

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Property Committee held in the Council Chambers,
the Amenity Centre, Main Street, Yaxley on 21st November 2023 at 7.00pm.**

Present:- Councillor M Oliver – Chairman

Councillors R Butcher, D Chapman, K Gulson, S McMullon, C Swanborough and A Wood.

In attendance – Mrs H Taylor – Clerk.

PR22. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Councillors R Doncaster and A Minns.

PR23. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

PR24. MINUTES

Councillor R Butcher proposed approval of the Minutes of the Committee held on 19th September 2023. This was seconded by Councillor A Wood and **RESOLVED** unanimously.

PR25. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No Member of the Public wished to speak.

PR26. REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

By way of a report by the Clerk (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), Members noted the repairs and maintenance carried out on the facilities since the last meeting, along with that planned.

Members were advised that since the report had been written a number of unexpected issues had arisen regarding the Owen Pooley Hall. Following investigations into why the fuse board kept tripping, the cause was identified to be breaks in the circuit for the wall sockets resulting in the circuit having to be disconnected. Members were advised that the problem had blown the control panel for the gas boiler. The Clerk explained that the circuit would need rewiring, the distribution board upgraded and the work required the floor to be lifted and relayed. A quotation had been received from Massingham Electricals who had been called out when the problems first appeared a week ago, the quote included lifting, relaying and varnishing the floor. In recognising the urgency surrounding the rewiring of the hall it was proposed by Councillor A Wood that Financial Regulations 11i be waived to enable the quote from Massingham Electrical to be accepted and a recommendation made to Full Council that the cost, £3,970.00, be met from the General Reserves. This was seconded by Councillor R Butcher and unanimously **RESOLVED**. The Clerk added that plans were being made to accommodate hall hirers in other venues whilst the work was being undertaken with a provisional start date of 11th December 2023.

The Clerk reported that the Owen Pooley hall would benefit greatly from the inclusion of a wall mounted dehumidifier as being an older building it suffers from condensation. Having received details of a potential unit, it was proposed by Councillor D Chapman, seconded by Councillor A Wood and unanimously **RESOLVED** that a wall mounted dehumidifier be installed.

Members were advised that the gas boiler for the heating system in the Owen Pooley had been serviced but given the units age it would be sensible to consider replacing it before something goes wrong. The Clerk would explore the options available with the relevant tradesperson and would report back to a future meeting.

Finally, the meeting thanked the staff for their efforts in keeping the facilities running during a very difficult period.

PR27. FIRE SAFETY LEGISLATION FOR NON RESIDENTIAL PREMISES

Members received a briefing paper (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) summarising new fire safety requirements and important legislative changes in the responsibilities of Responsible Persons following the implementation of Section 156 of the Building Safety Act 2022 which came into force on 1st October 2023.

It was reported that the fire policies for the buildings would be reviewed by external fire safety specialists and a report made to a future meeting.

PR28. ELECTRICITY AND GAS RATES

The Clerk circulated a schedule showing the new electricity rates agreed for the facilities which would come into effect from 1st April 2024 for two years. Members were advised that the rates had doubled across all of the sites, however the new rate for Queens Park was lower than first expected. With regard to the gas contracts, Members were advised that the Clerk had extended the contracts in January 2021 of 5.880p/kwh with 0 standing charge which appears to have been a very smart move given today's rates.

PR29. BUDGET 2023/24

Members were presented with a budget report as at 30th September 2023 (a copy of which has been appended in the Minute Book). In discussing the various budget headings, actual spend against predicted and the proposed figures for 2024/25, Members felt that the 2024/25 income figures for the Austin hall could be a bit more optimistic. The Clerk advised that she would raise this and a change to the gas figures to reflect PR28 above with the Accountant prior to the final draft being produced for Full Council. Whereupon, it was proposed by Councillor R Butcher that subject to the aforementioned amendments the budget be recommended to Full Council for approval. This was seconded by Councillor A Wood and unanimously **RESOLVED**.

PR30. MARTYN'S LAW – TERRORISM (PROTECTION OF PREMISES) DRAFT BILL

The Clerk reported on a draft terrorism protection bill, Martyn's Law, being pursued in the forthcoming Parliamentary session. The Bill will require certain venues to introduce appropriate and practical measures to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack and reduce harm. Although the extent of the requirements are unknown it is believed that the Austin Hall will come under the standard tier

requirements given it has a capacity of more than 100. Responsibility for complying with the Bill's requirements will fall to the responsible person for the venue, in this case the Parish Council and outdoor venues will fall within the scope of the Act. Members were advised that the requirements for the Standard tier will be consulted on and further detail on the consultation will be produced in due course. In the meantime, the Clerk encouraged everyone to visit the Protect Uk website to gain a better understanding of this important topic.

Meeting closed at 7.50pm

Signed Chairman.

DRAFT