



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire LU5 5EY

Town Mayor: **Cllr Tracey K McMahon** Tel: 01582 708540
Town Clerk: **Clare Evans** E-mail: info@houghtonregis.org.uk

1st July 2020

To: Members of the Personnel Sub-Committee

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

Notice of Meeting

You are hereby summoned to a Virtual Meeting of the **Personnel Sub-Committee** to be held on **13th July 2020 at 6.00pm.**

This meeting is being held virtually via Microsoft Teams. If members of the public would like to attend, please pre-advise the Head of Democratic Services (louise.senior@houghtonregis.org.uk) by 3pm on the day of the meeting in order for appropriate access to be arranged.

pp. *Clare Evans*

Clare Evans
Town Clerk
Agenda

**THIS MEETING MAY BE
FILMED/RECORDED ***

This meeting is being held virtually due to Covid-19. To assist in the smooth running of the meeting please refer and adhere to the Council's Virtual Meeting Guidance. Virtual Meeting Guidance can be found on the Houghton Regis Town Council website.

- 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.

**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.

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.

4. COMMITTEE ARRANGEMENTS

Members are advised that in accordance with the Minute 111207 taken at Town Council on 18th March 2020 the following committee arrangements remain in place:

Chair and Vice Chair of Personnel Sub-Committee

The Chair and Vice Chair of Personnel Sub-Committee will remain as follows:

Chair – Cllr Wattingham

Vice Chair – Cllr Jones

Committee Functions & Terms of Reference

These remain as most recently approved.

5. MINUTES

Pages 9 - 12

To receive the minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on the 13th January 2020.

Recommendation: **To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 13th January 2020 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

6. REVIEW OF STAFF SICKNESS

Pages 13 - 14

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

This report is provided for information only.

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

Annual Leave

At the end of 2019/20 the Clerk had 4 days annual leave to carry forward. From April to June the Clerk has had 1 day's leave.

The following leave requests are made:

5 days in July / August

5 days in September

Overtime Working

For the period from the 1st January to the 31st March the Town Clerk has attended 4 council meetings / members briefing sessions.

For the period from the 1st April to the 30th June the Town Clerk has attended 3 council meetings / members briefing sessions (virtual).

Sickness

There were no absences of sickness.

Recommendation: **To approve the Town Clerks annual leave request**

8. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS

Members are informed that for the period January to June 2020 one Freedom of Information request had been received. It is confirmed that this request was responded to within the statutory timeframe.

This report is provided for information only.

9. EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME - ANNUAL REVIEW

At the Town Council meeting held on the 30th January 2017 (minute number 8835) members agreed to support a recommendation from the Corporate Services committee (minute number 8835) for the introduction of an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) under a 5-year contract.

Employee Assistance Programmes are employee benefit programmes offered by employers. EAP's are intended to help employees deal with personal problems that might adversely impact their work performance, health and well-being. EAP's generally include assessment, short-term counselling and referral services for employees. Employees' immediate family members would also have access to the online help and support for issues such as: Alcohol/Drugs, Debt, Family Issues, Bereavement, Tax, Childcare and other Citizens Advice Bureau type advice. Members unanimously agreed to the introduction of an Employee Assistance Programme in support of its commitment to the wellbeing of staff.

Members are provided with information, annually, detailing how many contacts and under which heading contact to this service had been made however, this information does not include names or details of those making contact, as this allows those making contact to feel confident in the service being totally confidential.

Between 1st Jan 2019 and 31st Dec 2019

- 13 calls were made the helpline which received in the moment support from a counsellor
- 10 online portal hits were recorded

This report is provided for information only.

10. ANNUAL LEAVE 2020/2021

Staff annual leave entitlement period is from the 1st April 2020 to the 31st March 2021.

As members are aware, COVID-19 regulations required employees to work from home as of the 23rd March 2020.

