

PENISTONE ANNUAL TOWN ASSEMBLY

7pm 18 APRIL 2024

ST JOHN'S COMMUNITY CENTRE, CHURCH STREET, PENISTONE S36 6AR

The meeting was chaired by the Mayor of Penistone, Cllr. Mandy Lowe-Flello. Minutes were taken by the Town Clerk, Mr Nigel Bailey.

- The Mayor opened the meeting by welcoming the attendees and presented a brief round robin of councillors and Penistone Town Council office staff.
- The Mayor made it clear that the Town Assembly is not a council meeting but a meeting for the towns people. The towns people can discuss any matter they wish at the meeting but it is important that attendees wishing to raise complaints to Penistone Town Council understand the Council's responsibilities and their limitations.
- Discussion took place around why the speed monitoring device had not gone up in Cubley, discussed the issues around it not being the Council's responsibility as well as the issues for insurance and risk assessment to put it up in the first place. Issues around the initial installation programme back in early summer 23 due to the dangers of : *"death by lamppost" feasibility studies , insurance issues , setting of precedence for other areas in the district , expectation as to what to do with information gathered and who would gather collate and share this and for what purpose, monitoring of functionality and constant changing of location onto what structure as this has now been limited due to street furniture infrastructure issues, the devices can back fire as can be used in the opposite manner as nothing will come of the information gathered. BMBC is responsible for managing speeding in the area and they specifically collect and analyse data collected from speed monitoring devices. PTC has no authority nor the resources to collect and analyse speed monitoring data.*
- The Clerk has requested that the Police do checks up in this area in the meantime which they did to raise the awareness of vehicles heading into the town at higher speeds from national limits to 40.
- It was suggested that MP and Clerk find a way forward. Minutes from the ordinary Town Council meeting of January 24 2024 show that it was resolved that the device would not be put up.
- **Section 137 grant funding what has happened to it?** S137 is not grant funding but is a provision whereby town councils may allocate a certain amount of money (prescribed by law) per annum towards initiatives which will benefit their residents. It is not necessary to use S137 if grants can be made under different statutory provisions.
- It was raised that lorries from the learner driver company are constantly coming up and down the high street, the main road through Penistone and living in a cottage near the town centre was becoming unpleasant due to this. PTC has no control over where a private business can run their vehicles on main roads that they have paid taxes for.
- It was raised about the damage to the bridges in the area these were checked regularly by the relevant bodies from the highways and the railways departments, but it was accepted that these looked rather unsightly but were not the responsibility of PTC to repair, retain or enhance.
- It was suggested that PTC should press Bernaslai homes for more affordable housing in Penistone and to give priority to current residents of Penistone and their relatives in assigning council housing. Once

again PTC has no influence or jurisdiction of any kind over the allocation of council housing. This function is contracted to Berneslai Homes by Barnsley Council.

- Monies for the much-maligned Wellhouse Lane project will not be released until the project is nearing completion and does not have to be allocated specifically to Penistone. Again this is a BMBC matter rather than Parish.
- **Why has the precept increased by 15%?** - looking through the historic changes and line by line through the finances hard decisions needed to be made huge uplift in utility , and wages for one is a massive aspect that is costing the council huge sums of money which can no longer be buffered, that along with a deficit budget and the Paramount costing the council, ambitious plans are in place for this and the modernisations of the SJCC. The Paramount is showing positive signs of change, but this will take time as it continues to make a loss. We had to find a balance make difficult decisions and do responsible things to ensure the future of these facilities. The Paramount now has a much more varied programme of film and live events, a new Marketing manager to raise the profile of the resource. Clerk and marketing person to share publicity with Penistone FM to share. Clerk & marketing manager delivered on this 22.4.23 directly with Penistone FM staff.
- It was clearly noted by the Clerk that a substantial amount of work and money had gone into the public toilets to keep them open and in good order for the community, including a replacement door, a new kick panel cameras a change of opening times and liaison with local business to support. So far this has worked but if it is vandalised again, it is unlikely that it will remain open. This facility is costing more and more for repairs and electric charge has almost quadrupled the income from usage for the period 24/2/24 – 24/4/24 - 2 months the income from users was £45.50. This suggests 227 users approximately 114 people per month. Wages alone cost about £30 per week for basic maintenance, cleaning, and lock and open. This is before you include electricity and water, another very heavily subsidised resource.
- The issues with the lack of publicity for PACT was raised. All of the meeting dates and times are on the council website and updated on the FB page prior to the meeting. These are now posted around the town centre in the notice boards and on all three notice boards in the SJCC centre. The meeting has now reduced to one every 8 weeks and are still held in the SJCC centre. A monthly newsletter was proposed to fill this gap; however, these are often late and have little or no relevance to the area so we don't publicise these. The Clerk does liaise with the police team in Penistone but due to the nature of their shift's response time can often be slow. There are only 2/3 part time police located at the station covering a huge area of PENISTONE West & East wards and not dedicated to one area.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.

Signed.....Chair, Penistone Annual Town Assembly
15th May 2025.