

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF LYDD TOWN COUNCIL PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Held on Monday 23rd February 2026 at 6.30 pm in the Guild Hall Parlour

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

39. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

41. MINUTES

RESOLVED: *The minutes of the meeting held on 26th January 2026 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman Proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Rye Unanimous*

42. PRESS AND PUBLIC EXCLUDED

RESOLVED; *That this meeting be held without press or public present as the content of discussions will involve 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 Unanimous*

43. STAFFING MATTERS

Confidential report 2026 – C0003

- a) The Town Clerk updated the Committee on the appointment of Claire Whitting to the Finance Officer role following the interviews and the Personnel Committee meeting where the appointment was discussed.

The Town Clerk said that Claire has accepted the role and started work on 2nd February 2026 working Monday and Wednesday mornings in the office from 9am until 1pm and either Tuesday or Thursday morning working from home being 12 hours per week in total at the SCP of 24 and with a six-month probationary period.

Received and noted

- b) The Town Clerk advised that the first task for the finance work was to prepare and submit the VAT return. This had previously been sent to GMP Accounts in Rye due to a difficulty in the last quarter with submission. The Town Clerk had established during communications with Scribe that an adjustment meant that we could submit the VAT return through their accountancy package. This was completed for the latest VAT submission.

The February salaries were completed by the new finance officer and errors of underpayment from December and January salaries corrected in the February salary. This is because the older hourly rate had been used to calculate the salaries and not the increased rate as agreed to be paid from November salary.

The Town Clerk said that looking at these figures with the Finance Officer that it was appropriate to review the allowance for working from home for staff using the HMRC working from home tax free allowance which is £26 per month on a pro-rata basis in accordance with hours worked from home.

The Town Clerk requested that a direct debit instruction be set up by Unity Bank signatories for HMRC payments from 1st April 2026 which was agreed.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the new working from home allowances as agreed be actioned from the March salaries.**

II. That a direct debit be set up for HMRC payments from 1st April 2026 with Unity Bank.

- c) Councillors to review the decision regarding adjustment payment to staff of meeting hours. The Town Clerk advised that following the Committees review of additional hours to cover meeting dates – being 52 hours for a member of staff which was no longer accurate in line with meeting dates and length of meeting she had discussed pausing the action of this decision due to the resignation of the previous Finance Officer with the Chairman of the Personnel Committee who had agreed.

Councillors considered that with a new member of staff now in place that this could be put into place. Using the actual hours for Council, Planning, Annual Town Meeting and events such as Lydd in Lights, Lydd in Bloom, Band Concert that a reduction to 26 hours per month was reasonable and would still allow hours for an additional event as when we have beacon lighting.

The Town Clerk asked Councillors to confirm when this should be actioned from, and it was agreed as of 1st April 2026.

RESOLVED: That following a review of additional hours allocated for meeting and event dates that this would be reduced from 52 per annum to 26 per annum from 1st April 2026. This would be reviewed annually.

Unanimous

44. BANKING

- a) Following the resignation of Martin Sweeney Councillors considered the appointment of a new signatory for the Mayors Charity Account with Lloyds Bank

RESOLVED: That Cllr Robert Jones be appointed as the signatory for the Mayor's Charity Account with Lloyds Bank and Martin Sweeney removed.

Proposed by Cllr Darren Chapman and seconded by Cllr Paul Rye

Unanimous

- b) The Town Clerk updated on progress made with Unity Bank following telephone meeting with Unity, Town Clerk and Finance Officer as follows:

On 31st December 2025 Unity Bank emailed the Finance Officer email address to say that as they had not heard from Lydd Town Council, there would be a cancellation and that they were removing our request to switch to using Unity Bank from their Data Base

The Town Clerk responded on 12th January 2026 when made aware of this email requesting that the matter be paused as we wished to continue with the switch and online banking.

On 29th January the Town Clerk wrote again to confirm that a new Finance Officer was due to start work on 2nd February and that she wished to review the status of the Lydd Town Council accounts so that we could progress the transfer.

The Town Clerk asked for clarification on the status of the approved signatories – Goddard, R. Jones, Chapman and P. Rye and confirmation that M Sweeney and C Livesey were removed. A telephone call with Unity, Town Clerk and new Finance Officer was arranged for 11th February.

