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## **MINUTES of a MEETING of the PROPERTY AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020 at 6.30PM**

### **Present:**

Councillor Chace (Chair)

Councillor Price

Councillor Turner

### **2020/2021**

**This meeting is available to view using the following link:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGoGyXSBmpY>

### **10. Virtual Meeting Protocol and Use of Mobile Devices**

The Chair opened the meeting and explained how it would be conducted and the protocol that would be followed, including how any break in the proceedings due to technical difficulties would be managed.

### **11. Apologies**

There were no apologies.

### **12. 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.

### **13. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020 (previously circulated) were confirmed as a true record and it was noted that arrangements would be made for these to be signed at a later date.

## 14. Chair's Report and Urgent Items

### 14.1. Memorial to the Late Tony Squires

The Town Clerk had been contacted by Mrs Wendy Squires regarding a memorial to her husband the late Councillor Tony Squires. He explained that Mrs Squires wished to plant a tree in the Durmersheim Garden at the front of the Manor House and had also offered to meet the costs. This was supported and it was therefore **Resolved** that:

**Authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, to liaise with Mrs Squires on the planting of a memorial tree in the Durmersheim Garden.**

## 15. Public Forum

In accordance with the Remote Meetings Protocol introduced by the Town Council, members of the public who wished to address the Council or any of its Committees during a remote meeting should have emailed their representations one clear working day before the meeting. There was one:

Mr Chester asked:

1. How is it that virtually every business in Littlehampton and Rustington parish council has been able to install the necessary adaptations to reopen to the public for weeks now yet the town council reception remains closed and the museum only open one day a week?
2. With regard to the project 82 building, has any marketing exercise at all been carried out to let the building? Is it concluded that Wick Information Centre has no future there and is to continue in a garden annex accessed from Beaconsfield road? Has any thought been given to using it as a community hub, a space for community groups to meet and use office facilities? If the disposal is agreed will the Town Council, consider writing a brief planning brief for the site? In particular the use of red brick and replacement of the dairy emblem on the front of the building so that any replacement build fits in with the character of the area and retains a note to its heritage?

Response:

1. We are working towards reopening the reception in the Manor House in the next fortnight and the Museum shortly after.
2. Regarding the Project 82 building, no marketing exercise has been undertaken and its value will be determined by the District valuer. The Town Council continues to work with the Management Committee and All Saints Church through a Service Funding Agreement to continue the services provided to the community through the Wick Information Centre. The recently commissioned new Keystone Centre will, as well as providing a modern youth centre, also provide facilities for community groups. Regarding the

future use of the site, it is thought that the Town Council would look to maximising income from its disposal and would therefore not wish to hinder a sale by imposing conditions.

## **16. Officer's Reports**

### **16.1. Absence Monitoring Report**

The Committee received a report (previously circulated) which set out the staff absence records for the full year's 2011/12 to 2019/20 and Quarter 1 of 2020/21. It was **Resolved** that:

**The report be noted.**

### **16.2. Staffing and Property Update**

The Committee received a report (previously circulated) which set out changes in staffing since the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 and an update on premises related matters. Regarding the accident and subsequent theft of the Amenity Team van, it was noted that no one had been hurt and that there was no update from the Police. The Town Clerk reported that changes to working practices to meet the social distancing requirements had enabled staff to return to the office using a rota system. The Manor House Reception however needed further adaptations before it could be reopened. This work had been prioritised and it was hoped that the reception and the Museum would reopen shortly. It was **Resolved** that:

**The report and updates be noted.**

### **16.3. Project 82 Building**

The Committee received a report (previously circulated) which proposed recommending to Council that the Project 82 building be declared surplus to requirements. The Town Clerk briefly outlined the history of the building and explained the district valuation process. It was noted that although not binding, Council would need clear justification if it was minded to sell at a lower price than the valuation because the building was a public asset. It was therefore **Resolved** that:

**Council be RECOMMENDED to declare the Project 82 building surplus to requirements and that authority be delegated to the Town Clerk to engage the District Valuer and progress the sale of the premises.**

#### **16.4. Supplement to Holidays Policy during COVID-19 Pandemic**

The Committee received a report (previously circulated) which set out an interim supplement to the Town Council's Holiday Policy during the coronavirus pandemic. This had been implemented to ensure that the Town Council had the flexibility to respond to staff requests for annual leave taking into consideration quarantine restrictions and the need for the Council to maintain services. In view of the changing nature of the restrictions on travelling abroad, this was considered a prudent measure and it was therefore **Resolved** that:

- 1. The Urgent Action be noted and the interim supplement to the Town Council's Holiday Policy during the COVID-19 pandemic be endorsed.**
- 2. Authority be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair of the Committee to amend this policy in accordance with ACAS and Government Guidance as required.**

#### **16.5. Keystone Centre**

Following the completion of a tender process in August, a consultant had been appointed as Employers Agent to provide technical and contractual project management services in respect of the planned new Centre. The contract for this role was expected to be signed shortly. In the meantime, the architects had been liaising with the District Council regarding the validation requirements for the planning application and a brief for the outdoor leisure facilities. **It was Resolved** that:

**The update be noted.**

### **17. Finance**

#### **17.1. Finance Report**

The Committee had before it the Income and Expenditure report (previously circulated) for the first and second quarters of the current financial year. The report highlighted variances from budget in the areas in the remit of the committee. These largely related to the organisation adapting to the new ways of working in response to the COVID 19 pandemic.. Revenue was also coming under increasing pressure as income from room hire and carparking was significantly under budget. Although hopeful that this would pick up as restrictions eased, income from investments was also declining.

Overall, the impact of the pandemic on the Council's overall finances at present was balanced by the cancellation of the summer events programme however, it was thought that this would significantly affect next year's budget. Officers continued to closely monitor the situation and with this in mind work had already started on preparing next year's budgets. It was **Resolved** that:

**The report be noted**

**18. Exempt Business**

There was none.

The meeting closed at 6:58pm.

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**CHAIR**