

# Penistone Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance, Assets & HR Committee held in the Resource Centre, St John's Community Centre on Monday 10 March 2025 at 7.00pm

## PRESENT

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

Nigel Bailey – Town Clerk

Alison Fleetwood – Finance Officer

Elaine Miller – Asst. Town Clerk

## COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

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

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public in attendance.

## FAHR 2024/41 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies from Cllrs. Wayne Chadburn and Anita Kimberley were **NOTED**. Reasons for absence were unanimously **APPROVED**.

## FAHR 2024/42 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.

## FAHR 2024/43 3. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC – PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS ACT 1960)

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.

The Town Clerk reported that there were no matters prejudicial to the public interest on the agenda.

## FAHR 2024/44 4. TO CONSIDER SMALL GRANT APPLICATIONS FROM THE FOLLOWING; WITH RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL.

**4.1** Penistone Film Festival CIC – previously presented at FAHR 20/01/2025. Evidence of replacement Director and second bank signatory were presented; with further details of the project and expenditure already incurred by the Directors. The evidence included minutes of a meeting of the Directors, showing that Brian Barnsley was removed as a Director and replaced by Christian Michael

Mckenzie, who is also a second bank signatory. The Mayor remains a nominal Director and will therefore recuse herself from voting on this application.

Further to discussion it was Moved, Seconded and **RESOLVED** to recommend to full Council that the grant be approved.

**4.2** Penistone Ladies' Choir – the Choir is seeking the Council's support so they can redesign their website, recruit new members and expand their repertoire by purchasing new sheet music.

Further to discussion the Councillors agreed in principle to recommend that the Council approve this grant, but raised a query regarding a transaction on the bank statement presented with the application. Subject to clarification on this matter it was Moved, Seconded and **RESOLVED** to recommend to full Council that the grant be approved.

**FAHR 2024/45 5. TO APPROVE (SUBJECT TO CONSIDERATION) AN AMENDMENT TO THE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AS RECOMMENDED BY THE INTERNAL AUDITOR, WITH RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL.**

The Finance Officer presented an amendment to Clause 5.15 of the Financial Regulations, further to advice from the Council's Internal Auditor. The amendment clarifies that the Managers of the Paramount Cinema have delegated authority to book films or live acts regardless of the eventual cost/amount which will be paid by the Council to the film distributor or artist(s); where the written booking agreement states that the only cost to the Council will be a percentage of the eventual ticket sales.

Moved, Seconded and **RESOLVED** to recommend to full Council that the amendment to Clause 5.15 of the Financial Regulations be adopted.

**FAHR 2024/46 6. TO APPROVE (SUBJECT TO CONSIDERATION) THE DRAFT PENISTONE TOWN COUNCIL RESERVES POLICY, WITH RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL.**

The Finance Officer presented the draft Reserves Policy which states that the current level of general reserves to be held by the Council is set to 3 months of averaged fixed predicted expenditure. She confirmed that for the forthcoming financial year 2025/2026 this is calculated is £160,000.

Moved, Seconded and **RESOLVED** to recommend to full Council that the draft reserves Policy be approved.

**FAHR 2024/47 7. ST. JOHN'S COMMUNITY CENTRE REFURBISHMENT PROJECT**

**7.1** To note the sums disbursed to date and to review the potential costs to finish the project.

The Clerk explained that the project has incurred additional costs due to issues which arose once the contractors removed parts of the walls etc. This was always a possibility due to the age of the building. There is a budget shortfall of money available to finish the project; however the Clerk stressed that it is important the building be finished to a high standard. This was agreed by the Committee. Discussion took place regarding transferring more funds into a new earmarked reserve for the project.

Moved, Seconded and **RESOLVED** that the transfer of funds into a new earmarked reserve be tabled on the agenda of the next Ordinary Town Council meeting.

