

**Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Personnel, Policy and Finance (PPF) Committee  
held on Thursday 11 January 2024 at 6pm in the Old Wool Market**

<b>Present</b>	Cllr H Lewis Cllr J Brady Cllr K Jones Cllr M Lewis Cllr J Owens Cllr R Thomas Vanessa Lewis Camacho	PPF Committee Chairman    Chairman of Council / Mayor - Ex-officio Town Clerk
<b>Apologies</b>	Cllr A Brooker Cllr John Hackett	
<b>Observer</b>	Cllr P Lewis Cllr B Simister	

Cllr Helen Lewis welcomed everyone to the meeting. Council Members who normally attended as observers and who had sent their apologies included Cllr(s) Randell Thomas-Turner who was holding a Castle Ward Surgery at 7 pm the same evening, which Cllr John Hackett was also attending.

**Declarations of interest from Members**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Interest</b>	<b>Nature of interest</b>
No declarations			

**Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting held on 5 December 2023**

**2024 Sheriffs' Weekend/AGM** – the first meeting of the Task & Finish Group (T&FG) would be held the following week. [*Post meeting note: a meeting scheduled to be held at 5.15 p.m. on Thursday 18 January 2023 was cancelled due to snow, is being re-scheduled*].

**Haverfordwest Civic Society Blue Plaques** – the Clerk provided an update on the response from the Society to Council's suggestion of spreading the cost of replacement plaques over a 4-5 year period, and request to provide a couple of more quotes, if possible, recognising that there would not be a local supplier for this. The Society had considered the Council's request but felt that a two-year project to renew and refurbish the existing plaques would be more appropriate. The Society were not also keen on the use of QR Codes on the plaques, as there had been reports that this is open to scammers, but were willing to meet and discuss the matter further with Council. Cllr Martin Lewis proposed not to make a recommendation to Full Council at this stage and for a further discussion to be held with the Society. This was seconded.

**Update on Accounts since Full Council Meeting on 23 November 2023**

The Town Clerk confirmed that the Accountant had been given access to the Edge system that day and that he had agreed to come into Old Wool Market on Tuesday 23 January to perform a reconciliation of invoices against the bank statements up to the half year, 30 September 2023. Meanwhile all incoming invoices and expenditure was being recorded outside of the Edge system with all payments made via online banking, once expenditure had been approved by Full Council each month, when details of the latest bank account balances are provided. No events which impacted the Council's reserves had occurred under the new Administration.

**Submission of Precept to Pembrokeshire County Council**

Further to the 2024-25 budget, recommended by the Committee and approved at Full Council meeting on 21 December 2023, which reflected no increase in the Council's precept requirement as calculated at the rate of £78.75 per Band D property, it was agreed to recommend that the precept request be submitted to PCC.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>That the 2024-25 Precept request be submitted to Pembrokeshire County Council</b>
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### **Scribe Accounts**

As previously discussed, the Committee was asked to consider a proposal to move from Edge to the Scribe Accounting system, which having undertaken appropriate research was considered to be a better system specifically for use by councils. It was proposed by Cllr Roy Thomas and seconded by Cllr Kevin Jones to recommend the change to the new accounting system to Full Council. After a short discussion on agreeing the timing for the implementation of the new system, particularly given the hiatus in the new Administration not accessing the Edge accounting system, the proposal was amended to recommend the change to the new accounting system after seeking the advice of the Accountant who was very experienced in the implementation of new accounting systems, so as to ensure a smooth closure of the financial year end.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>That the accounting system be changed from Edge to Scribe subject to seeking advice on the implementation from the Accountant prior to the Full Council meeting on 25 January 2024.</b>
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### **Review of Audit Wales Audit Opinions**

Cllr Peter Lewis had asked the Clerk to circulate the Audit Wales Audit Opinions for the financial years ended 31 March 2022 and 2023. The latter had been circulated to all members of Council upon receipt, which recognised some governance process improvements were needed, whereas the majority of current Council members would not necessarily have been aware of 2022 Audit Opinion which had raised a number of inconsistencies at that time. The point Cllr Peter Lewis wished to make was that it was important for the Council to learn from past experiences and to focus on ensuring that it strives to operate in accordance with proper practice in ensuring the relevant legislation and regulatory requirements are met. The new Clerk noted that the current administration is working hard to improve transparency via the Council's website, for example, but had experienced some issues where previous agendas and minutes had disappeared from the website, and some edits made were not showing on the live site, following a website upgrade by the host, which had been frustrating as priority had been given to this. Cllr Helen Lewis thanked Cllr Peter Lewis for bringing these matters to the Clerk's and the Council's attention.

### **Applications for Financial Assistance**

No applications had been received.

### **Items for next agenda (item brought forward on agenda for staffing to be last item):**

No new items proposed at the meeting.

### **Staffing Matters**

All voted in favour of exercising the PUBLIC BODIES ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960.

### **Resolved**

**That as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting**

*Members of the public left at 6.35pm.*

### **Recommendation**

**That a meeting of the Staffing Sub-Committee be held to review vacancies for a Mace Bearer and Sword Bearer and to consider staffing resources over the short and medium-term in order to meet the Council's operational needs.**

The meeting closed at 6.45pm