

Minutes of **THE STAFF & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE** held at  
**The Old Station**, Station Road, Groombridge on  
**MONDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> NOVEMBER 2022** at 7pm

**PRESENT** Cllrs Andrew Fane (Chair), Robert Gordon-James, Diana Kelly, Paul Watkins, Linsey Winter

**In attendance:** Deborah Siddle - Clerk (minutes)

Members of the public are encouraged to attend meetings and there is a 10-minute opportunity for members of the public to address meeting. There were no members of the public present.

**1. APOLOGIES:** – Cllr Nick Anderson – work commitment

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – None

**3. TO CONSIDER WHETHER TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING DURING CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS 4-15 PURSUANT TO SECTION 1(2) OF THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 ON THE GROUNDS THAT PUBLICITY WOULD BE PREJUDICIAL TO THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS**

**002388 RESOLVED** to exclude press and public.

**4. MINUTES and MATTERS ARISING**

**002389 RESOLVED** that the minutes (and confidential file note) of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2022 were approved.

Completed Actions

Minute no.	Who	Item
Pg. 2473	Clerk	Reviewed achievements against Parish Plan
Pg. 2577	Cllr Watkins	Invited councillor concerned in conduct matters to an informal update meeting
<b>002359</b>	Staff Committee	Recommended to October Council to make a Code of Conduct complaint
Pg. 2577	Cllr Gordon-James/ Clerk	Drafted the complaint including suggested outcomes for agreement by Staff Committee prior to Council
Pg. 2577	Clerks	Dealing with Difficult People training booked/undertaken

Actions from previous meetings still to be completed

Minute no.	Who	Item
Pg. 2474	Assistant Clerk/ Highways Coordinator	Recommend to Council to hold an annual forum to allow the public to feed in highways related concerns in a solution-based way

Actions from this meeting

Minute no.	Who	Item
Pg 2614	Clerks	Build on relationship with Sussex Police/PCSOs
Pg 2614	Clerk	Recommend to Council to terminate the Community Warden's contract with Forest Row Parish Council
Pg 2614	Clerks	Promote Operation Crackdown in the Newsletter
Pg 2615	Clerk	Recommend to Council changes to Administrator/ Volunteer Facilitator Role and salary
Pg 2615	Staff	Share administrative tasks no longer in the Administrator/ Volunteer Facilitator job description
Pg 2615	Clerk	Recommend to Council changes to contractual hours based on overtime review
Pg 2615	Clerk	Recommend Staff and training budget lines to Finance Committee as part of the budget setting process for 2023/24
Pg 2616	Clerks	Circulate ways that Councillors can be involved other than at meetings to Council
Pg 2616	Clerks	Circulate the Noticeboard content with a reminder that Ward Chair are responsible
Pg 2616	Clerk	Recommend Councillor/Employee Policy to Council
Pg 2616	Clerk	Recommend Employee Code of Conduct to Council
Pg 2616	Clerk	Recommend Lone Worker policy to Council

## 5. TO CONSIDER COMMUNITY WARDEN ROLE

A paper had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Committee AGREED that when Council first agreed to the Community Warden role, its concerns were that changes to East Sussex Police's priorities and service delivery were impacting on neighbourhood policing, exacerbated by PCSOs being based at Hailsham. The new police station at Crowborough has meant a stronger working relationship with the PCSOs/Sussex Police, although the Clerks were asked to build on this, particularly regarding pavement parking and visibility, and to promote Operation Crackdown in the Newsletter. In addition our volunteer Highways Coordinator's role has established and the Rights of Way Committee is very active, so reports regarding defects in highways and rights of way are being picked up by them.

Councillors regretted having to make the recommendation to Council to terminate the Community Warden's contract with Forest Row Parish Council but felt that the above reasons and the squeeze on budgets made this necessary.

## 6. TO NOTE SALARY AWARD

The Committee had been notified prior to the meeting that an agreement had been reached on the 2022/23 rates of pay. The terms of the agreement include:

- With effect from 1 April 2022, an increase on all NJC pay points 1 and above (backdated) (*confidential file note has detail*)

- With effect from 1 April 2023, an increase of one day to all employees' annual leave entitlement

This was noted.

