

## PENISTONE TOWN COUNCIL

**Keith Coulton MIIMC MSLCC Town Clerk**  
**St. Johns Community Centre**  
**Church Street**  
**Penistone**  
**S36 6AR**  
**Email info@penistonetowncouncil.gov.uk**

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held in the Bar Room St. Johns Community Centre on July 1<sup>st</sup> at 7.00pm

**Present:** The Town Mayor Cllr. Mrs. Millner (In the Chair) Cllrs. Hinchliff, Millner, Unsworth, Cutts, Marsh, Barraclough, Kimberley, Bradbury, Rusby, Trotman Webber and Wood

Also present the **Town Clerk, K. Coulton** and **Finance Officer A. Hart**

**1. Apologies for absence.** Cllr. Perkins  
**RESOLVED** the apologies was accepted

**2. Declarations of personal or prejudicial interest**  
**Cllr. Cutts** (Item 3 staff issues)

### **3. Financial Regulation Amendment.**

The Town Clerk and Finance Officer explained the reason for the amendment which had been circulated by Email for approval by members following advice from the internal auditor, which was to enable the ordinary trading expenses of the Paramount and the Town Council not to require prior approval. With the exception of Cllr. Wood all other members replied in agreement by Email therefore the meeting had been called to clarify the reason behind the amendment.

Following a brief discussion it was recommended by a show of hands that the amendment was approved.

### **4. Staff Issues.**

At this point in the meeting the Town Clerk, Finance Officer and Cllr. Cutts left the room while the item was discussed

Members present had been tabled with the correspondence. The purpose of the report was to review the hours worked and responsibilities undertaken that would be considered necessary with the Town Clerk's intention to retire in May 2020.

The proposal would be that the Administration Officer should work towards job sharing with the Finance Officer to ensure continuity when the Finance Officer retires and to cover holidays or illness.

It has already been approved by the Council for training to be given to the Administration Officer to achieve the necessary qualifications in finance, and it is proposed (subject to recommendation and ratification) to increase her basic working hours to 30 per week with the Community Centre bookings being high and a busy office.

Signed..... Mayor 15/07/19

## Staffing Issues continued

Should the above be approved, then a job share can be phased in over the next year or so. As the Finance Officer is also Deputy Clerk, more time would be available to undertake this role and, rather than having to work extra hours each week the Finance Officer may be able to revert to the contracted hours of 16 per week. This would then enable a smooth transition and if necessary, a review of the Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer roles. The Town Clerk, Finance Officer and Cllr. Cutts were asked to re-enter the room and be informed that the proposal was recommended for approval.

### **4. Request for Financial Information:**

The Town Clerk stated that he had received a request from a member of the public asking to see the accounts dating back to 2015. The member of the public lived in Barnsley and was not on the Penistone electoral roll. However any member of the public can inspect accounts for the financial year to which it relates during the allocated window and make comments or objections to the auditor.

In this instance accounts relating to 2015/16 2016/17 2017/18 cannot be questioned, revisited or challenged as the window for the opportunity under the exercise of electors public rights to inspect these accounts had expired without challenge, the accounts had been internally and externally audited and signed off without question, and were now history.

Extra hours work and costs had been incurred to the Town Council by both the Finance Officer and Town Clerk in collating this information from the archives, copying etc. equating at present to £685.00. Included in this figure are the extra hours worked by the Town Clerk responding to queries raised at council meetings and Emails received with regard to printing costs.

Members commented that since the request was for the past 4 years and that the official time for querying accounts is approximately 40 days made available for inspection relating to each year, querying past accounts seemed pointless and a waste of public money itself, and was a vexatious request.

Costs of copying should be reimbursed by the person requesting this information. It was agreed that the costs of copying need to be received prior to releasing the information.

On completion of the collation of information the member of public will be asked to attend the office to view the request.

### **5. Date and Time of the next meeting**

To be arranged

Signed.....Mayor 15/07/19