

MINUTES of the Staffing & Resources Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 4th February, 2019 at St Barnabas Church, Beanacre at 8.10 p.m.

Present: Cllrs John Glover (Vice Chair of Council), Alan Baines (Chair of Committee), David Pafford and Robert Shea-Simonds.

Cllr Terry Chivers as an observer for the first part of the meeting.

Officers: Teresa Strange (Clerk) & Jo Eccleston (Parish Officer)

- 416/18 **Housekeeping & Announcements:** Cllr. Baines welcomed all to the meeting and explained the evacuation procedures in the event of a fire.
- 417/18 **Apologies:** Cllr. Richard Wood was unwell and Cllr Nick Holder had an urgent family matter to attend to; these were accepted.
- 418/18 **Declarations of Interest:** The Parish Officer declared an interest as a staff member and left the room when agenda items 7&8 were discussed.
- 419/18 **Dispensation Requests:** None.
- 420/18 **Items to be Held in Committee: Resolved:** *Agenda items 7 & 8 to be held in Committee under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960* "That the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted". *This is in line with Standing Order 3d:* "That in the view of the special/confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw". Reason: a) engagement, terms of service, conduct and dismissal of employees.
- 421/18 **Public Participation:** There were no members of the public present.
- 422/18 **NJC (National Joint Council for Local Government Services) agreed new pay scales for 2019-2020:** The new pay scales are to be implemented from 1st April 2019. Due to the introduction of the national living wage, the NJC agreement includes the introduction of a new pay spine on 1st April and the members noted the documentation translating the existing spinal column points and scale ranges to the new scales, against the individual staff roles. The Clerk confirmed that the new pay scales details had arrived just in time for reflecting in the 2019/20 Budget for staffing.
- In line with Standing Order 3d the following agenda item was held in Committee and the Parish Officer left the room and Cllr Chivers left the meeting.*
- 423/18 **Staff Appraisals:** The Clerk gave a brief overview of the staff appraisals that had taken place on 17th January; which for the office staff had included a review of the new working arrangements without a separate Finance Officer role. Any training needs for staff had been identified and courses booked for the coming months.

Members discussed whether there was a requirement for staff to have a 1:1 supervision meeting more regularly than just the annual appraisal; the Clerk explained that all staff are encouraged to talk to her as their Line Manager as and when any issue arises, and not to leave for the annual Appraisal but did reflect that it may be a good idea to have a nominated councillor for staff to talk to in the Clerk's absence, or if they would prefer a different person as the officers are such a small working team. **Recommended:** *The Chair of the Staffing Committee be the nominated councillor for a staff member to contact for an informal discussion if the Clerk as Line Manager was not available or appropriate for the discussion; as long as this did not conflict with the Council's Grievance Policy.*

It was noted that the Clerk's annual appraisal was now due, and this was to be arranged with the Chair of the Staffing Committee and Chair of Council.

424/18 **Review of new Staffing Structure:** The members reviewed the new Staffing Structure without a separate Finance Officer role (arising from Min 175/18); the review was taken place post-Christmas rather than in November as a true picture could not be ascertained earlier due to staff leave and the office relocation. The Clerk reported that the new working arrangement was working really well and all the office staff were keen for that structure and working pattern to continue. It was a new skill set for both the Parish Officer and the Assistant Parish Officer and they had more than risen to the challenge. The office staff had reviewed the Finance Officer's job description between them and allocated the tasks to the different members of staff for the trial period.

Recommended 1: *The council approve the revised Job Description for the Assistant Parish Officer with the addition of the appropriate Finance Officer tasks.*

Following the production of the Assistant Parish Officer's Job Description last year, the Staffing Committee had asked the Clerk to review the Parish Officer's Job Description to reflect the increased tasks that were being undertaken.