**7.2** To discuss clients' storage at St John's Community Centre.

The Clerks reported that a letter has been sent to all clients asking them to complete a short questionnaire about their storage requirements, if any. The response has been slow and a reminder has been sent. Discussion took place around the provision of storage and potential charges. The Clerks asked the Committee to consider that the system should not be over complicated and that there should be some

flexibility as clients have widely varying needs. The Committee asked the Clerks to work on a draft policy to be presented at the next Committee meeting.

## FAHR/48 8. ALLOTMENTS

- 8.1** To approve (subject to consideration) a draft letter of notification regarding the new annual increase policy to allotment tenancy holders' annual charges; with evidence of Office of National Statistics website inflation and prices indices.

Moved, Seconded and **RESOLVED** that the draft be approved; *provided that* the notification of the 2026 administration charge should be in bold type.

- 8.2** To note an email (dated 02/03/2025) from the Chair of the Allotment Society and the response of the Town Clerk (dated 04/03/2025), regarding queries relating to the charges at Berrywell Avenue allotments. These have always been charged at a significantly higher rate than the Wilson Avenue allotments, reflecting the facts that the plots are bigger and amenities such as parking and piped water are included. The Clerks presented evidence that the charging differential goes back to when the Berrywell allotments were acquired.

The email correspondence and evidence presented were **NOTED** by the Committee.

- 8.3** To note a schedule of expenditure associated with the allotments since 2013 – present.

The Finance Officer presented evidence of the costs associated with the 31 allotment plots since 2013. This showed expenditure of over £20K. The cost of staff time over the same period amount to almost £14K.

The schedule of expenditure was **NOTED** by the Committee.

## FAHR/49 9. PARAMOUNT CINEMA

- 9.1** To approve (subject to consideration) allocating budgeted funds of £25K for Paramount repairs to Paramount Earmarked Reserves.

Moved, Seconded and **RESOLVED** to recommend to full Council that £25,000 should be allocated to Paramount Earmarked Reserves.

- 9.2** To consider a quotation for £8,800 (ex VAT) for replacement of old/damaged stage lights.

To Committee noted that swift replacement of the lights is a safety issue. The Clerk to liaise with the management of the Paramount in providing 2 additional quotations before the 24 March Ordinary Town Council Meeting.

- 9.3** To note the response from Admit One that the system cannot implement tiered booking fees.

The Chair had placed a call to Admit One and discussed other ways in which variable fees could be charged, e.g. by introducing different ticket categories. Discussion took place on how this could be implemented while remaining compliant with the contractual terms regarding the supply of films. The Clerk to discuss this with Brian Barnsley and report back at the next full Council meeting.

- 9.4** To discuss the future strategy regarding Paramount booking fees, with recommendations to Council.

It was **AGREED** that no recommendation can be made until the resolution of item 9.3 above. To be deferred to the next Committee meeting.

**FAHR/50 10. COUNCILLORS ITEMS – CLLR. FRANCES NIXON**

To discuss the setting up of a Working Group for the Paramount Cinema (ref. Minute no. OTC 2023/47/8(iii) ).

Cllr. Nixon referred to the Minute Number above from September 2023. This refers to the Council’s decision to set up a Working Group; however this had not been implemented. In the meantime Cllrs. Jon Palmer and James Kitching have run a number of strategy meetings with the aim of supporting the management of the Paramount in taking the necessary steps to improve profitability after the pandemic years. Cllr. Nixon acknowledged the significant positive changes which have come about in the last 2 years. She suggested that now is the time for a designated Working Group with formal terms of reference specifying any delegated responsibilities. Cllr. Nixon suggested that this would improve the Council’s oversight of its most significant asset. Membership should include members of the Events & Leisure Committee as well as the managers of the Paramount. The Clerk to consider ways to share information and include all Councillors in decisions relating to the Paramount without unduly increasing the number of evening meetings.

Moved, Seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Committee will recommend Cllr. Nixon’s motion to the Council at its next meeting.

**FAHR/51 11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was **AGREED** that the next Finance, Assets & HR Committee meeting will be held at 7pm on **12<sup>th</sup> May 2025**.

Signed by.....Chair, 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025