

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE

Held on 11.30am, Tuesday 10th September 2024, Street Library, Leigh Road, Street.

Members Summons and Present: Adrian Sparkes (Chair), Neil Howiantz (Vice Chair), Pam Birch, Bryan Knickerbocker, Heather Shearer, Nina Swift and Laura Wolfers.

Absent: None

Officers Present: Jenny Service (Clerk).

In attendance: Members of the public (0)

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION There was none.

MINUTES

- 24/25.SC.033. Apologies for absence
There were none.
- 24/25.SC.034. Declarations of Interests and Grant of Dispensations
Councillors were reminded of their duty to declare any interests in the business to be transacted.
There were none.
- 24/25.SC.035. Confirmation of minutes
RESOLVED: The minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 30th July 2024 (circulated) were approved as a correct record and direction given to be signed by the Chair. LGA 1972, Schedule 12, paragraph 41(1)
- 24/25.SC.036. Training
a. Employment Seminar
Members received an update from Cllr Howiantz following their attendance at a recent Employment Seminar. Cllr Howiantz provided a summary of key learning points.
- Avoid commenting on past Officers.
 - Best councils work as a team.
 - Annual appraisal process should be a two-way process (Council and Officers)
 - Two members to undertake appraisal of the Clerk.
- RESOLVED to update appraisal of the Clerk from one to two members (Chair and Vice Chair of Staffing Cttee).
- Use of scheme of delegation.
 - Review of job descriptions and contracts.
 - Members should not challenge performance in meetings. Performance managed through the Staffing Cttee.
 - Be prepared for when things go wrong by having the right policies in place.
 - Advice around publication of complaints made to the Monitoring Officer – this differed to the advice Clerk had previously obtained. Clerk to clarify through SALC/SLCC and Monitoring Officer at Somerset Council and report back to P&F or Full Council.
 - Cllr Howiantz to circulate notes.

b. SW Councils free virtual conference

The Clerk introduced the SW Councils virtual conference - Thursday 17th October 2024 09.30 – 15.00 A full Programme of events including: Employment Law Update, 30-minute surgery / psychometric feedback, performance management including appraisal, plus a choice of workshops. Clerk to join / attend. Cllrs welcome.

24/25.SC.037.

Conflict resolution

Update from Cllr Sparkes – DEFERRED to the next Staffing Cttee meeting.
(With reference to the CIPD 2015 document, *Conflict management: a shift in direction*).

24/25.SC.038.

Policies and procedures

- a. The Clerk introduced the staff handbook / ACAS policies. Policies were divided up for an initial review with Cllrs reporting back to the next Staffing Cttee meeting.
- i. Leave Policy (in conjunction with the approved Sickness/Absence Policy) (Cllr Shearer and Cllr Howiantz).
- ii. Grievance/Disciplinary & Capability Policies. (Cllrs Knickerbocker and Cllr Sparkes)
- iii. Bullying & Harassment Policy (Cllrs Wolfers and Birch).
- iv. Additional policies / procedures relevant to Officers to form part of the Staff Handbook - for example: information about the Council structure/staffing; other specialist or local policies, Health & Safety. This section will need to be developed as part of the staff handbook.
- b. Members received the DRAFT Flexible Working Request Form.

RESOLVED - to approve the Flexible Working Request Form. [Addition: remove shaded areas before printing].

24/25.SC.039.

Developing a strategy for the Parish Rooms

Committee members discussed developing a strategy for the Parish Rooms.

Background: No issues identified from Officers perspective, but these topics were raised at the ordinary July Staffing Committee meeting under 'items to raise for further consideration.' To include discussion on:

- Opening hours and public access.
- Councillor appointments / drop-ins.
- Councillor Teambuilding wellbeing / teambuilding sessions.
- Flow chart of who/how to contact Officers and Cllrs and specialists.

Clerk to run a log to capture customer, contractor and Cllr contact by email/website/door/telephone/booked appointments. All in agreement that flexibility for residents is important.

Cllr Knickerbocker introduced no ordinary / scheduled Parish Council / Committee meetings in August to support pinch points of activity over the summer when most Cllrs and Officer will ordinarily take leave. Scheme of delegation and extraordinary meetings as required.

24/25.SC.040.

Confidential Items

RESOLVED - In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 amended by the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, the Staffing Committee entered a confidential session (excluding the press and public) as the items that followed involved confidential information on HR / staffing matters.

24/25.SC.041.

Clerk's Staffing Report

The Clerk gave a short verbal report on Staffing Matters by exception which included sickness/absence.

24/25.SC.042.

Admin Officer onboarding

The Clerk provided an update on appointment of the Admin Officer on a permanent basis.

24/25.SC.043.

Livestreaming

Cllr Sparkes and the Clerk provided an update. Members discussed / considered options to explore further. Discussion points to be shared with the Livestreaming Task and Finish Group. Clerk to explore mitigations with Officers. Staffing Committee view is that Street Parish Council still have an ambition to be more transparent whether the format be podcast/another recording device or livestreaming. This ambition also ties in with remote attendance by Cllrs.

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24/25.SC.044. Contingency Planning

The Clerk introduced contingency planning and provided updates on tasks in hand and future recommendations. Items covered included:

- Update on Officer workloads and annual leave.
- Contingency Pack.
- Consideration of Rialtas training for the Clerk - ½ day quote supplied.

RESOLVED – That the Staffing Committee support ½ day Rialtas training for the Clerk and switching to Unity Trust Bank for current account / online banking.

24/25.SC.045. Items to raise for future consideration.

- Conflict Resolution
- Staff handbook / ACAS Policies

24/25.SC.046. Date of Next Meeting.

The next ordinary meeting of the Staffing Committee will take place at 11am on Tuesday 12th November 2024 in Street Library.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 12.30pm. These minutes were adopted under minute reference 24/25.SC.049. as a true record of the decisions taken and are duly signed below by the Chair of that meeting.

Signed: _____ Date: _____