Recommended 2: *The council approve the revised Job Description for the Parish Officer with the additional tasks added by the Clerk in review with the Parish Officer, and the addition of the appropriate Finance Officer tasks.*

Recommended 3: *The contracts of the Assistant Parish Officer and Parish Officer to be permanently amended to be 30 hours per week, 7.5 hours per day Monday to Thursday, with any meetings attended being additional paid hours, following the successful trial period.*

The members then reviewed the Scale Points of the Assistant Parish Officer and Parish Officer in line with the increased responsibility they had taken on. It was noted that the Finance Officer had been on Scale Point 15 and the Budget set for 2019/20 had anticipated some increase.

Recommended 4: *In recognition of the large change in responsibility for the Assistant Parish Officer in taking on many of the Finance Officer tasks, the new Scale Point from 1st April 2019 be SCP 5 (on the new scale point spine, which equates to Scale Point 15 on the existing spine).*

Recommended 5: *In recognition of the increased role that the Parish Officer is taking in "deputising" for the Clerk, the new Scale Point from 1st April 2019 will be SCP 9 (on the new scale point spine, which equates to Scale Point 20 on the existing spine).*

Cllr Glover left the meeting at 9.05 p.m. The Clerk confirmed that the meeting was still quorate.

425/18 **Policies:**

The members reviewed policies in line with altered working practices following the office relocation. **Recommended 1:** *The council adopt the revised Working Alone Policy and First Aid Policy.*

The Clerk advised that some staff members had undergone DBS (Disclosure Barring Service) checks relating to their job roles, and that it would be useful to have a policy stating which job roles required a DBS check, and what the renewal cycle would be. A model policy provided by the Government had been reviewed and personalised to suit the council's requirements.

Recommended 2: *The council adopt the personalised DBS Check Policy.*

426/18 **Corporate clothing for outdoor staff:** Members discussed the positive reasons for the caretaker and allotment warden to wear a polo shirt and fleece with the Parish Council name and logo on, during working hours. This would give a clear indication of why they were there, when working in public spaces such as play areas and allotments and in addition would be good PR for the council when seen actively working in the parish.

Recommended: *The council purchase livery work wear, such as a polo shirt and fleece jacket, for the parish caretaker and allotment warden for wearing during working hours.*

427/18 **Pension Scheme:**

- a) **Re-enrolment responsibilities:** The Clerk advised that The Pensions Regulator had contacted the council as an employer to advise that every 3 years they must put certain staff back into a pension scheme, to "re-enrol" them. This is a legal duty and a re-declaration of compliance must be undertaken. Two staff members had opted out of the scheme but following the guidance given by the Pension Regulator and the Wiltshire Pension Fund it was understood that those two staff members were "non-eligible jobholders" and therefore it was not thought that they needed to be re-enrolled, but this would be checked.
- b) **Minimum pension contributions:** The Pension Regulator had advised that Minimum pension contributions will increase on 6th April 2019, with employers having to contribute a minimum of 3% and eligible employees a minimum of 5%. The Clerk reported that she had been unable to ascertain from Wiltshire Pension Fund what the planned rates for 2019/20 would be but at present could confirm that the employer rate was currently 20.4% and the employee contribution was 5.5% or 6.5% dependent on salary. This would be reviewed when the new rates were advised for the new financial year by Wiltshire Pension Fund.

428/18 **Training:** The members noted the following training that was booked:

- Finance for Clerks & Officers by WALC, Tues 26th Feb for the Assistant Parish Officer and Parish Officer.
- Finance for Councillors by WALC, Tues 26th Feb for Cllrs Carter & Taylor
- Online training for all staff on Legionella Awareness and COSHH

- Online training for all office staff on Cyber/Information Security, Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard and Display Screen Equipment.

The Clerk confirmed that the 6-month First Aid refresher had been undertaken by the Clerk and Parish Officer and that the Assistant Parish Officer had carried it out too, with an online St John Ambulance quiz being discussed and then marked.

Meeting closed at 9.20 p.m.

Chairman, 11th February 2019