## **7. TO NOTE COMPLETED APPRAISALS**

The Committee had received a precis of the appraisals that had taken place, which were both rated as exemplary. These were noted

## **8. TO CONSIDER INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATOR/VOLUNTEER FACILITATOR ROLE AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

An independent review of the role had taken place, and the Committee had received the report prior to the meeting. In order to best deliver on the Parish Plan and in recognition of the post holders skills and knowledge, the Committee AGREED to recommend to Council:

- Job title to be amended to something like 'Community Engagement Coordinator' ('Officer' felt to be too officious)
- Job description to be updated to reflect the evolved nature of the role, and account for other aspects within the Council's Parish Plan which are, or will become, part of the jobholder's remit
- Salary scale for the role is amended (*confidential file note has detail*)

Staff members to look at sharing administrative tasks no longer in the job description.

## **9. TO CONSIDER INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF OVERTIME AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

An independent review of overtime had taken place, and the Committee had received the report prior to the meeting. Based on historic overtime data provided, discussions with staff and considering the council's functions and plans within its Parish Plan, the recommendations that were AGREED to be recommended to Council were:

- Clerk's contracted hours increased from 22 to 26 per week
- Assistant Clerk's contracted hours remain at 18 per week
- Administrator/Volunteer Facilitator's (or amended role title as appropriate) contracted hours increased from 12.5 to 15
- Council conducts an annual review of overtime paid against contracted hours to assess any future changes

It was AGREED that the principle moving forward should be that overtime is not be worked unless necessary. Council should consider workload when agreeing to new projects.

## **10. TO CONSIDER 2023/24 STAFF AND TRAINING BUDGET LINES**

The Committee AGREED the following budget lines to be recommended to Finance Committee as part of the budget setting process for 2023/24:

4000	Staff salary	£50,400
4001	Staff on costs	£13,000
4003	Parish Maintenance Contract	£ 0 (increase 4407 instead)
4005	Clerical support & overtime	£ 2,000

4007	Training	£ 2,500
4009	Conferences & Networking	£ 500

## **11. TO CONSIDER GUIDELINES FOR COUNCILLORS WORKING ON PROJECTS**

Cllr Winter had worked with the Assistant Clerk on ways that Councillors can be involved other than at meetings, this had been circulated to the Committee. Should Councillors be leading on projects the Clerks also have further guidance. It was AGREED that these should be circulated to Council with a more informal title rather than 'guidelines'.

## **12. TO CONSIDER RECOMMENDATION FOR NOTICEBOARDS**

Cllr Winter had worked with the Assistant Clerk on a proposal for WPC noticeboards, to ensure they have relevant content without needing too frequent updating.

The Committee AGREED the proposal but were concerned about the boards being too static. They agreed Ward Chairs should temporarily add topical information (such as the APA) if they wished to. Clerks to circulate the first content with a reminder that Ward Chair are responsible, Cllr Gordon-James offered to assist Cllr Anderson with Groombridge ward.

## **13. POLICIES:**

### 13.1 Councillor/Employee Policy (New - NALC/SLCC Template)

AGREED to recommend to Council

### 13.2 Employee Code of Conduct

AGREED to recommend to Council

### 13.3 Lone Worker policy

AGREED to recommend to Council

## **14. COUNCILLOR CONDUCT**

Council had agreed to make a Code of Conduct complaint to the District Monitoring Officer regarding a Councillor's conduct. A change in circumstance meant that the Clerk was awaiting confirmation as to whether the complaint would stop or proceed. (*confidential file note has detail*)

## **15. MATTERS OF URGENT IMPORTANCE FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA**

The Clerk's appraisal would be the following week. Members of the Committee could input any comments to Cllr Kelly.

## **16. TO INVITE THE PUBLIC TO RETURN TO THE MEETING IF THEY WERE EXCLUDED FOR THE PREVIOUS ITEMS**

002390 **RESOLVED** to invite press and public to return.

## **17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – to be confirmed, as required.**

The meeting closed at 8.30pm