

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Staffing Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2026 at 7pm

Present: Councillors: W Henderson Chairman
E Costello
D Jones
T McMahon
A Slough
D Taylor

Officers: Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services
Amanda Samuels Administration Officer

Public: 1 (virtual)

Apologies: Councillor: M Herber

13642 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Herber.

13643 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13644 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

13645 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Members were invited to elect a Vice-Chair for the Staffing Committee for 2026-2027.

Nominee:	Cllr Jones	Proposed by:	Cllr Henderson
		Seconded by:	Cllr Costello

On being put to the vote, Cllr Jones was appointed Vice-Chair of Staffing for the municipal year of 2026/2027.

13646 MINUTES

The Committee received the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 2nd February 2026 for consideration.

Members highlighted that the Town Clerk had attended the previous meeting but had been omitted from the Minutes. Members were happy to agree the minutes with this amendment.

Resolved: That the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 2nd February 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed accordingly.

13647 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

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

These arrangements were set out in the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference. This document set out the system of delegation to the Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Groups of the Council.

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

13648 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Members were provided with a workplan for the municipal year 2026/27.

The workplan provided a structured approach to the committee's business throughout 2026/27, ensuring all statutory requirements and governance obligations were met in a timely manner.

Resolved: To review and approve the Staffing Committee Workplan, which outlines anticipated specific reports for the municipal year 2026/27.

13649 APPOINTMENT OF CLERKS APPOINTED PERSON

As part of the Committees Functions a member was to be appointed to support the Clerk for day-to-day matters, to handle impromptu leave requests, absences from work and to feed matters to Committee where any decisions/actions had been made.

For the 2025/2026 municipal year, the role for day-to-day contact was undertaken by Councillor David Jones.

In accordance with the Council's established arrangements, the Clerk's appraisal would typically be undertaken by the Chair of the Council and the Chair of the Corporate Services Committee.

Cllr Jones expressed a wish to act as the second councillor for the Clerk's appraisal process rather than continuing in the role of the Clerk's Appointed Person.

Cllr Jones considered this an appropriate opportunity for another councillor to take on the Appointed Person role and undertake the regular day-to-day liaison with the Clerk. Cllr Jones suggested that Cllr Taylor be considered for the role, given their position as Chair of Corporate Services.

Cllr McMahon also expressed an interest in becoming the Appointed Person but noted that appointing Cllr Herber would provide continuity in the role.

Following further discussion, Members proposed Cllr A Slough to act as the Clerks Appointed Person

Proposed by: Cllr Jones

Seconded by: Cllr McMahon

On being put to the vote, councillors voted in favour of Cllr Slough as the Clerk's Appointed Person.

Cllr Jones was proposed as the second member to undertake the Clerk's appraisal

Proposed by: Cllr Henderson

Seconded by: Cllr Slough

On being put to the vote, councillors voted in favour of Cllr Jones being appointed to undertake the Clerk's appraisal.

Members considered recommendation 2 and agreed that the wording 'in addition to Cllr Jones' should be removed.

Resolved:

- 1) To appoint a member as the designated day-to-day contact and to undertake the Clerk's appraisal;**
- 2) To appoint a second member to undertake the Clerk's appraisal.**

13650 EYECARE POLICY

Members were advised that the Eye Care Policy was due for re-approval.

Members were provided with a report and tracked-changes policy to support the recommendation for adoption of the policy.

Members enquired whether councillors would be included in the policy, given that much of their work was now in electronic form. There was some discussion as to whether councillors, as volunteers, would be eligible. Members agreed that they would welcome further investigation into the matter and the Head of Democratic Services confirmed this would be explored further.

Resolved: To adopt the Town Council's Eyecare Policy.

13651 EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

Members were provided with a report and requested to consider the renewal of the Council's Employee Assistance Programme, which supported staff wellbeing through confidential advice, counselling and guidance services.

The current contract, previously based on 20 employees at an annual cost of £450, was due for renewal. The Council currently employed 33 staff, and accordingly the cost reflected the increase.

Quotations had been obtained from accredited providers, with options including both fixed-rate and per-employee pricing structures.