During the call it was established that Cllrs Goddard and R Jones are fully set up as signatories with access to approve payments. Cllr Chapman was partially set up but the incorrect address had been used as contact details. During the call the Town Clerk provided the correct address and phone numbers and date of birth. The Town Clerk also provided contact information for Cllr Paul Rye and confirmed date of birth with him during the call. The Finance Officer was then guided through the process of updating this information and adding her information by the support of the Unity Bank representative.

Now the information had been updated paperwork was signed by authorised signatories at the meeting to be able to progress further

The new goal is to have the transfer complete by 1st April 2026 to start the new financial year.

RESOLVED: All paperwork required by Unity Bank to progress utilising the account was duly signed by the authorised signatories with a view to going forward with the transfer of funds from Lloyds Bank and live with the Online banking from 1st April 2026. As per a previous resolution the salaries will be phased to the end of the month. March salary by cheque on 20th and future salaries by BACS to be date closest to 25th month up to 28th month.

Unanimous

45. WEBSITE

Confidential report 2026 – C0004

Following the discussions and decisions made by the Committee at the meeting in January 2026 the Town Clerk reported that the MOT of the website had been carried out and the report showing changes that had been made was circulated for Councillors consideration. There were a number of sections which had been refined and Councillors agreed this had been a thorough job and that it was now easier to find information.

The Useful Links section had not been checked but most of the links were now showing an error 404 code and could be removed.

There was additional work to be done as suggested following the MOT and Councillors said that they wished to engage with the website provider to carry out this work at the cost of £35 per hour rather than have the work done in house to ensure compliance with the accessibility requirements. The Town Clerk advised that website training had been arranged for the new Finance Officer on 26th February and that she would also be attending to review the areas of the website that needed further work to be done. Councillors agreed that the Finance Officer should be tasked with the website following training and this to be kept under review.

RESOLVED: Town Clerk to liaise with the website provider regarding the outstanding work to be undertaken on the website and agree on changes and instruct them to carry out work as required at £35 + Vat per hour

46. DRAFT MEETING DATES

Councillors considered the draft meeting dates in line with staff resources, and an amendment was made as requested.

RESOLVED: To approve the draft meeting dates with amendment as discussed to be put forward for adoption at the May Annual Meeting.

Unanimous

47. HOLIDAY HOURS

Confidential report 2026 – C0005

The Town Clerk updated on the current position regarding holiday hours for the current leave year and advised on suggested dates for the August and Christmas shut down.

Cllr. Jones suggested a longer shut down at Christmas and it was discussed that the Lydd in Lights judging and presentation evening and the band concert makes this difficult. Cllr Goddard suggested a longer shut down in August which would be easier to achieve so that leave was more easily taken.

The Town Clerk advised that the new Finance Officer has holiday leave to take this leave year and it was discussed that this could be carried over to April. The Town Clerk said that the Finance Officer has worked an additional six hours so far and Councillors agreed that this should be taken as TOIL and any further additional hours worked taken as TOIL.

RESOLVED:

- I. That the dates for Christmas closure of 21st December 2026 until 4th January 2027 be agreed**
- II. That the dates for the August closure of 10th August until 24th August 2026 be agreed with further consideration given to a longer period of closure during this period.**

III. *That an additional shut down be considered at an appropriate time*

IV. *That the Town Clerk be reimbursed for untaken leave due to workload in consultation with the Chairman of Personnel under delegated authority.*

Unanimous

48. VEXATIOUS BEHAVIOUR

Confidential report 2026 – C0006

- a) The Chairman of Personnel updated the Committee following a meeting with the more recently elected Councillors prior to this meeting regarding the volume of work created by vexatious behaviour and the outcome of Tribunal Cases with the ICO. The Town Council's duty of care towards its staff members was also stressed and a statement written by the Assistant Town Clerk who was not present at the meeting was read to the new Councillors at the briefing.

Received and noted

- b) Councillors considered a letter received from a member of the public with a vexatious classification and considered the advice of the DPO

RESOLVED; That the Committee follow the advice given by the Data Protection Officer following a review of the vexatious classification.

Unanimous

- c) **Policy for Habitual or Vexatious Complainants**

Councillors reviewed the policy and agreed that it be tabled for Councillors at the March Council meeting.

RESOLVED: That following review the Habitual or Vexatious Complainants Policy be tabled for Councillors at the March Council meeting.

Unanimous

The meeting closed at 19.45

Chairman _____

Date _____