

Penistone Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Assets & Amenities Committee held in the Bar Room, St John's Community Centre on Tuesday 18th July 2023 at 7pm

PRESENT Cllr. Jonathan Cutts (Chair), Cllr. David Greenhough (Vice-Chair), Cllr. Rob Blackshaw, Cllr. Wayne Chadburn, Cllr. Lisa Cork, Cllr. James Kitching, Cllr. Mandy Lowe-Flello (Town Mayor, *ex-officio*), Cllr. Frances Nixon, Cllr. David Walker

Brian Barnsley – Manager, Paramount Cinema
Elaine Miller – Assistant Town Clerk

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Cllr. Jonathan Cutts (Chair), Cllr. David Greenhough (Vice Chair), Cllr. Rob Blackshaw, Cllr. Wayne Chadburn, Cllr. Lisa Cork, Cllr. Hannah Kitching, Cllr. James Kitching, Cllr. Mandy Lowe-Flello (Town Mayor, *ex-officio*), Cllr. Frances Nixon, Cllr. Jon Palmer, Cllr. David Walker

There were no members of the public in attendance.

1. A&A 2023/1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Hannah Kitching and Jon Palmer.

1.2 Apologies were accepted with reasons for absence approved.

2. A&A 2023/2 DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL OR PREJUDICIAL INTEREST FROM COUNCILLORS

2.1 In accordance with Section 31 of the Localism Act 2011 members to declare any disposable pecuniary interests in items on this agenda.

It was **NOTED** and **RECORDED** that there were no declarations of interest.

2.2 The Town Clerk to report any written dispensations in respect of items on this agenda.

The Assistant Clerk reported that there were none.

3. A&A 2023/3 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC – PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS ACT 1960) S. 1 (2)

Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for the other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings Act) 1960.

There were no members of the public and press present. There were no items to be excluded.

4. A&A 2023/4 TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Assistant Clerk requested that this matter be deferred to the next Committee meeting; which request was unanimously agreed.

5. A&A 2023/5 PARAMOUNT CINEMA

5.1 To review and consider the lease agreement and any related documents – the Assistant Clerk reported that the office has only recently received hard copies of the Paramount lease (between Penistone Town Council and Barnsley MBC) and related documents. She suggested that electronic copies of these (and all other documents relating to property owned by the Council) be made and circulated to the Committee members for reference. This was unanimously agreed.

5.2 Paramount Cinema Manager's report and update – Brian Barnsley (BB) presented a written report on staffing, films, live events and promotions for July 2023. A verbal report/discussion took place which covered the following matters:

- Staff - Two key staff members have been on extended absences over the last month which has caused pressure on the other staff members; however they are now both back at work. The staff situation overall remains volatile due to difficulty in recruiting reliable/long term relief staff; but this situation is endemic throughout this and other job sectors at the moment. Recruitment efforts are ongoing. A staff survey was conducted in September 2022, the results of which will be circulated to the Committee by the Assistant Clerk. Further to this the Committee will consider introducing a standard survey which can be conducted annually to produce measurable data on job satisfaction and other matters. Cllr. Kitching will forward a template which may be suitable to the PTC office for consideration.
- Film attendance – BB reported that attendance in June was poor, again this is a situation which prevails throughout the cinema industry where even large, well-established cinema chains are going out of business. There is enormous competition in film availability and streaming and a shortage of films significant enough to entice people into cinemas. BB reported that the industry as a whole tends to rely on “blockbuster” films and there are not enough suitable family films with wide audience appeal. Another issue is that film distributors will only provide the big, well promoted films on their own terms, for fixed periods of time and impose restrictive conditions such as guaranteed 100% screenings; i.e. so the cinema cannot show one film at matinee and a different film in the evening. He is not concerned for the moment about the current strikes by writers and actors taking place in the USA. BB is hopeful that the figures for July will be improved and the picture going forward to Christmas is better with several big releases coming up.
- Live events – BB reported that live bookings are now firmly set through to Spring 2024. Discussion took place around the possibility of staging more live acts as film attendance is so poor. BB reported that the number of live acts has been increased over the last few years. Films are much cheaper to run than live acts with increased staffing etc. Bar sales are variable - some live acts bringing high bar sales but others demand that the bar be closed during their performance. The ideal situation would be to have a bar which is not accessed through the auditorium, then there would be no need to close it for any performance. Cllr. Kitching enquired about the possibility of obtaining figures showing the takings for each film and live event over the last (for example) two years so that a comparison could be made. BB reported that this would be possible but would take some time to produce.
- Community – the Paramount is leased from Barnsley MBC at a peppercorn rent, which is conditional upon the facilities being available for community events. These remain a significant part of the Paramount's operations. For Christmas 2022 the Paramount hosted 19 schools from around the borough for special-deal film screenings. Participation in the Warm Spaces project has been a popular feature and will be maintained during the Winter of 2023/24 subject to the availability of funding. Local dance schools and choirs hold recitals at the Paramount and there is an annual amateur produced pantomime staged by Penistone Theatre Group. BB reported that the price charged to community bookers has been increased to reflect higher running costs.
- Principal towns funding – BB enquired from the Committee members who are also BMBC

Councillors about progress on this matter, which would include extensive modifications to the Paramount and Town Hall buildings. Cllr. Lowe-Flelo reported that for the moment nothing will happen until some time in the next financial year but to date there is no clear timetable on when any action will be taken. BB responded that, notwithstanding the frustration caused by the long delays, it may be beneficial in the long run as the Principal Towns planning was done over 10 years ago and there have been profound and lasting social changes during the intervening period.

