

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF LYDD TOWN COUNCIL PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Held on Monday 28th October 2024 at 6.30 pm in the Guild Hall Parlour

Present: Councillors Darren Chapman (Chairman), Clive Goddard, R.S. Jones and Paul Rye
Angela Alexander – Town Clerk

244. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Martin Sweeney - holiday

245. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

246. MINUTES

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 22nd July 2024 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman

Proposed by Cllr Bob Jones and seconded by Cllr Clive Goddard

247. CONFIDENTIALITY

The Chairman advised Councillors on the subject of confidentiality

248. 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

249. ONLINE BANKING

a) Following the decision to work towards online banking the Town Clerk reported on progress since the reports to the July meeting as follows:

The first stage in the planned move to Internet Banking is now complete, Lydd Town Council currently banks with Lloyds Bank and has two accounts – the current account with a cheque book for making payments and a reserve account which earns a small amount of interest.

The mandate change has now been actioned and following the Town Clerk escalating this to a complaint the mandate change was made and a payment of £70 was paid to our current account to settle the complaint the following day after the various telephone calls with the bank by the Town Clerk and Cllrs Goddard and Sweeney.

The signatories on the mandate with Lloyds are the long serving Councillors – Clive Goddard, Bob Jones, Martin Sweeney and Darren Chapman.

The next stage will be to move the account to a bank which provides internet banking and offers a business account with meets the Council's financial regulations.

This will mean that the Town Clerk and Finance Officer can view the account, access statements and set up payments to be authorised by any two of the four signatories.

The Town Clerk and Finance Officer will 'manage' the online account and the signatories will 'authorise' payments. There is no cross over between the two roles.

Unity Trust Bank meets the needs of Council banking and financial regulations.

Their mission statement is as follows:

Unity Trust Bank's vision is to create a better society and support a variety of businesses and organisations that help improve the lives of local communities. Unity supports a range of sectors that deliver positive social impact across the UK; from local councils helping to improve the lives of local communities to charities delivering vital services to people in need.

To ensure a smooth transition from Lloyds to Unity we will need 'like for like' details. This will mean that the signatories on the Mandate should be the same as with Lloyds and the

registered address the same. This will ensure an automatic transfer of funds rather than a manual one which is much more complicated.

In the first step we will need to provide the signatories information to Unity bank – this will be either a valid passport or driving licence and a bill with name and address such as Council tax or utility bill. The Town Clerk and Finance Officer will be required to provide the same information to be registered as users of the account/s.

Once we are set up and the money transferred then we will begin to use Internet Banking for payments and salaries.

Financial Regulations will be updated to reflect the changes to banking methods and a relevant policy put in place.

Signatories must only use their Council issued iPad to access Lydd Town Council bank accounts and not their own devices and must not transfer any financial or personal information to another device or a third party.

- b) Councillors considered the next actions to progress the move to online banking and the information required from signatories to ensure that the signatories were comfortable and in agreement with the requirements for them to be registered and authorise payments online as follows:

Internet Banking

- To use Unity Trust Bank's Internet Banking services, you will need to register a telephone number and have this phone available whilst logged in to Internet Banking.
- When registering for the use of the Internet Banking service, each person authorised by Lydd Town Council to use the service will be issued with a unique user name and password. Access to the Internet Banking service will be dependent upon the use of the user name, password and pin.

- c) Councillors considered the draft procedures for online banking as follows:

250. DRAFT ONLINE BANKING PROCEDURE

1. Where possible payments will be made to suppliers, providers of services and for staff salaries by online transfer
2. Direct debits will continue for utilities
3. The Finance Officer or Town Clerk, as administrators for the Town Council bank account, shall enter payments online and create an online banking payments list.
4. The payments list along with all the related invoices shall be sent to those Councillors who are authorised signatories for approval and release of payments
5. Authorised signatories will review the payments list and invoice back-up paperwork against the payments prior to approval.
6. As Per the banking mandate, all online payments are required to be approved by two authorised signatories.
7. Those Councillors who approve the payments shall send an email confirming their review of the expenses and approval of the payments.
8. Evidence and a log will be retained to show who entered and approved each payment.
9. The online banking payments will be subject to a periodic Councillor's audit. This will involve a Councillor independently selecting a sample of payments from the cashbook and checking the amounts back to the bank statement and invoice. The Councillor should not select payments that they have authorised.
10. Evidence of the Councillor audit will be retained for our Independent Internal Audit

Councillors had been provided with links to the Unity Trust Bank website to view any further information.

The Committee considered and agreed that two bank accounts should be set up – current and reserve for the Town Council funds to replicate the current arrangement with Lloyds Bank. The option for a Multipay card for use by the Town Clerk was also discussed as the current system of staff members making purchases on behalf of the Council with their own funds and then claiming back was felt unacceptable.

The Clerk advised that this progress be reported to full Council at the November meeting and that once actioned this will require a change to Financial Regulations to reflect the change in method of payments.

RESOLVED: That the opening of two bank accounts, current and reserve is actioned with Unity Trust Bank and that a limited spend Multipay debit card is researched with a view to being provided for use under authority by the Town Clerk. That the progress be reported to full Council at the November 2024 meeting.

Unanimous

251. ICO APPEAL RESIDENT OF LYDD VS ICO Appendix

FT/EA/2024/0338: Lydd Resident vs Information Commissioner - IC-313665-H4V8

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT 2024 – C0012

Councillors noted that the resident has appealed the ICO decision in favour of the Town Council and received a report on the responses to the ICO Court bundle sent on behalf of the Town Council.

The increase in workload created by the resident concerned was discussed by Councillors and that the responses required by the ICO have deadlines as do the responses to the External Auditor as does the budget setting process and the scheduled meetings.

