

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

**Personnel Sub-Committee
15th October 2018 at 6.30pm.**

Present: Councillors: Ms J Hillyard Chairman
D Abbott
C Slough Substitute
K Wattingham

Officers: Clare Evans Town Clerk
Debbie Marsh Corporate Services Manager
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 0

Apologies: Councillor: D Dixon-Wilkinson

Also Present: Councillors: J Carroll
M Kennedy

PE55 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor D Dixon-Wilkinson substituted by Councillor C Slough.

PE56 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The office Christmas opening times were queried, it was advised that this had been placed on the agenda of the special meeting of the Town Council on 22nd October 2018.

PE57 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

PE58 MINUTES

The Committee received the minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on 16th July 2018 for consideration.

Matters arising: It was requested that the Town Clerks' appraisal be diarised for November.

Resolved: That the minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on 16th July 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed accordingly.

PE59 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

- Staffing matters
- Staff capacity issues
- Consideration of the Town Council's Apprenticeship Scheme
- Review of staff sickness
- Receive notification of the Town Clerk's annual leave and matters relating to overtime working and sickness.

Members requested that consideration be given to the subject matter and reflect if these matters required the discussion to go into private session.

Following officer advice, it was proposed that agenda items 6, 8 and 11 remain in public session and that following a resolution, items 7, 9 and 10 would move into private session.

Proposed by: Cllr Wattingham Seconded by: Cllr Slough
All in favour, accordingly items 6, 8 and 11 remained in public session.

The Chair requested a proposer for the meeting to move into private session in order to discuss items 7, 9 and 10.

Proposed by: Cllr Slough. There was no seconder for this proposal.
Accordingly, the resolution for private session was not carried and these items remained in public session.

PE60 STAFFING MATTERS

- At the Environment & Leisure meeting held on the 17th September 2018, Members were advised that a review of the structure of the grounds team had taken place. The review concluded that as the work of the team remained constant and was likely to continue to do so, it was therefore recommended that the team should continue to comprise of the Foreman plus 5 groundsmen and 1 junior groundsman. The vacant permanent position of a Groundsperson (left vacant following the promotion of the Deputy Foreman) was to be advertised as soon as possible with the fixed term summer contract being extended to the 30th November 2018, to cover any gaps. The closing date for this position was the 15th October 2018.
- Members were informed, at the previous meeting, that a disciplinary process had been underway. This process was now concluded.
- At the Community Services meeting held on the 3rd September 2018 members noted that meetings involving the Community Development Officer over the summer were difficult due to an increased workload during August arising from the summer playscheme.
- Members were advised that the Corporate Services Manager, in agreement with the Clerk, was proposing to increase their working days in order to concentrate on specific projects. Any time accrued would be taken in agreement with the Clerk so as to avoid any impact on existing duties.
- To consider any recommendations coming from the Town Council meeting held on the 8th October 2018 in relation to the outcome of an internal investigation.

The Ground staff numbers were queried as it was suggested that the appointment of a Town Ranger was yet to be discussed. It was advised that this would be placed on the next Community Services agenda.

Resolved:

- 1) **To note the information.**
- 2) **To note no recommendations came from the Town Council meeting held on the 8th October 2018 in relation to the outcome of an internal investigation.**

PE61 STAFF CAPACITY ISSUES

Members received a report detailing arising issues.

Members were advised that all members of the office team were experiencing an increased workload.

It was suggested that the following areas be looked at to ensure staff were not overloaded and had capacity to achieve tasks requested.

- Combating Crime Working Group projects;
- Events;
- Community Services.

Members suggested the website come under member scrutiny and placed on a committee. Members also suggested that the responsibilities of the RFO be separated from the roll of the Clerk.

Support options discussed were:

Additional staff
Outsourcing some events
Reduction of meetings
Reduction of services
Volunteer support.

It was suggested that whilst this council had been proactive with their ideas, this had led to an increase in the workload for the staff.

It was requested that a staff review be carried out. Prior to the employment of additional staff in both 2016 & 2017, a consultant had been employed to examine staffing and staff capacity. Members requested a similar review be undertaken.

The Chair requested that staff be thanked for bringing this matter to the attention of the sub-committee. Members agreed that it was important for staff to have their concerns heard and discussed.

Resolved: **To discuss arising issues.**

PE62 TO CONSIDER THE TOWN COUNCIL APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME

At the Corporate Services meeting held on the 24th September 2018 Members requested, under the Town Council's Review of Vision - 51 – Develop a local apprenticeship scheme - that the merits of this scheme be discussed at the next Personnel Sub-Committee. At the meeting Members voiced concerns that employing apprentices at the end of their time removed the opportunity of employing local people into future schemes. The Town Council had one apprentice, who was office based. This apprenticeship commenced on the 20th November 2017 and would finish on the 31st July 2019.

As detailed above, under agenda item 6, there was no current capacity / demand to embark on a grounds apprenticeship scheme. It was proposed that should a vacancy arise within the grounds team then this would provide an opportunity to revisit the scheme.

Members discussed the current vacancy for a Groundsperson in relation to an apprentice position. It was suggested that an apprentice should not be classified as an additional member of staff but would be purely in post for training and educational purposes only, whereas the position advertised was for a fully qualified Groundsperson.

The possibility of a grant was discussed; however, members were advised that as we were classified as Local Government, which overall employ over 2,000 staff, we would not qualify for funding.

Members felt that the Groundsperson apprenticeship should continue as the Town Council felt it was their obligation to train young people and aid their gaining of working experience.

Members requested that the Town Clerk to look at the Town Council budget and report back to Town Council.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council that a Groundsperson apprenticeship scheme be approved subject to budget provision.

PE63 REVIEW OF STAFF SICKNESS

Members received a report indicating levels of staff sickness absence for the period 1st April 2017 to 30th September 2018.

Clarification was sought on the figures of the Grounds Team absences, and if the cause had been due a lack of the suitable equipment including PPE. Members were assured that this was not the case, and the figures remained a steady average.

Resolved: To note the report.

PE64 TOWN CLERK'S ANNUAL LEAVE, OVERTIME WORKING AND SICKNESS

Annual Leave

The clerk is requesting the following leave
22nd October – 26th October 2018
1st & 2nd November 2018
27th – 28th December 2018
3rd – 4th January 2019
18th – 22nd February 2019
This leaves 6 annual leave days outstanding.

Overtime Working

From 1st July to 30th September the Clerk had attended 8 meetings outside of the normal working day comprising council meetings and briefing sessions (compared to 12 meetings in the previous quarter) and 3 council events.

Sickness

From 1st July to 30th September 1 day's sick leave had been taken.

Resolved: To approve the Town Clerks annual leave request.

PE65 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS

From 1st July to 30th September no Freedom of Information requests had been received.

Resolved: To note the report.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 6.54pm

Dated this 14th day of January 2019

Chairman