The government has passed new emergency legislation to ensure businesses have the flexibility they need to respond to the coronavirus pandemic and to protect workers from losing their statutory holiday entitlement (The Working Time (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020, laid before Parliament on 27 March 2020). These regulations enable workers to carry holiday forward where the impact of coronavirus means that it has not been reasonably practicable to take it in the leave year to which it relates.

Where it has not been reasonably practicable for the worker to take some or all of the 4 weeks' holiday due to the effects of coronavirus, the untaken amount may be carried forward into the following 2 leave years.

Due to the uncertainty on travel restrictions staff may not be requesting leave as they would do under normal circumstances. Therefore, members are being asked to agree that, should the need arise, staff can carry over up to 10 days (pro rata) annual leave from the 2020/21 period to the 2021/2022 period.

There is a slight concern that when staff are allowed to return to work there will be an unprecedented rush of leave requests to enable staff to use up their entitlement within the current period. Allowing staff to carry over this entitlement will allow for a more measured approach to staff leave absence between now and March 2022.

However, this arrangement does not change the current arrangements of staff not being able to take more than a two-week block of annual leave at one time. A longer period than that of two weeks can only be agreed under special circumstances and with the Town Clerks approval.

In addition to the above, should an employee travel and find Government advice has changed in the interim and they then found themselves having to self-isolate on their return, the self-isolation period would be either unpaid or the employee could choose to take this time as annual leave. If they have no annual leave remaining, then it would be classed as unpaid leave. However, if they were self-isolating due to being unwell then this would be classed as sick leave.

Recommendation: To agree to staff carrying over up to 10 days (pro rata) annual leave entitlement from the 2020/21 period to the 2021/2022 period.

11. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

- Staff appraisals
- Town Clerk's appraisal

- Staffing arrangements

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
13th January 2020 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: 0

PE121 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

None.

PE122 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

PE123 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

PE124 MINUTES

The Committee received the minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on 14th October 2019 for consideration.

Resolved: That the minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on 14th October 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed accordingly.

PE125 REVIEW OF STAFF SICKNESS

Members received a rolling twelve-month record of sickness absence for all members of staff for the period of October – December 2019.

Resolved: To note the information.

PE126 TOWN CLERK'S ANNUAL LEAVE, OVERTIME WORKING AND SICKNESS

Annual Leave

Members were advised that the Town Clerk had provided additional holiday dates since the agenda had been sent to members. This left 2.5 days annual leave outstanding which would be taken on an ad-hoc basis.

Overtime Working

For the period from the 1st October to the 31st December the Town Clerk had attended 11 council meetings / members briefing sessions and 4 council events.

Sickness

There were no absences of sickness.

Resolved: To note the information.

PE127 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS

Members were advised there had been no Freedom of Information requests received for the period of October to December 2019.

Resolved: To note the information.

PE128 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

- Staffing matters
- Staff capacity issues

Members voted on the exclusion of the press and public:

Proposed by: Cllr Jones, Seconded by: Cllr Copleston

Votes in favour: 4

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.

PE129 STAFFING MATTERS

Members received a verbal update on staffing matters. It was agreed that further discussion would take place at an extraordinary Corporate Services meeting. Overtime working would be discussed at the next Corporate Services meeting on 2nd March 2020.

PE130 STAFF CAPACITY REVIEW

Members received a report detailing a staffing solution in relation to the staff capacity review.

Resolved: To support officer recommendations as contained in the report.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 6.48pm

Dated this 14th day of April 2020

Chairman

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Staff sickness absence figures
April – June 2020

	2019/2020					2020/2021				
	April - June 2019	July - Sept 2019	Oct - Dec 2019	Jan - March 2020	April - June 2020	July - Sept 2020	Oct - Dec 2020	Jan - March 2021		
Office										
No of office staff (inc cleaners)	10	10	10	10	10					
Office staff sickness days	37	37	10.5	67.5	66					
Grounds										
No of grounds staff	7	7	7	6	6					
Grounds staff sickness days	11	51	76	0	33					
Total Staff no.	17	17	17	16	16					
Total staff sickness days	48	88	86.5	67.5	98					

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