

Penistone Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and HR Committee held in the IT room, St John's Community Centre on Monday 8th January 2024 at 7.00pm

PRESENT

Cllr. Jon Palmer (Chair) Cllr. Jonathan Cutts, Cllr. Catherine Dodson, Cllr James Kitching, Cllr. Mandy Lowe-Flello (Town Mayor *ex-officio*) Cllr Frances Nixon, Cllr David Walker.

Nigel Bailey – Town Clerk

Alison Fleetwood – Finance Officer

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Cllr Jon Palmer (Chair), Cllr Anita Kimberley (Vice-Chair), Cllr Wayne Chadburn, Cllr Lynne Crisp, Cllr Jonathan Cutts, Cllr Catherine Dodson, Cllr James Kitching, Cllr Mandy Lowe-Flello (Town Mayor – *ex officio*), Cllr Frances Nixon, Cllr Nick Perkins, Cllr David Walker.

There were no members of the public in attendance.

FHR 2024/34 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies and reasons for absence were received from Cllrs. Lynne Crisp, Cllr Anita Kimberley, Cllr Nick Perkins, Cllr Chadburn. Councillors noted and accepted both the apologies and the reasons given.

FHR 2024/35 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 Town Clerk reported that there were none.

HR 2024/36 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.

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

FHR 2024/37 4. To discuss the planning of the budget and precept 2024/25.

The budget forecast for the remainder of 23/24 and the budget for the financial year 24/25 was presented to the councillors that were present.

Detailed conversations took place regarding the budget line by line, and the following matters were drawn out from this to scrutinise more deeply.

The Clerk discussed where we were at with the funds for the proposed extension of Option 7 that had previously been agreed. Although funds accessible remained similar to what had been previously forecast. The Clerk and Finance Officer made it clear that there were clear limits to expenditure on this project. The Clerk will report back to the F & HR committee after the meeting with the project manager and architect on the 10.1.24.

It was identified by the committee that items of significant expenditure that had capacity to be reduced included Christmas lights, (these were upgraded including new lights and infrastructure in 2023/24), Resource centre expenditure, Town Centre floral displays (these were upgraded significantly in 2023/24) and round table funding. The Committee was tasked with establishing how PTC contribution were being used.

Moved by Cllr. J. Palmer, seconded by Cllr. J. Kitching and **RESOLVED** that the Christmas lights, resource centre and floral displays after recent significant improvements and increased expenditure in 23/24, be reduced in budget 24/25.

It was agreed that the Mayoral allowance be increased from £2,500 to £3,000 for the financial year 2024/25

Moved by Cllr. J. Cutts, seconded by Cllr. D. Walker and **RESOLVED** that the above mayoral allowance proposal should be **RECOMMENDED** to full Council at the OTC meeting on 22.1.24.

Community grants were highlighted as an item within the budget. The Clerk suggested it would be best to defer this item for discussion in the next F & HR meeting. 11/3/24

Allotments revenue was discussed in detail, after having no increases since 2021 it was agreed that the budget revenue be increased for 24/25.

Moved by Cllr. J. Palmer, seconded by Cllr. D. Walker and **RESOLVED** that the new charges be reviewed and adopted. To be recommended at OTC 22.1.24

Community centre rates were discussed in detail. After having no increase since April 2015. It was agreed that the budget revenue be increased 24/25. The Clerk and FO were tasked to investigate the cost of hire with a view to making appropriate changes to hire charges which were standardised and reflected current prices. This was unanimously **AGREED**.

To expand hanging baskets where possible in different locations, including increasing of charge per item. It was suggested that making effective use of the planters/ barrier planters to promote or sponsor local businesses for additional revenue. The Clerk explained the continued difficulty of communication with BMBC on the matter and requested support from Borough councillors to speed up the process.

The Precept for the financial year 24/25 was discussed in detail. F & HR committee members to recommend precept charge for 24/25 to the full council at OTC 22.1.24 following receipt of additional information requested from the FO and Clerk.

Moved by Cllr J.Palmer, Seconded by Cllr D. Walker and **RESOLVED** that the above precept for 24/25 be **RECOMMENDED** to full council at the OTC meeting on 22.1.24

FHR 2024/38 5. The next meeting of the F&HR Committee will be held on Monday 11th March 2024.

Signed.....Town Mayor, Ordinary Town Council meeting 22nd January 2024