

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE

Held on 11.30am, Tuesday 12th November 2024, Street Library, Leigh Road, Street.

Members Summoned and Present: Adrian Sparkes (Chair), Bryan Knickerbocker and Nina Swift.

Absent: Neil Howiantz (Vice Chair), Pam Birch, Heather Shearer and Laura Wolfers

Officers Present: Jenny Service (Clerk).

In attendance: Members of the public (0)

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION There was none.

MINUTES

- 24/25.SC.047. Apologies for absence
Apologies were received from Cllrs Neil Howiantz (Vice Chair), Pam Birch, Heather Shearer and Laura Wolfers.
- 24/25.SC.048. 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.049. Confirmation of minutes
RESOLVED: The minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 10th September 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.050. Staff Training/Events
Members NOTED recent training / events, planned training, and briefly discussed the future training needs of Officers.
- a. Training undertaken:
 - Grant bids or Community Wellbeing – ACCE (2nd October 2024)
 - Rialtas – Clerk (9th October 2024)
 - VAT Registered Town and Parish Councils - Clerk and RFO (15th October 2024)
 - Community Library Partnerships Conference – Clerk (23rd October 2024)
 - 2023 Procurement Act – Clerk (24th November 2024)
 - Fire Warden Training – DCRO, ACCE and Admin Officer (November 2024)
 - Somerset Prepared – Clerk and ACCE (Wednesday 6th November 2024)
 - b. Planned training:
 - Code of Conduct - Clerk (Monday 11th November 2024)
 - Somerset Parishes Conference – Clerk (Wednesday 13th November 2024)
 - c. Future training needs:
 - Finance in Local Council Administration (FiLCA).
- RESOLVED: that Staffing Cttee RECOMMEND to full council that Clerk and RFO undertake FiLCA training.
- Event management training.

RESOLVED: that Staffing Cttee RECOMMEND the full council approval of an annual £30 subscription to 'The Purple Guide: to Health, Safety and Welfare at Outside Events'.

- 24/25.SC.051. LGS Pay Award
The Staffing Committee NOTED the Local Government Services Pay Agreement 2024. *Agreement has been reached on rates of pay applicable from 1st April 2024 (covering the period 1 April 2024 - 1 April 2025). The new pay rates have increased by £1,290 per annum.*
- 24/25.SC.052. Conflict resolution
Cllr Sparkes circulated a discussion document related to conflict management and referred to the CIPD (Chartered Institute of Professional Development) 2015 document, Conflict management: a shift in direction together with a several NALC (National Association of Local Councils) resources. A short discussion took place. The Staffing Cttee supported proposal to develop a policy to promote informal mediation processes as part of the review of the current Grievance and Disciplinary Policies, that training requirements for such policy be identified and costed and draft taken to Policy and Finance before Easter 2025. Clerk to download and provide the supporting NALC resources. *Staffing Cttee agenda item for the January meeting. To include Officer/Cllr/residents and signposting to other supporting resources.*
- 24/25.SC.053. Policies and procedures
Staff handbook ACAS policies.
The Clerk provided an update on the review of the following Staff Handbook/ ACAS policies from South West Councils. Model policies had been grouped for Cllr review as follows:
i. Leave Policy (in conjunction with the 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 in conjunction with the Clerk).
iv. The Staffing Cttee briefly considered additional policies / procedures relevant to Officers to form part of the Staff Handbook – Expenses policy is being drafted through the Policy and Finance Cttee). This section will be developed further as part of the staff handbook.
These policies will be reviewed as final drafts at the January Staffing Cttee. Discussion also took place
- 24/25.SC.054. Developing a strategy for the Parish Rooms
The Clerk provided an update on “tally week” to capture customer, contractor, and Cllr contact by email/website/door/telephone/booked appointments.
This follows discussion at the September 2024 Staffing Cttee meeting on:
 - Opening hours and public access.
 - Councillor appointments / drop-ins.
 - Councillor Teambuilding wellbeing / teambuilding sessions.
 - Officers and Cllr contact and specialisms.*Clerk to report back to the January Staffing Cttee meeting.*
- 24/25.SC.055. 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.056. Clerk's Staffing Report
The Clerk gave a short verbal report on Staffing Matters by exception which included sickness/absence and the next appraisals process (booked for January 2025). Discussion also took place around actions and tasks from full council and Cttee minutes and Chair's allowance / Cllr and Officer expense claim. *This will be progressed through Policy and Finance Cttee.*
- 24/25.SC.057. Committee Quorum
The Clerk provided an update around Cttee quorum and threat of several inquorate meetings. Members discussed impact and options from a Staffing perspective:

- Published Cttee dates/times and acceptance of meeting invitations.
- Calendar of meetings scheduled for 2025/26 will be circulated at the November Parish Council meeting.
- Cllr engagement and number of Committees / meetings. Terms of Reference for each Cttee together with Scheme of Delegation.
- Meeting invites.
- The Clerk advised that members should not ask Officers to hold inquorate meetings as this is not lawful.
- Discussion took place around 'core' members and 'ad hoc members' though the Clerk advised members required time to consider papers prior to attending a meeting.

RESOLVED – item to go to full council for full discussion / further consideration.

The Clerk will prepare a table of Cttee/membership/quorum. Clerk to review Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference with Officers and take recommendations to a future council meeting.

24/25.SC.058.

Officer roles

Members considered the ACCE role and events and invited views of the Staffing Cttee and expectations of the wider Council.

An initial discussion took place around aspects of events that have impacted Officer roles.

Discussion included the ACCE role, expectations of the wider council and risk and responsibility and the impact on Officers.

This item will be developed further for the next Staffing Cttee meeting together with a review of the ACCE role looking at both events and engagement aspect including vision of the Parish Council with regards to the Parish Council brand and preferred 'style sheet' for different types of communications.

24/25.SC.059.

Flexible Working Requests

The Staffing Cttee considered three flexible working requests following the approval of a Flexible Working Policy and form.

RESOLVED – to RECOMMEND approval of flexible working requests to full council for ratification.

24/25.SC.060.

Contingency Planning

Members received an update from the Clerk in relation to contingency planning. This included:

- SPC Contingency Pack.
- Completion of Rialtas training for the Clerk.
- Move to Unity Trust Bank for current account / online banking (85% complete).

24/25.SC.061.

Items to raise for future consideration.

- HR/Staffing Policies (final drafts).
- Developing a plan for the Parish Rooms and 'Tally Week'.
- Conflict Resolution.
- Office roles.

24/25.SC.062.

Date of Next Meeting.

The next ordinary meeting of the Staffing Committee will take place at 11am on Tuesday 14th January 2025 in Street Library.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 1.13pm. These minutes were adopted under minute reference 24/25.SC.065. as a true record of the decisions taken and are duly signed below by the Chair of that meeting.