

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SHOTTON HALL, PETERLEE  
ON THURSDAY 12<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2024

PRESENT: COUN K HAWLEY (CHAIR)

R. Burnip, M. Cartright, D. Hawley, D Howarth, A Laing, K Liddell and R Moore

**20. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were offered from Councillors M Sanderson and R Scott.  
**RESOLVED That the apologies be noted.**

**21. The Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

The minutes of the previous meeting were attached for consideration and approval as a true and correct record. **RESOLVED the minutes be accepted and signed as a true record.**

**22. Exclusion of Press and Public**

**RESOLVED** that in view of the confidential nature of the items to be discussed, the committee passed the formal resolution to exclude the press and public from the meeting, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 & the Local Government (Access to Information) Act, Part 1, due to the commercial and personal information contained in the report.

**23. The Pavilion, Helford Road**

The Acting Town Clerk (ATC) advised Members that the Pavilion Manager had tendered his resignation and would be leaving the employment of the Council on 9<sup>th</sup> May. Implications of the Manager's departure were discussed.

The ATC advised that he was to meet with staff to discuss arrangements to minimise disruption in the short term following the Manager's departure. He would ensure that current bookings were honoured, although general opening hours may need to be adjusted because of operational capacity.

Discussions also took place in relation to a review of the staffing structure, particularly at management level, which had previously been proposed. Given that the Council has commenced the process of recruiting a Town Clerk, it was suggested that NEREO be asked to advise on the process of a restructure.

The recruitment to the Town Clerk's position was briefly discussed. It was advised that a report would be submitted to the next Council meeting regarding the recruitment process.

The ATC advised that he had met with the College who had expressed an interest in booking rooms at the Pavilion to deliver various classes. Further meetings would take place to discuss the details of the potential hire.

A local artist had requested to display his artwork at the Pavilion. The ATC was to meet with the artist to progress.

**RECOMMENDED** That the information be noted.

**24. Shotton Hall**

The ATC gave feedback from the Plunkett Foundation outlining the results of their community consultation.

The Foundation had recommended the following in order to move the project forward to the next stage:

1. Grow the steering group (in particular with key skills that are missing)
2. For the group and the Town Council to proactively and positively work together to answer questions, share vision and move the project and building forwards into the hands of the community
3. Ensure the steering group understands what involvement is required from them and what the steps to completion would be
4. Review the business canvas in detail and create a separate one for each clearly defined activity
5. Research what 'elevating' Peterlee looks like and develop a plan for this, including: employment, perception and tourism

Members commented that they were disappointed that only 8 members of the public had come forward to express an interest in being part of a steering group. It was suggested that additional people with required key skills could be encouraged to come forward. There was however limited time available to establish a steering group to submit a funding application by the deadline of early June.

General concern was raised on whether the Plunkett approach was viable. Wider discussion took place on possible options for the building, including community ownership, retaining ownership and possible sale.

It was suggested that a meeting/workshop be arranged so that all Members had the opportunity to discuss in detail the issues and possible options, together with implications to be able to arrive at a considered decision concerning the future of the building.

**RECOMMENDED**

1. That the recommendations of the Plunkett Foundation be noted.
2. That a meeting/workshop be arranged to consider in detail the issues and possible options, together with implications, to enable members to arrive at a considered decision concerning the future of Shotton Hall.