

Minutes of **THE STAFF & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE** held at  
**The Old Station**, Station Road, Groombridge on  
**MONDAY 26<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2024 at 6pm**

**PRESENT** Cllrs Nick Anderson, Andrew Fane (Chair), Robert Gordon-James, Diana Kelly, 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** – none.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** - none

**3. TO CONSIDER WHETHER TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING DURING CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS 4-9 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**

**002645 RESOLVED** to exclude press and public.

**4. MINUTES and MATTERS ARISING**

**002646 RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023 were approved.

Completed Actions

Minute no.	Who	Item
Pg. 2474	Assistant Clerk	Agreed that WPC holding an annual forum for highways related concerns could cause confusion regarding responsibility for highways
Pg 2870	Clerk	A 'How to report issues' guidance circulated to councillors and in parish magazines
Pg. 2871	Clerk	Increments notified to payroll effective from April 2024
<b>002602</b>	Clerk	Made changes to the Community Engagement Coordinator's Job Description
Pg. 2871	Clerk	Recommended staffing and training 2024/25 budget lines to Finance Committee
<b>002603</b>	Clerk	Recommended the Bullying & Harassment policy to Council
<b>002604</b>	Clerk	Recommended the Equal Opportunities policy to Council
<b>002605</b>	Clerk	Recommended the recruitment policy to Council

**Staff 26.2.2024 – 002925**

<b>002606</b>	Clerk	Recommended the Sickness and Absence policy to Council
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Actions from previous meetings still to be completed

Minute no.	Who	Item
<b>002601</b>	Clerk	Staff evaluation to be undertaken after the Parish Plan 2024-28 is completed
Pg. 2871	Committee	Consider autumn 2024 whether Clerk's additional week's holiday in 2025 would be paid or unpaid

Actions from this meeting

Minute no.	Who	Item
Pg. 2924	Assistant Clerk	APA to request feedback on highways as part of next Parish Plan
Pg. 2924	Assistant Clerk	APA to have info sheets on reporting issues for residents to take away
<b>002647</b>	Clerk	Issue new contract for Parish Maintenance Person
Pg. 2926	Clerk	Notify Payroll of Parish Maintenance Person pay from 12 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
Pg. 2926	Clerk	Consider tasks that can be completed in winter 2024 and assess how many hours would be required
Pg. 2926	Clerk	Ask PMP if he would like his details passed to Groombridge Village Hall
<b>002649</b>	Clerk	Recruit an office volunteer
Pg. 2926	All	New Parish Plan to consider what WPC should not do as well as confirming priorities
<b>002650</b>	Clerk	Recommend the Capability Policy to Council
<b>002651</b>	Clerk	Recommend the Dignity at Work Policy to Council
Pg. 2927	Clerk	Next agenda to include Staff and Volunteer updates

**5. PARISH MAINTENANCE PERSON CONTRACT** - Consider an extension to the current 6-month contract and confirm terms and conditions

A paper had been circulated prior to the meeting. Staff Committee agreed that the current incumbent had been doing a very good job and that the contract should be extended for a further six months.

Clerk to look at what tasks can be completed in winter 2024 in order to start assessing how many hours would be required in a further contract after 12<sup>th</sup> September.

**002647 RESOLVED** to extend the Parish Maintenance Contract for a further 6 months to 13<sup>th</sup> September.

**002648 RESOLVED** to increase the salary to track above minimum wage (see confidential file note). It was noted that this can be absorbed across the 2024/25 salary budgets.

Groombridge Village Hall had asked whether they could buy an hour of the role every week to sweep around the Hall as this arrangement had been in place with previous incumbents. The Committee felt that WPC would require all its hours in the Spring/Summer but that the Clerk should ask the incumbent if they would like their details passed to the Village Hall for them to contract him directly.

It was discussed whether WPC should consider contracting the PMP's services out to various organisations but this would have repercussions on the Clerk's time in managing such arrangements and relationships.

**6. OFFICE VOLUNTEER PROPOSAL – for consideration**

Due to high staff workloads the Clerk had proposed a volunteer to assist in the office. A paper had been circulated prior to the meeting with tasks that had been identified.

Committee members commented on the importance of confidentiality and that the recruitment and training should ensure that this was protected. It would be important to get the right person and to be clear about the role and its expectations.

The Clerk had recommended one half day every week. It was agreed that this might be extended based on the individual volunteer's abilities and availability.

The Committee noted that the new Parish Plan could result in changes to priorities to reflect the needs of the Parish and consequently it could be problematic if staff roles had to change and this affected the volunteer role. However, the Committee also noted that initiatives can be put on hold due to staff workload currently and it would be good for capacity to be freed up.

**002649 RESOLVED** that the Clerk should start recruitment for an office Volunteer, to start as soon as possible.

The Clerk should use the WPCIC volunteer policies and paperwork as a template.

It was AGREED that as part of the new Parish Plan work, consideration should be given to what WPC no longer should be doing as well as what it wants to achieve and where the balance and focus of its priorities should be.

**7. POLICIES** to recommend to Council:

7.1 Capability

**002650 RESOLVED** to recommend the Capability Policy to Council

7.2 Dignity at Work

**002651 RESOLVED** to recommend the Dignity at Work Policy to Council

**8. CLERK'S REPORTS** - overtime, absence and training

These reports had been circulated prior to the meeting and were noted.

The Committee was pleased that overtime was no longer routinely being worked.

There was concern that workloads might be impacting some staff. Clear prioritisation in the new Parish Plan, and Councillors and Committee members helping more, could help this.

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

- Staff update
- Volunteer update

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

**002652 RESOLVED** to invite press and public to return.

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

The meeting closed at 7pm