

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF LYDD TOWN COUNCIL PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Held on Monday 12th June 2023 at 6.30 pm in the Guild Hall Chamber

Present: Councillors Darren Chapman, Clive Goddard, R.S. Jones. Paul Rye and Martin Sweeney

Angela Alexander – Town Clerk

125. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Town Mayor, Cllr Bob Jones opened the meeting and called for nominations for the role of Chairman.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Darren Chapman be re-elected as Chairman of the Personnel Committee.

Proposed by Cllr Goddard and seconded by Cllr Sweeney

Unanimous

126. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none

127. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none

128. MINUTES

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 3rd April 2023 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman

Proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Paul Rye

For: 4

Abstention: 1 Cllr Sweeney (not present at the last meeting)

129. PRESS AND PUBLIC EXCLUDED

RESOLVED: That this meeting be held without press or public present as the content of discussions will involve sensitive and confidential matters and is therefore exempt information as defined in Paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the local Government Act 1972, to be treated as confidential by Members

130. CONFIDENTIALITY

The Chairman reminded Councillors of the need for confidentiality on matters covered at the meeting and that no discussion should take place outside the meeting.

131. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS AND ICO

Confidential report 2023/C0011

a) The Chairman reported on the outcome of the following case references: EA/2022/0187, EA/2022/0188, EA/2022/0189, EA/2022/0190, EA/2022/0218, EA/2022/0219. These covered an appeal against two decisions of the Information Commissioner dated 21 June 2022 (the "First Decision Notice", covering requests one to four) and 5 August 2022 (the "Second Decision Notice", covering requests five and six). The appeal relates to the application of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("FOIA"). It concerns various sets of information requested from Lydd Town Council by a resident of Lydd.

The Chairman said that the decision notice of the Judge was to dismiss the resident's appeal.

Members of the Committee thanked the Town Clerk for the extra work she had put in on behalf of the Council.

RESOLVED: That the Chairman of the Committee, Cllr Chapman would report in bullet point format to the full Council at the next meeting on the outcome of these cases and the decision notice so that all Councillors had an understanding of the situation.

Unanimous

- b) Councillors discussed the position going forward for responses to this particular resident and those working in concert. The Chairman proposed that the stance does not change. He said that following his email sent to Councillors after the Town Meeting he had three councillors contact him. One who was a newer councillor had asked for the background and accepted the facts.

RESOLVED: That the Chairman delivers a strong and solid statement to full Council setting out the decision and the position that Council must take.

132. STAFFING MATTERS

Confidential report 2023/C0012

a) Invoice from GMP

The invoice for GMP accountants had been circulated for approval by the Committee. The Chairman said that when the Finance Officer had taken long term time out of the role from September, the Assistant Town Clerk had been asked to step in to prepare salaries and pensions. The accountants had picked up that from that point there were errors over a period of six months and so they had to re-run that period to make corrections prior to the end of year closures for HMRC and the Kent Pension Fund. It was noted that the Assistant Town Clerk had been shadowing the Finance Assistant since her fall at the end of 2021 for the salaries and pensions but had raised concerns that she was not confident of carrying out the closure of the end of the financial year for these matters. The assistant town clerk had been allocated additional hours on Monday afternoons for finance work and it was advised that the Town Clerk has taken on the additional tasks around the finance as the main point of contact for the accountants. The Town Clerk said that she will reallocate work for these extra hours.

The Clerk advised that the invoice was much higher than expected due to the work of rolling back the payroll to October and the associated work but much less than the timesheets for the accountancy staff carrying out the work but an agreement had been reached for the invoiced sum.

Cllr Sweeney said that whilst the Town Clerk is the RFO she needs to release some workload and release her time for other things.

It was discussed that the Mayor's diary schedule is back on track in line with the Personnel Committee decision that all invitations reach the Mayor on Thursday and that he meets briefly in the Guild Hall at 12.30 on Monday for half an hour when we are closed to confirm his attendances and that these are actioned on Monday afternoon.

RESOLVED: That the invoice from GMP LLP.

Proposed by Cllr Bob Jones and seconded by Cllr Paul Rye

Unanimous

b) Internal Audit

The Internal Audit report had been circulated for information and the advice noted from the Auditor that the cash book entries had reached a volume that an accountancy package should be used due to the time taken to make that number. The Town Clerk advised that she had discussed this with GMP and they would be using QuickBooks package from April 2023 which would provide reports to go to Council.

Received and noted

c) Review of Working from Home Policy

Confidential report 2023/C0013

Working from Home Policy – The Chairman said that the Town Clerk was happy with the current balance of working in the office and at home and he went on to say some people prefer to work from home due to less distractions. The Chairman said that we have to reiterate that the current working from home schedule was a decision of the Committee. He went on to say that in May there was an incident with a councillor coming to the Guild Hall on a Thursday when an office staff member was there and that the incident would not have happened otherwise.

Cllr Goddard said that the working from home was one of the best policies that the Committee has adopted and that since lockdown the number of officers from the District Council working from home has greatly increased. He said that the Town Clerk gets a lot more work done at home and is able to manage her time well. Cllr Sweeney said that the Town Clerk doesn't work from home all the time and that he agrees with Cllr Goddard that the current system is completely working. The Chairman read statements from the people present when the incident happened. Cllr Chapman said that the caretaker has been asked to take photographs of the letterbox when delivering envelopes to this councillor in future.

RESOLVED: That the current working policy which is in the office on Monday and Wednesday until 1pm and working from home on all other normal working days for clerical staff is to continue and that the current policy must be adhered to. The Chairman to reiterate this at a staff meeting.

Proposed by Cllr Sweeney and seconded by Cllr Goddard
Unanimous

d) Guild Hall Alarm Call Out

The Town Clerk said that it had previously been agreed that the caretaker would be put on the alarm call out when his six- month probation was over. However, it would be beneficial to bring this forward and that he be put on now and trained by Ashe Alarms.

RESOLVED: That the caretaker be added to first point of call on the Alarm call outs and that the Town Sergeant be second point of call

Proposed by Cllr Bob Jones and seconded by Cllr Sweeney
Unanimous

e) Honorarium

The Town Clerk said that following the appointment of a Shadow Town Sergeant and the retirement date of the existing Town Sergeant now in place that it was appropriate for an Honorarium to be decided upon.

RESOLVED: That an honorarium of £800 per annum be paid in two payments – the first October 2023 and then in April 2024.

Unanimous

The meeting closed at 8pm

Chairman _____

Date _____