

COOKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Staffing Committee of Cookham Parish Council Held in the Community Room on Tuesday 22nd October 2024, at 6.45pm

PRESENT: Cllrs. C. Aisladie (Chairman),
B. Perry, M. Howard, R. Kellaway and L. Austin.

Also Present: J. Holder (Locum)
No members of the public or the Press were present.

1. Apologies for Absence

All members were present.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Aisladie declared an interest in that her husband was a candidate for item 7 below.

3. To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th August 2024

These were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters Arising (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)

There were none.

5. Motion under section 1(2) Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings Act 1960) and Standing Order 3d

Cllr. Perry moved, and Cllr. Howard seconded, the motion that under section 1(2) Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings Act 1960) and under Standing order 3d to agree that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted below that the public be temporarily excluded and be instructed to withdraw. The motion was **approved** unanimously.

6. To report on matters relating to the Clerk and recruitment

6.1 Cllr. Perry reported that all outstanding matters relating to the former Clerk were resolved under the authority given at the Council meeting of 2nd July 2024 at minute 23 page 3293. It was unanimously **agreed to approve** these arrangements and to authorise Cllr. Perry to agree on behalf of the Council. The Council to be notified at its next meeting.

Action: Cllr. Perry

6.2 The Chairman reported that, with the Locum Clerks, she had conducted first round interviews with four candidates and two had been selected for final interview with Cllrs. Perry, Howard and herself at the end of the month. She expressed her appreciation for the pertinent questions and involvement of the Locum Clerks. It was noted that only one of these two candidates had confirmed their attendance.

6.3 In respect of the draft contract for the new Clerk, following discussion, it was **agreed** that whilst pay-scales could be linked to those agreed under the Green Book, the Green Book should otherwise be excluded from this agreement. Save for that comment, the draft contract was otherwise **approved** by the members.

Action: Locum Clerk

7. To consider a payscale increase for the Assistant Clerk

The Chairman noted that the Assistant Clerk's contract provided for a salary review on the anniversary of her appointment, which was in November. It was noted that she was happy to come off the pay scales, hers currently being point 8. Following discussion, it was agreed that an increase should be made in accordance with the proposed national increase of 5.31%. However, if she were to agree to other changes including to remove reference to the Green Book, then the Chairman and the Locum Clerk were authorised to agree such further sum as they deemed reasonable.

Action: Cllr. Aisladie / Locum Clerk

8. To discuss HR support; whether to terminate the Croner contract and if so with whom to replace them

The Chairman noted that the 5 year contract with Croner ran to November 2025 but if it were not terminated on at least 6 months prior notice, then it would continue for a further 5 year term. Following discussion, it was **agreed** to give notice shortly to terminate this agreement at the end of its term.

Action: Locum Clerk

It was understood that NALC might offer HR services but for an additional cost; this and other possible arrangements should be investigated further.

Action: Cllr. Aisladie / Locum Clerk

9. To receive an update about the Chief Commons Officer and ancillary Commons Officers for Cookham Parish Council and terms of engagement thereof

9.1 Cllr. Aisladie, having declared an interest, left the meeting and Cllr. Perry took the chair for this item. Cllr. Perry said that expected new legislation could make it very difficult to have a zero hours contract and it would probably need to be a self employed engagement. It was also necessary to define the job description.

Action: Cllr. Perry / Locum Clerk

9.2 Cllr. Perry noted that the Odney Club had said they had no budget to help fund this position.

10. To consider the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 which will introduce a duty on employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees during the course of their employment

10.1 The Chairman said that this would come into force on 26th October and would require organisations to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees at work. She said there would need to be training for all councillors and

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employees and noted there were on-line training courses for £25 per person. Cllr. Howard noted that for the global sum involved, it would be better to have a bespoke actual session which could cover not only this new duty but also other areas of employee rights including any lessons learnt from the recent issues with the former Clerk.

Action: Cllr. Aisladie / Locum Clerk

10.2 This new duty to be also considered under the Council's Risk Assessment.

Action: Cllr. Aisladie / Locum Clerk

The meeting closed at 7.35 pm

Signed as a true record of the meeting

.....Chairman

Dated.....