

Minutes of a meeting of the Property and Personnel Committee held in The New Millennium Chamber, The Manor House, Church Street, Littlehampton, BN17 5EW on Monday 9 December 2024 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor May - Chair
Councillor Walsh KStJ
Councillor O'Neill
Councillor Butcher
Councillor Worne*
Councillor Tilbrook
Councillor Tandy

Attendance:

Laura Chrysostomou – Town Clerk
Jon Short – Deputy Town Clerk

2024 to 2025

22. Evacuation Procedures

The evacuation procedures were noted.

23. Filming of Council Meetings, Use of Social Media and Mobile Phones

The procedures were noted.

24. Apologies

There were apologies from Councillor Northeast, and Councillor Tandy attended as a substitute.

25. Declarations of interest

Members and Officers were reminded to make any declarations of disclosable pecuniary or personal and/or prejudicial interests that they might have in relation to items on the agenda. The standing declarations were noted, and Councillor Tandy also declared a personal interest as an Arun District Councillor.

26. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2024 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

27. Chair's Report and Urgent Items

There were none.

28. Public Forum

There were no members of the public present.

29. Officers Reports

29.1 Absence Monitoring

29.1.1. Members had before them a report, previously circulated, which provided records of staff absences for the full years 2018 to 2019 to 2023 to 2024 and quarters one and two for 2024 to 2025. The Deputy Town Clerk provided clarification regarding the certified absences which was noted.

It was resolved that:

The report be noted.

29.2 Staffing Update and Proposals

29.2.1. The Town Clerk presented a report, previously circulated, explaining the current staffing structure and outlining proposals for changes in staffing going forward. Members were asked to consider a revised staffing structure which if approved would be recommended to Council as part of the budget setting process. Following the conclusion of the recruitment process for the interim Events Manager, an internal appointment had been made. It was noted that a further review of the staffing arrangements was therefore underway to backfill this post and provide cover.

It was resolved that:

1. The revised staff structure be approved and recommended to Full Council as part of the budget setting process.
2. The contents of the report and update be noted.

*6.38pm Councillor Worne joined the meeting.

29.3 Property, Facilities and Equipment Update

29.3.1. The Deputy Town Clerk presented a report, previously circulated, which contained updates on the building maintenance programme and facilities at the Manor House, community centres and War Memorial. Leaks emanating from the roof area above the landing adjacent to the mayor's parlour at the Manor House had prompted the commissioning of a condition survey which

had identified the need for further work. This would require further examination which could not be undertaken until the weather improved and consequently the financial implications were unknown at this time. Members welcomed the move to obtain a carbon footprint report of the Council's premises portfolio and noted that this information would enable the Town Council to demonstrate its commitment to reducing its carbon footprint.

It was resolved that:

The report be noted.

29.4 Quarterly Business Plan Progress Report

29.4.1. Members had before them a report, previously circulated, providing an update on progress with delivering the goals as they related to the work of the committee.

It was resolved that:

The report be noted.

30. Finance

30.1 Committee Budget Monitor

30.1.1. Members had before them a report, previously circulated, which highlighted significant variances from budget in income and expenditure relating to this respective committee for 2024 to 2025.

It was resolved that:

The report be noted.

30.2 Manor House Venue Hire Charge Proposals 2025 to 2026

30.2.1. Members had before them a report, previously circulated, which set out proposals for changes to charges for 2025 to 2026. The report included the current fees and proposals to increase prices for the Manor House room hire, weddings and ceremonies by five percent and car parking by 10 percent for consideration. This level of increase was proposed following research undertaken by officers and aimed to ensure that the prices of the Town Council's venues and car parking remained competitive against other comparable facilities in the area. It was agreed that going forward the periodic reporting would be updated to include details about the application of discounts. Taking this analysis and the facilities into consideration the proposals were judged sensible.

It was therefore resolved that:

1. The level of room hire charges for the Manor House Rooms, Weddings and Ceremonies be increased by 5% percent for 2025 to 2026.
2. The level of car parking fees be increased by 10% percent for 2025 to 2026.

3. Authority be delegated to the Town Clerk to apply discounts and offers on an individual basis and as appropriate to further the Town Council's Community Centre Action Plan objectives.

30.3 Committee Draft Budget Proposals 2025 to 2026, 2026 to 2027 and 2027 to 2028

- 30.3.1. Members considered a report, previously circulated, setting out proposals for this committee's budget for the next three years. The committee budget had been drafted to take into consideration estimated increases in costs for the coming year and projected forward to 2028. It was noted that since publication of the papers, the Town Council had received confirmation that the Council Tax base for 2025 to 2026 had increased. This would be factored into the calculation of the precept figure as the December budget setting progressed.
- 30.3.2. Members proceeded to review the Property and Personnel budget proposals in more detail and discussion focussed on progressing maintenance work at the Manor House. Recalling the need for further work to the Manor House roof, Members considered it would be prudent to use some of the headroom created by the increase in the Council Tax Base to underpin the Manor House Maintenance Planned Preventive Maintenance budget. In doing so, it was considered that a figure of £10,000 was sensible and that this level of increase in this budget head be included in the committee's budget recommendation to the Policy and Finance Committee.

It was therefore resolved that:

1. The draft Committee budget for 2025 to 2026 be updated to reflect the change set out in Minute 30.3.2. above.
2. The revised draft Property and Personnel Committee budget for 2025 to 2026 and the projected budgets for 2026 to 2027 and 2027 to 2028 be recommended to the Policy and Finance Committee.
3. The Committee's Earmarked Reserve Position be noted.

31. Exempt Business

There was none.

The meeting was closed at 7.02pm.

Chair