Members stated that figures on annual usage might prove helpful. The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that this data could be requested.

In response to questions from Members, the Head of Democratic Services stated that the extended services offered by some companies were not required, hence the recommendation for Company B. The contract would be for five years with no break clause; however, it would be possible to upgrade the service during this period if it was felt necessary.

- 1. To support the continuation of the Employee Assistance Programme.**
- 2. To recommend that the Corporate Services committee enters into a contract with Company B for the provision of the Employee Assistance Programme for a period of five years at a cost of £535 per annum.**

13652 MEMBERSHIP OF EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

Members were advised of the membership of the Senior Management Team (SMT) on relevant external professional organisations. There were no major changes to report.

- Resolved:**
- 1) To approve the continued membership of the Town Clerk, Head of Democratic Services, and Head of Environmental and Community Services in relevant external professional organisations.**
 - 2) To note that the associated membership fees, officer time, and travel costs are proportionate to the benefits gained.**

13653 TOWN CLERK'S ANNUAL LEAVE, OVERTIME WORKING AND SICKNESS

Annual leave

- From January 2026 to March 2026 the Clerk had taken 6 day's annual leave and 3 days flexi leave.
- From April 2026 to June 2026 the Clerk had taken 4 day's annual leave and 3 days flexi leave.

The following leave was requested:

10th – 24th August

Overtime

- During the period January 2026 to March 2026 the Clerk attended 3 meetings or events outside of the working day.
- During the period April 2026 to date the Clerk attended 4 meetings or events outside of the working day.

Sickness

- From January 2026 to March 2026 the Clerk had 0 day's sick leave
- From April 2026 to date the Clerk had 0 day's sick leave

Resolved: To approve the Town Clerk's annual leave request.

13654 RECRUITMENT UPDATE

Members were advised of recent recruitment outcomes:

Project Manager - Bianca Nagle

Following an internal recruitment exercise, an employee had been successfully appointed.

Cemetery and Allotments Officer – Susan Styant

An appointment had been made to the post of Cemetery and Allotments Officer – the successful candidate commenced employment on 1st June 2026.

Grounds Person – Robert Doris

The Grounds Person position was re-advertised following the unsuccessful probationary outcome of the previous appointee.

An appointment had been made to the post of Grounds Person. The successful candidate commenced employment on 22nd June 2026.

Finance Manager – Heidi Crumpton

An appointment had been made to the post of Finance Manager – The successful candidate had a confirmed start date of 27th July 2026.

Members believed the successful recruitment for these positions demonstrated that Houghton Regis Town Council was viewed as an attractive employer. The internal appointment also demonstrated the potential for progression within the council.

Members sent their best wishes to all those recently recruited.

13655 STAFF APPRAISALS

Members were advised that the majority of staff Appraisals had been completed with the remaining appraisal meetings booked over the coming weeks.

This information was provided for information only.

13656 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Members voted on the exclusion of the press and public:

Proposed by: Cllr A Slough

Seconded by: Cllr E Costello

Votes in favour: 6

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.

13657 STAFF SICKNESS

Members discussed the staff sickness figures. Members felt that with the increase in staff numbers, sickness days lost was improved from previous data.

This data was provided for information only.

13658 JOB EVALUATION

Members received a report outlining the findings of the job evaluation requested at the previous Staffing Committee meeting. The Committee considered and discussed the outcome of the evaluation and the recommendations arising from it.

Members queried how the evaluation was carried out. It was confirmed that the external evaluator had been trained to evaluate posts under the Single Status Agreement and was the Chief Officer at the first Council in the Country of any size to adopt the single status agreement and evaluation. He is also trained in evaluation under the 2004 National Agreement and is a fully qualified Associate of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development.

Resolved:

- 1. To note the outcome of the Town Clerk's job evaluation and to revise the Town Clerks spinal point range to SCP 55-62, effective from 1st April 2026;**
- 2. To note that there is no arising budgetary implication in 2026/27;**
- 3. To budget for a SCP increase for the town clerk in 2027/28 and for the subsequent 3 years.**

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.54 pm

Dated this 20th day of October 2026

Chairman