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Town Clerk – Laura Chrysostomou

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Property and Personnel held in The New Millennium Chamber, Manor House, Church Street, Littlehampton BN17 5EW on Monday 8 December 2025 at 18.30pm.

Present:

Councillor May - Chair

Councillor Butcher – Vice Chair

Councillor Northeast

Councillor O'Neill

Councillor Tilbrook

Councillor Dr Walsh KStJ

In attendance:

Laura Chrysostomou – Town Clerk

2025 to 2026

21. Evacuation Procedures

The evacuation procedures were noted.

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

The procedures were noted.

23. Apologies

There were none.

24. 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 no further declarations were made.

25. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2025, previously circulated, were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

26. Chairs's Report and Urgent Items

The Chair highlighted the positive feedback received during the recent Small Business Saturday event. Officers worked with contractors, local businesses and entertainers to defer activities from Christmas Lights Switch-On to Small Business Saturday, which was then moved in part from the High Street into the New Millennium Chamber due to poor weather. Members shared their thanks to the officers for their hard work in actioning this contingency plan.

27. Public Forum

There were no members of the public present, and no written representations made.

28. Finance

28.1. Committee Budget Monitor

28.1.1. Members had before them a report, previously circulated, which highlighted significant variances from budget in income and expenditure relating to the Property and Personnel Committee budget for 2025 to 2026. Observing the underachievement of Manor House hire income, it was highlighted that Car Parking income is received monthly therefore the years remaining months were not yet reflected. The recent success of Small Business Saturday being hosted in the New Millennium Chamber was seen as an encouraging example of how the chamber could be utilised for non-corporate functions, allowing for more hiring opportunities.

It was resolved that:

The report be noted.

28.2. Manor House Venue Hire Fee Charge Proposals 2026 to 2027

28.2.1. Members had before them a report, previously circulated, which set out proposals for changes to charges for 2026 to 2027. The report included the current fees and proposals to increase prices for the Manor House room hire, weddings and ceremonies by 5% and car parking by 10% for consideration. Taking the report's analysis and the facilities into consideration the proposals were considered reasonable and still competitive with local venues.

It was resolved that:

1. The level of room hire charges for the Manor House Rooms, Weddings and Ceremonies be increased by 5% for 2026 to 2027.
2. The level of car parking fees be increased by 10% for 2026 to 2027.

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.

28.3. Committee Draft Budgets 2026 to 2027, 2027 to 2028, and 2028 to 2029

- 28.3.1. Members considered a report, previously circulated, setting out proposals for this committee's budget for the next three years. The Town Clerk explained the background to the budget setting process and how the precept calculation was impacted by annual changes in the number of households from which council tax was collected. The projected increase in the Council's overall budget for 2026 to 2027 was currently 6.37% modelled on last year's household figures. It was noted that the current projected precept figure for 2026 to 2027 was subject to change as the December budget setting progressed.
- 28.3.2. The committee's current earmarked reserves (EMR) position were included within the report, alongside proposals to combine and realign the smaller pots of money following advice from the auditor. These were seen as sensible recommendations that rationalised the EMRs and enabled informed decisions.
- 28.3.3. The committee budget had been drafted to take into consideration estimated increases in costs for the coming year and projected forward to 2029. Members proceeded to review the Property and Personnel budget proposals in more detail and the following points were noted:

- Staffing apportionment had been modified since the report was published. This updated apportionment did not affect the overall total of staffing across the Council's services.
- The movement of the weddings and Manor House license earmarked reserves into IT reserves, and the movement of project 82 maintenance reserves into museum maintenance reserves.

It was resolved that:

1. The draft Committee budget for 2026 to 2027 and the projected budgets for 2027 to 2028 and 2028 to 2029 be approved and recommended to the Policy and Finance Committee.
2. The Committee's Earmarked Reserve position be noted and the suggested repurposing of them be approved.
3. The contents of the report be otherwise noted.

29. Exempt Business

There are items of exempt business.

It is Recommended that: The public and accredited representatives of the press be excluded from the Meeting under Section 100 Local Government Act 1972 due to the confidential nature of the business to be conducted.

The following minutes are confidential for Members of the Council only in accordance with Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, being information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person.

The following report is confidential for Members of the Council only in accordance with Paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (being Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relating matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under the authority).

The meeting adjourned at 18:53.

The meeting reconvened at 18:54.

29.1. K2 Youth and Community Centre

The Town Clerk gave members an oral update on the current position regarding the final construction costs, including progress on outstanding defects and lease discussions which were all being concluded.

29.2. Staffing and Realignment

The Town Clerk provided an oral update on staffing. It was confirmed that the proposed staff realignment had been agreed by Full Council for inclusion in the budget discussions and no changes to the proposed structure had been put forward since this Committee last discussed it.

The Town Clerk updated Members on the recent recruitment, and it was hoped the new staff would start in the new year. The Committee discussed the additional duties and workload during the last six months and agreed this should be acknowledged. Members also agreed that office accommodation within the Manor House needed to be reviewed to accommodate new staff, with all areas being considered so that the rationale behind the realignment could be delivered. Given the earlier discussion about the work entailed to utilise the chamber for events, the Committee also agreed that the furniture needed to be assessed for condition and suitability and where appropriate replaced.

The meeting was closed at 19:19.

Chair