- Paramount building tour – BB invited the Committee to come over to the Paramount during the Summer so that he could show them the whole building and explain the basic operations; which would give everyone a better perspective on both the current situation and possibilities for the future. The Committee were happy to accept this invitation. The Assistant Clerk to liaise with BB and the Committee to set a date and time.

5.3 Review the terms of the lease – see minute item 2023/5(5.1).

5.4 Revise costings of utilities 60/40 PTS paid in 2022 £24K – as utility costs continue to rise the Cllrs enquired about the possibility of installing solar PV panels on the roof of the Paramount building. BB responded that this is a matter he has been discussing with the Town Clerk and they have already received a quotation. The existing roof structure of the Paramount/Town Hall (dating from 1914) is built to high specifications using top quality wood and steel; however the overlying ridge joints, tiles and guttering are much poorer quality and some of the tiles are asbestos. Extensive repairs would be required before anything could be placed on the roof. The existing quotation obtained by BB appears to include the repairs to the roof. BB to send the quotation to Cllr. Kitching who has expertise in this field and will report back to the Committee.

A&A 2023/6 ST JOHN'S COMMUNITY CENTRE

6.1 To review and consider existing plans for structural alterations for the building/future modernisation of the building – see minute item 2023/5(5.1). Further, Cllr. Kitching may be able to assist in finding other builders to give quotations. It was agreed that a sub-committee may need to be set up to discuss the existing plans and future possibilities. For further discussion once the plans and related documents have been circulated.

6.2 To consider replacing stock of stacking chairs – the Assistant Clerk explained that the existing stacking chairs are fabric and have become badly stained and unsightly. Hirers use the tables and chairs at SJCC at no additional cost so it would be practical to replace these with non-fabric chairs which can be wiped clean. Assistant Clerk to look into the costs of replacement and report back to the next meeting.

6.3 To consider solutions to unauthorised parking at SJCC – over the last 6 months the problem of unauthorised parking has increased significantly, despite improved signage, polite letters being left on the cars of repeat offenders and staff members speaking to them personally. Many of them leave their cars in the car park in the early morning until the end of the working day. Hirers and users of SJCC are complaining that the car park is always full and they have to park elsewhere and walk, which is difficult for clients who have mobility issues and/or small children or have large items to unload for setup.

Research has shown that some companies will install a parking charge system including signage, cameras and ipads (for clients of SJCC to register their car registration numbers) at no cost. Under this system unauthorised parkers will be fined £60 but PTC will have a veto to cancel the penalty for first offenders. This would inevitably lead to an increase of work for the PTC office. Another option would be to have a camera based system whereby users could park free for a limited amount of time but would be charged for overstaying (as is done by some supermarkets). This would cause minimal work for the office but there could be setup charges. Neither system would be guaranteed to be trouble free as there would inevitably be complaints and issues arising.

The Clerks are seeking a steer from the Council on how to proceed. In discussion the Committee were not averse to installing a charging system if authorised users continue to be prevented from parking. Further research to be undertaken on costs of installation. In the meantime the Committee agreed that

options such as sticky notices (on side windows) can be used, also letters stating that if unauthorised parking does not cease the Council will act to install a £60 penalty charging system.

A&A 2023/7 ALLOTMENTS

The Assistant Clerk presented a written report showing that all the allotments at Wilson Avenue and Berrywell Avenue currently have tenants. All have signed Tenancy Agreements and all annual fees are paid. There are currently 22 people on the waiting list for allotments. Cllr. Cutts reported that there are no current issues at either site.

The Cllrs discussed the possibility of buying the land off Boggard Lane, Penistone (which belongs to Barnsley MBC) as a possible future allotment site as there is high demand. Cllr. Greenhough to investigate this and report back to the next meeting.

A&A 2023/8 RESOURCE CENTRE

8.1 To review and consider the Occupancy Licence with Barnsley MBC dated 26 November 2008 - see minute item 2023/5(5.1). The Assistant Clerk explained that the office has only very recently received a copy of this agreement which was previously described as a lease. On seeing the document it is apparent that there has been long standing confusion regarding the conditions and neither party has been adhering strictly to the terms of the licence. The original licence fee of £12,600 per annum is stated to be “reviewable on an annual basis” but has not changed since 2008. The Committee agreed that a meeting should be set up with BMBC Property Services to discuss revision of the licence before the next meeting.

8.2 To consider the income and expenditure relating to the Resource Centre – the Assistant Clerk reported that the production of figures for expenditure has been difficult due to the utilities being billed together with those of SJCC. There is currently no way to tell how much usage belongs to each building. Engineer visits have been requested from the providers to address the problem and if necessary install meters in the Resource Centre, currently there are none. Clerks to report to the Committee on progress.

A&A 2023/9 PUBLIC TOILETS

9.1 To consider the income and expenditure relating to the public toilets – a written report prepared by the Finance Officer was presented. This showed that over the last 5 years it has cost over £25.5K to keep the public toilet open; income shows that not more than 4 people per day use the facility. During the last year the toilet has remained closed for much of the time due to vandalism; and remains closed at the time of writing as repairs to the door and coin operating system are being finalised. Discussion took place and the feeling among the Committee was that once these repairs are finished if there are any further acts of vandalism necessitating closure the Committee will recommend to Council that the facility be permanently closed due to prohibitive cost.

A&A 2023/10 COUNCILLORS’ ITEMS None tabled

A&A 2023/11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Penistone Town Council Events & Leisure Committee will take place on **Tuesday 19th September 2023** at 7pm in the Bar Room, St John’s Community Centre.

Signed.....Town Mayor, 24th July 2023