



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire LU5 5EY

Town Mayor: **Cllr M S Kennedy** Tel: 01582 708540
Town Clerk: **Clare Evans** E-mail: info@houghtonregis.org.uk

7th October 2019

To: Members of the Personnel Sub-Committee

Cllrs: K Wattingham (Chairman), D Abbott, C Copleston and D Jones.

(Copies to all Councillors for information)

Notice of Meeting

You are hereby summoned to a Meeting of the **Personnel Sub-Committee** to be held at the Council Offices, Peel Street on **14th October 2019 at 6.00pm.**

Clare Evans

THIS MEETING MAY BE FILMED/RECORDED *

CE
Clare Evans
Town Clerk

Agenda

- 1. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**
- 2. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

In accordance with approved Standing Orders 1(e)-1(l) Members of the public may make representations, ask questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.

The total period of time designated for public participation at a meeting shall not exceed 15 minutes and an individual member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.

- 3. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

Under the Localism Act 2011 (sections 26-37 and Schedule 4) and in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, Members are required to declare any interests which are not currently entered in the member's register of interests or if he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of any such interest.

Members are invited to submit any requests for Dispensations for consideration.

**This meeting may be filmed by the Council for subsequent broadcast online and can be viewed at <http://www.houghtonregis.org.uk/minutes>*

Phones and other equipment may be used to film, audio record, tweet or blog from this meeting by an individual Council member or a member of the public. The use of images or recordings arising from this is not under the Council's control.

No part of the meeting room is exempt from public filming unless the meeting resolves to go into exempt session.

4. MINUTES

To receive the minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on the 15th July 2019.

Recommendation: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 15th July 2019 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

5. REVIEW OF STAFF SICKNESS

Page 11

Members will find attached a rolling twelve-month record of sickness absence for all members of staff.

Recommendation: To note the information.

6. TOWN CLERK'S ANNUAL LEAVE, OVERTIME WORKING AND SICKNESS

The Town Clerk has:

- Booked 4 days annual leave between 1st October and 31st December 2019.
- Attended 11 meetings outside of normal office hours from 1st July to 30th September 2019 (compared with 12 meetings in the previous quarter).
- Taken ½ day sick leave

Recommendation: To approve the Town Clerks annual leave request.

7. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS

For the period July to September 0 Freedom of Information request were received.

Recommendation: To note the information.

8. TOWN COUNCIL'S APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME

Members are informed that both the office and grounds apprentice roles have been advertised.

An office apprentice has been appointed and it is anticipated that they will be in post shortly, date to be confirmed.

The grounds apprentice role has been advertised twice, with only one applicant applying who subsequently withdrew.

Recommendation: To note the information.

9. RETIREMENT GRATUITIES

Pages 13 - 14

Members will find attached a report detailing the change to discretionary retirement gratuities.

Recommendation: To note the information.

10. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

- Staffing matters
- Capacity review

Recommendation: In accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the item set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Personnel Sub-Committee

15th July 2019 at 6.00pm

Present: Councillors: K Wattingham Chairman
D Abbott
C Copleston
D Jones

Officers: Debbie Marsh Corporate Services Manager
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 1

PE92 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Members were invited to put forward nominations for Chair of the Personnel Sub-Committee.

Nominee: Cllr Wattingham Nominated by: Cllr Jones
Seconded by: C Copleston

No other nominations were received.

On being put to the vote Cllr Wattingham was elected as Chair of the Personnel Sub-committee.

PE93 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

None.

PE94 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A member of the public:

- Asked why the declarations of interest were not showing on the Houghton Regis Town Council website.
The member of public was advised that this would be looked into as the information needed was received from Central Bedfordshire Council.
- Asked whether party affiliation should be displayed on the Houghton Regis Town Council website as for one member it did not show any information.
The councillor questioned, advised that he would only answer questions which related to agenda items.
- Asked why a councillor's information had been removed from the website.
The member of public was advised that updated information was awaited and would be uploaded once received.

PE95 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

PE96 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Members were invited to put forward nominations for Vice-Chair of the Personnel Sub-committee.

Nominee: Cllr Jones Nominated by: C Copleston
Seconded by: Cllr Abbott

No other nominations were received.

On being put to the vote Cllr Jones was elected as Vice-Chair of the Personnel Sub-committee.

PE97 MINUTES

The Committee received the minutes of the Personnel Sub-committee meeting held on 15th April 2019 for consideration.

Resolved: That the minutes of the Personnel Sub-committee meeting held on 15th April 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed accordingly.

PE98 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

In accordance with Standing Order 4.j.iii. Council was required to review its delegation arrangements to committees and sub committees.

Members received the extract from the approved Committee Functions & Terms of Reference which related to this committee.

Resolved: To note the information

PE99 APPOINTMENT OF APPOINTED PERSON

As part of the Committees Functions one member of the Sub-committee was to be appointed, preferably the Chair, to act as contact for the clerk for day to day matters, to provide support, handle leave requests, absence from work and to feed matters to Committee where any decisions/action were needed and to undertake the Clerks appraisal.

Nominee: Cllr Wattingham Nominated by: Cllr Abbott
Seconded by: Cllr Jones

No other nominations were received.

Members voted in favour of Cllr Wattingham being appointed as the Clerks appointed person.

PE100 REVIEW OF STAFF SICKNESS

Members received a rolling twelve-month record of sickness absence for all members of staff.

A member asked if any of the sickness was work or stress related. Members were advised that as this section of the meeting was in public session, this could not be answered, however, the Town Clerk would manage the sickness and report to council if there were any concerns or action needed.

Resolved: To note the information.

