



PRINCES RISBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COMMERCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 11TH APRIL AT 6.30 PM AT THE PRINCES CENTRE, CLIFFORD ROAD, PRINCES RISBOROUGH

PRESENT

Chairman Cllr I Parkinson
Cllrs J Coombs, S Marshall
Clerk – Susanne Barter
Bookings Officer – Tania Campbell
Admin Support Officer – Cate Holloway

No members of the public were present.

1. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Ball who had a previous business commitment, Cllrs S Coombs and Cross who were both unwell.

Resolved: To accept apologies from Cllrs Ball, S Coombs and Cross.

2. MINUTES OF THE COMMERCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING ON THE 14TH FEBRUARY 2023

All present agreed to accept the minutes as a correct record.

Resolved: To agree and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Commercial Services Committee meeting on the 14th February 2023.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

Members were asked to declare any pecuniary or non-pecuniary declarations of interest and any relevant dispensations. **None were declared.**

4. PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public addressed the committee.

5. RESPONSES TO CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED AT THE COMMERCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

An email has been received from a hirer paying in arrears and VAT

The hirer complains that they are not happy to pay in advance for their booking.

It has been the Town Council policy to require payment in advance when making bookings since taking over responsibility for the Centre, following on the practice of the previous trustees. The Bookings Clerk confirmed that she has copies of invoices made in advance by the Community Centre administrator and invoices issued in advance pre-covid by the Town Council. The Commercial Services Committee in the meeting held on 24th January reaffirmed the decision that all bookings must be paid in advance to gain access to the hall/ rooms required by the hirer.

The hirer also question VAT payments included in the invoices and ask for a refund if applicable.

The Clerk advised that VAT has been charged for bookings since July 2019 when the Town Council opted to tax the Wades Centre, but was included into the existing hire charges thereby incurring no increase to hirers.

Following a challenge in the courts by Chelmsford City Council (2020) UKFTT432 (TC) and subsequent appeals by HMRC, on the 26th January 2023 the HMRC advised Chelmsford City Council that they would not be pursuing the “significant distortion of competition” argument and accepted that local authority sports services can be treated as non- business and outside the scope of VAT. The Town Council has received advice that it applies only to hirers that the Town Council provides a service to which must include the equipment necessary for the particular sport and not to hirers requiring just the hire of a hall or space that can be used for many purposes. Therefore, as the Town Council does provide the badminton nets for the use of the badminton hirers, it is recommended that the Town Council considers submitting a claim for the refund of VAT since July 2019 and any refund received is passed on to the eligible hirers.

Cllr Parkinson proposed to submit a claim for the refund of VAT backdated to 5 July 2019 for any eligible hirer covered by the recent HMRC decision. Seconded by Cllr Marshall.

Resolved: To submit a claim for the refund of VAT backdated to 5 July 2019 for any eligible hirer covered by the recent HMRC decision. TC

Cllr I Parkinson further proposed that the office confirms to hirers that payment is required in advance for bookings made in the Wades Centre and Market House. Seconded by Cllr Marshall. **All present agreed.** TC

6. WADES CENTRE

To receive and note bookings to date

The bookings having previously been circulated to the members were noted.

The Bookings Officer recommended a clarification to the hire charges for the Wades Centre to differentiate the charge for local not for profit organisations and for any other not for profit organisation.

Cllr Parkinson proposed that the hire charge for residents includes local not for profit organisations and the charge for non-residents includes other not for profit organisations.

Seconded by Cllr Marshall. All present agreed

Resolved: that the hire charge for residents includes local not for profit organisations and the charge for non-residents includes other not for profit organisations TC

7. MARKET HOUSE

a) To receive and note bookings to date

The bookings having previously been circulated to the members were noted.

b) Reducing the hire fee for regular users

The Clerk advised members that as the Committee Room in the Wades Centre will not be available from July, 2023 there may be benefit in offering regular hirers a move to the Market House and reducing the usual hire charge.

Cllr J Coombs proposed that fee be £40.00 a day including a cleaning fee and £68.00 for 2 consecutive days including cleaning fee. The hourly rate would remain unchanged. Seconded by Cllr Marshall.

Resolved: that the fee for the hire of the Market House to regular hirers be £40.00 and £68.00 for 2 consecutive days. The hourly rate would remain unchanged. TC

8. BRUSHWOOD SUITE

Members received a report from the Deputy Brushwood Suite Manager on current and future activities planned.

9. TO PASS A RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 1(2) OF THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 TO DISCUSS AND DECIDE ON THE PREFERRED CONTRACTOR FOR REPAIRS TO THE AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMP
No members of public and press were present.

Air Source Heat Pump repair and upgrade to the system

The Clerk presented 3 quotations

£ 2,865.00 + vat

£ 3,500 + vat

£ 500 + vat (survey only)

All present agreed to defer this item until the next meeting to give time to review the survey and enable the members to make a better-informed decision.

10. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Air Source Heat Pump repair and upgrade to the system.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Committee is to be 9th May 2023 at 6.30pm

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.15 pm.

Chairman.....

Date