both he and the Police are aware of the activities in Penistone and that additional Police are already working with dedicated P.C.S.O's in the area. Police officers visit schools to speak on drugs and alcohol issues are very proactive with licensees.

The Deputy Mayor opened debate with Councillors. Much discussion ensued on subjects as Council Tax and the proportion to the Police Authority and where is this money being spent? 70% is from a Government grant and 30% from the local authority precept however the grant has been reduced by £2.5 million and Councils are being asked to make the shortfall by raising its precept.

Criminals and law breakers need to know there is a Police presence to deter their activities
P.C.S.'s are very rarely seen where are they?

Police presence is nearest to residents requirements

Dr. Billings replied that he will discuss these matters with the Chief Constable and would suggest a possible reopening of Penistone Police Station for a few hours a week as he understood residents feeling isolated and a distance from Barnsley.

Signed.....Mayor 20/03/17

The Deputy Mayor opened discussion with members of the public Again much discussion ensued on subjects as the advertising of P.A.C.T meetings Communication problems with the 101 service Dr. Billings admitted that the 101 system is outdated and was experiencing many difficulties however a new system was being introduced.

The local CSSG had now gone into decline since the removal of the Safer Neighbourhood Police Team, with no help from the P.C.S.O's. It was intended to reform the meetings however a Police officer would be required to attend the meetings

Dr. Billings admitted that there was no excuse and he would investigate this matter.

The Safer Neighbourhood Team were "hands on" and were always visible and approachable and a point of contact, this needs to be addressed.

Dr. Billings again agreed to discuss this with the Chief Constable.

Was Dr. Billings aware that more than a thousand new homes were to be constructed in the future the council tax from these properties will raise revenue and would need Police and a Police Station to monitor crime and does Dr. Billings anticipate Penistone Police Station would ever re – open? Crime, drug taking, anti - social behaviour, children on drugs are a huge problem in the area, escalating since the closure of the Station and removal of officers could the Chief Constable visit the Station? and see what a sound building it is and not in decay.

Dr. Billings again replied that the Station although closed to the public is still in use and would do all in his powers to persuade the Chief Constable to consider this request.

There being no further questions the Deputy Mayor closed the meeting and thanked everyone for the debate and Dr. Billings for his attendance.

The three main concerns which kept recurring during the debate:

- 1) More Police presence in the area
- 2) The reopening of Penistone Police Station
- 3) Reinstatement of Neighbourhood Policing

It was these topics Dr. Billings agreed to discuss with the Chief Constable as a priority

Signed.....Mayor 20/03/17