Councillors discussed if charges could be implemented or alternatively overtime payments to staff made available in these circumstances.

It was agreed that the Town Clerk must prioritise the office workload around the items we are legally and/or financially obliged to do and to meet their deadlines. Other actions or projects agreed by Council or Committees will be actioned as and when the office personnel have time in their schedule to work on these items and will be referred to the Personnel Committee as required.

RESOLVED 1: That the ICO Appeal documentation FT/EA/2024/0338: Lydd Resident vs Information Commissioner - IC-313665-H4V8 having been considered was received and noted.

RESOLVED 2: That the Town Clerk ensures that the office workload is prioritised around the matters that the Council is legally and/or financially obliged to do within deadlines and that the time management on other projects and actions will be dealt with as and when the office personnel have time in their schedule and may be referred to the Personnel Committee if necessary.

252. EXTERNAL AUDIT

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT 2024 – C0013

- a) To note the correspondence with Mazars during the audit period

The Town Clerk advised that the external auditor Mazars had raised some questions following the period of exercise of public rights. These concerned the review of Standing Orders and also awarding of Contracts for the leisure facilities recently installed.

Responses were provided regarding the awarding of contracts along with supporting documentation. There is no comment from the order made regarding this and the audit is therefore unqualified with no matters raising concern to the Auditor.

The internal auditor had responded with the recommended requirements for the review of Standing Orders to Mazars.

Received and noted

- b) To note the apology to the Internal Auditor from Mazars
The External Auditor had contacted the internal auditor with an apology regarding the purpose of their queries

Received and noted.

- c) To note the letter sent to Mazars as agreed with the Internal Auditor
The Finance Officer had written to Mazars regarding their observation in section 2 of their report which stated that the Standing Orders should be reviewed each year which differs from the guidance from NALC and that there was contradiction on this matter. The Town Council is requested that a note be put on our file in respect of this.

Received and noted

253. TENNIS COACHING AND MEETING WITH LTA

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT 2024 – C0014

The Town Clerk reported on the latest position with delivery of tennis coaching and meeting with the LTA and the difficulties that Hythe Tennis Coaching were currently facing. It was noted that Lydd school had engaged with a coach who had assisted with the festival fun day but that they were not currently LTA accredited.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council begin the process again of advertising for the Coaching agreement and that this should be with an organisation rather than an individual. That the hours be reduced in the agreement with a view to having this in place for Spring 2025

Unanimous

254. STAFF APPRAISALS

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT 2024 – C0015

- a) The Chairman reported on Staff appraisals held on 2nd October 2024 and Councillors considered the Chairman's recommendations.

The Chairman recommended new salary scales for the Town Clerk and Finance Officer and also stressed that he wished to ensure that the Council takes responsibility for the Town Clerk being able to have time to take all her annual holiday leave in accordance with the employment contract.

- b) The Chairman reported that the Finance Officers 6- month probation period has now come to an end and the Chairman said that he was happy to recommend a permanent contract with an increase in hours and SCP grade. Councillors reviewed and considered the number of hours per week and the hourly rate and the issue of contract of employment.

RESOLVED: That Caroline Livesey be offered a permanent contract of employment and that her hours be increased from 10 per week to 12 per week with effect from 1st November – these to be worked on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings from 9am until 1pm. The salary to be increased to SCP 30.

- c) Councillors discussed the costs that had been incurred for additional maintenance work and considered the possible costs for contractor hours for future maintenance work and agreed that the way forward would be to include a separate budget head for these payments as and when required.

RESOLVED; To include a budget head for contractor hours on an as and when required basis

255. BUDGET SETTING**CONFIDENTIAL REPORT 2024 – C0016**

A confidential report on current staff hours and salaries and pension implications had been circulated to Councillors to help inform their decision making for the setting of salary and budget heads to be included in the budget to be considered by full Council in November.

Further to the decisions at agenda item 10 Councillors considered the amounts to be included in the budget for the following:

a) Staff salaries

RESOLVED: That the SCP pay scales as agreed following the Chairman's report following the staff appraisals be included in the staff salaries budget head for consideration by full Council at the November budget setting meeting.

b) Pensions (to note to include Finance Officer)

RESOLVED: That the Finance Officer is entitled to join the KCC pension fund and the appropriate amount to be included in the Pension budget head for consideration by full Council at the November budget setting meeting.

c) The annual Honorarium for the Town Sergeant to be added to the budget head for the Mayoral Allowance and the budget head for 2025-26 to be increased from £2,000 per annum to £2,800 per annum to reflect this change.

Received and noted

d) Contractor maintenance costs and any other associated costs.

RESOLVED: That a budget head is included in the draft budget 2025-26 to cover costs to pay suitable contractors for tasks not covered by the Caretaker. Cllr Bob Jones agreed to carry out playground inspections if required as he has been trained by RoSPA to do so.

256. TOWN MAYOR TO REPORT ON COUNCILLOR CONDUCT

Further to the Town Mayor reporting on his communications with KALC regarding a member of Lydd Town Council at the July meeting he advised the Committee of further emails he had been made aware of and raised his concerns which would be kept under review.

Received and noted

257. CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR HOLIDAY CLOSURE

Councillors considered the holiday closure and reopening dates for the Christmas and New Year period. The Town Clerk advised that the Lydd in Lights presentation evening was to take place on the evening of Monday 16th December so that any final cleaning can be done on Wednesday 18th December. Staff would work from home on Thursday 19th December which would be the last day of work. The January Council meeting is scheduled for 13th January and so agenda deadline is the 8th January.

RESOLVED: That the last working day will be Wednesday 18th December 2024 for the Christmas closure and to return to work in the Guild Hall on Monday 6th January 2025
Unanimous

Meeting closed at 8.30pm

Chairman _____

Date _____