

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

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

Cllr John Hackett acted as Chairman and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Declarations of interest from Members

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

Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting held on 7 March 2024

- a) **2024 National Sheriffs' Association AGM (27-29 September 2024)** – the National Sheriff's Association representatives were happy with the format for the weekend. An update will be brought to next Full Council meeting.
- b) **Haverfordwest Civic Society Blue Plaques** – the Clerk is liaising with the Society to bring a proposal to Council which will involve potential match funding.
- c) **Application for Financial assistance** – the grant payment of £500 was made to Haverfordwest RFC Under 8's Team.
- d) **Mace and Sword Bearer vacancies** – including an increase in allowances, had been approved by Full Council and both posts subsequently advertised.

Accounts to 29 February and 31 March 2024

The Income and Expenditure Statements to for February and March 2024 were made available to the Committee to allow sufficient time to comment. Cllr R Thomas requested that comments are sent to the Clerk by Tuesday 16 April prior to the Full Council meeting pack being issued.

Recommendation	To accept the Accounts to 31 March 2024, subject to any comments sent to the Clerk.
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Review of Policy and Procedures

a) Banking

The Clerk provided a paper summarising the changes to the bank signatories, authorised with the Chair of the Council, at the point of changeover of administration to enable the Council to access the bank accounts. An application for a debit card for use by the Clerk and Senior Admin Officer to facilitate payment of incidentals rather than claiming as expenses had also been set up. The services of an accountant, who was providing ongoing support, providing regular bank

reconciliations, working within the existing Edge Accounting software thereby enabling financial reports to be produced for Council. The Clerk was satisfied that there was sufficient segregation of duties between the Clerk, Senior Admin Officer and Accountant and that there was a good level of internal control in place.

The Clerk sought approval for a charge card for the Groundsman's to be used for incidentals which otherwise would require the use of petty cash (or reimbursement on expenses), which were not ideal or appropriate long-term solutions. The card limit would be set at £200 per transaction, be interest free if paid in 45 days (direct debit) and incur an annual charge of £32 (except in the first year).

b) Financial Regulations and Standing Orders

The Clerk advised that Council had adopted the current Financial Regulations in 2022, and these were then re-adopted at the Council's Annual Meeting in May 2023. The Clerk had provided a copy of the current Financial Regulations to members of the Committee to ensure they are familiar with the regulations and recommended that these are re-adopted at the Annual Meeting on 24 May 2024. The Committee acknowledged that Council had yet to adopt the latest Standing Orders (the current version was adopted in January 2023) but the review exercise was progressing on this, in view of these also being brought to Full Council for adoption at the Annual Meeting.

Recommendation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Approval of charge card for Groundsman 2) Note and confirm for the record the issue of a Debit Card for use by the Clerk and Senior Admin Officer 3) Note and confirm for the record, amendments to the Bank Mandate on change of administration, as authorised by the Chair of the Council 4) Approval for the re-adoption of existing Financial Regulations at the Annual Meeting 5) Note proposal to review the Standing Orders, with view to adopting the latest version at the Annual Meeting.
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Councillor Allowances and Expenses Policy 2023-24

The Committee noted the necessary amendment made to the existing Policy to reflect the change in statutory payments determined by the 2023-24 Independent remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) Annual Report, made available and paid to members of Council on 28 March 2024 for the 2023-24 financial year.

Cllr M Lewis proposed that the item in the Expenses Policy which related to Expenses for overseas trips – Twin town, Oberkirch (page 3) be amended (amendment shown in italics) to read "Council have agreed that the Mayor *or in the event the Mayor is unable to attend, the Deputy Mayor, or Sheriff* may claim up to a maximum of £1,500 in their year of office for trip(s) to our town, Oberkirch." Cllr R Thomas suggested that the order should mirror the ceremonial order where the Sheriff proceeds the Deputy Mayor within the proposed amendment, which was agreed by Cllr M Lewis and then seconded by Cllr R Thomas.

Recommendation	That the following wording replace the existing wording in the Expenses Policy under the heading "Twin Town, Oberkirch": "Council have agreed that the Mayor or in the event the Mayor is unable to attend, the Sheriff, or Deputy Mayor, or may claim up to a maximum of £1,500 in their year of office for trip(s) to our town, Oberkirch."
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Insurance Renewal – 31 March 2024

The Committee noted the renewal noting the increased premium for the ensuing year. The Clerk confirmed that the insurer issued the renewal via email on Thursday 28 March, the day before the Easter bank holiday, with renewal being effective on 1 April (the Monday bank holiday) thereby not allowing any time to review it, but had managed to dispute/negotiate some reduction before finalising the premium and cover.

Cllr M Lewis proposed and Cllr R Thomas seconded, that a date is set to review the renewal at least one month ahead of the renewal date, to allow more time for a renewal decision to be reached.

Recommendation	To commence insurance renewal early by end of February 2025.
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Council Training Plan

The Committee considered the Clerk's recommendations to note the planned update to the Council Training Plan set in May 2022, which set out the training requirements of Council Members and Staff. These recommendations included approving the setting of minimum training requirements for Councillors and arranging an all-Council strategic planning and awareness session, to include the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 2015, ideally in June 2024. Cllr M Lewis proposed and Cllr R Thomas seconded the Clerk's recommendations.

Recommendation	<p>To note the current Training Plan, which will be updated as far as possible by the Clerk, and to approve the following minimum One Voice Wales training modules which Councillors should attend with as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Councillor Induction 2. Code of Conduct 3. Understanding the law 4. Local Government Finance (include Advanced Module)
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Items for next agenda (item brought forward on agenda for staffing to be last item):

Cllr R Thomas Turner requested, following the Welsh Government Anti-Racism Action Plan being adopted at the County Council level, is brought to the next meeting of PPF.

Cllr R Thomas asked PPF consider issuing a newsletter from Council at the appropriate time when staffing resources allow for this.

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 6.45 pm.

Recommendation

That the Clerk establish ongoing arrangements for SSP Provision for staff member on long-term absence and to pursue available return to work option put to Council.

The meeting closed at 6.51 pm