PE101 TOWN CLERK'S ANNUAL LEAVE AND MATTERS RELATING TO OVERTIME WORKING

The Town Clerk had:

- Booked 9 days annual leave between 1st July and 30th September 2019, up to 4 additional days may also be booked.
- Attended 12 meetings outside of normal office hours from 1st April to 30th June 2019 (compared with 15 meetings in the previous quarter).

Resolved: To approve the Town Clerks annual leave request.

PE102 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS

For the period April to July one Freedom of Information request had been received. It was confirmed that this request had been responded to within the statutory timeframe.

Members requested that a general overview of the request be provided to members on future Freedom of Information requests.

Resolved: To note the information.

PE103 STAFF CAPACITY REVIEW

Members were informed that the consultant who was undertaking a staff capacity review, as agreed at the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting (PE85) held on the 15th April 2019, was due to start work week commencing 12th August 2019.

As staff capacity issues had been raised with members it was felt that this review was necessary to formalise capacity issues and to help guide the new council in setting an achievable corporate plan.

Members raised concerns over the cost of this review and it was suggested that this should not be to the detriment of Health and Safety support as Health and Safety was a prime consideration of keeping staff, visitors and councillors safe. It was requested that details of the costs involved be circulated by the Corporate Services Manager.

Resolved: To note the information.

PE104 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

- Managing Negative Social Media Comments
- Staffing matters – staff appraisals
- Town Clerk’s appraisal
- Managing Staff overtime budget

Members voted on the exclusion of the press and public:

Proposed by: Cllr Jones; Seconded by: Cllr Copleston

Members for: all in favour

Resolved: In accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the item set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

PE105 MANAGING NEGATIVE SOCIAL MEDIA COMMENTS

Members were informed that legal advice had been sought in regard to continued defamation being experienced by staff and councillors on social media. These comments have had an ongoing negative impact on those named and also to the Town Council.

Members were made aware that there had been a number of derogatory comments on social media sites.

Members discussed the issue at length and supported certain steps that could be taken in trying to resolve the issue.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council that the use of steps 1 and 2, be agreed by the clerk in consultation with the Mayor, be instigated when dealing with those who continue to make defamatory comments in regard to staff and Councillors.

PE106 STAFFING MATTERS – STAFF APPRAISALS

At the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on the 15th April 2019 Members were informed that staff appraisals were currently underway and that any significant outcomes would be reported to the next meeting.

Members were advised that all staff appraisals had been completed and were advised of significant outcomes.

Members were advised that staff were supported by an open-door policy in order to speak to their Line Manager if they had any concerns regarding any issues raised in their staff appraisal or any other issues.

Resolved: To note the information

PE107 TOWN CLERK'S APPRAISAL

Members were advised of significant points made at the Town Clerks appraisal in April 2019.

In addition to this Members agreed that the Town Clerk should be supported by councillors. Members discussed ways in which to support the Town Clerk and discussed the option of reporting matters to the Monitoring Officer, however, members felt that this could be ineffectual.

It was proposed that Members should disclose any areas of critique in regard to any officer of the council, away from the public domain.

It was suggested that when chairing a committee or sub-committee, the chair remind members not to undermine officers at the time of members making disparaging remarks.

Members considered the use of mediation and requested that the cost for this be sought, however Members were fully aware of the current budgetary constraints therefore requested that officers try and identify an appropriate budget heading and report the outcomes to the Corporate Services Committee.

PE108 MANAGING STAFF OVERTIME BUDGET

Members received a report, for consideration, on options for possible staff savings costs and equality in pay, when working at Town Council events.

Members discussed this item at length and requested that this item be deferred until further investigative comparisons were made over a full year of events, and whether other councils used casual contracts for employees for staffing events and to report findings back to this committee at its next meeting.

Resolved: To consider charging staff costs arising from working at events to the events budget at the 2020/2021 budget setting process

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.03pm

Dated this 14th day of October 2019

Chairman

This page is
intentionally left
blank

	2018/2019 April - June 2018	2018/2019 July - Sept 2018	2018/2019 Oct - Dec 2018	2018/2019 Jan - March 2019	2019/2020 April - June 2019	2019/2020 July - Sept 2019
Office						
No of office staff (inc cleaners)	10	10	10	10	10	10
Office staff sickness days	10	12	26.5	9	37	36.5
Grounds						
No of grounds staff	7	7	7	7	7	7
Grounds staff sickness days	16	12.5	7	3	11	51
Total Staff no.	17	17	17	17	17	17
Total staff sickness days	26	24.5	28.5	12	48	87.5

This page is
intentionally left
blank



PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE**Agenda Item 9**

Date: 14th October 2019

Title: RETIREMENT GRATUITIES

Purpose of the Report: To provide an update to members on the regulations governing payment of discretionary retirement gratuities

Contact Officer: Debbie Marsh, Corporate Services Manager

1. RECOMMENDATION

To note the information

2. INFORMATION

Previously, town and parish councils were able to rely on the Local Government Discretionary Payments Regulations 1996 when making a retirement gratuity.

The regulations applying to a retirement gratuity have been revoked. The implication of this means, there is no longer any power for a council to pay a retirement gratuity regardless of an employee's terms of contract or length of service.

3. COUNCIL VISION

Indicate how the proposed action supports the Objectives of Council's Vision;
5. A strong efficient and proactive Town Council.

4. IMPLICATIONS**Corporate Implications**

There are no Corporate Implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

There are no Legal Implications at this preliminary stage.

Financial Implications

There are no Financial Implications arising from this report.

Risk Implications

There are no Risk Implications arising from this report.

Equalities Implications

Houghton Regis Town Council has a duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

This issue does not discriminate.

Press Contact

It is not considered necessary to contact the press in relation to this matter.

5. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Whilst members are informed of this change to regulations staff will also need to be advised.

It is proposed that an internal memorandum will be sent to staff to confirm the above.