

**MINUTES of the Staffing & Resources Committee of Melksham  
Without Parish Council held on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2015 at 7.45p.m. at  
Crown Chambers, 7, Market Place, Melksham.**

**Present:** Cllrs. John Glover (Vice Chair), Alan Baines, Pat Nicol (*from 7.50pm*), Terry Chivers and Jan Chivers

**Apologies:** Cllrs. Richard Wood (Chairman) and Mike Sankey

129/15 **Appointment of Chair of Staffing Committee:** The Clerk invited nominations for the Chair of the Staffing Committee for 2015/16.  
**Resolved:** *The Council unanimously resolved that Cllr. J Chivers be Chair of the Staffing Committee for 2015/16.*

130/15 **Appointment of Vice Chair of Staffing Committee:** The Clerk invited nominations for Vice Chair of the Staffing Committee for 2015/16.  
**Resolved:** *The Council unanimously resolved that Cllr. Baines be Vice Chair of the Staffing Committee for 2015/16.*

*(Cllr Nicol joined the meeting at 7.50pm)*

131/15 **Declarations of Interest:** The Clerk and Assistant Parish Officer declared an interest in issues relating to their positions and left the room when these items were discussed.

132/15 **Public Participation:** There were no members of the public present

133/15 **Items to be held in committee:** It was agreed to hold agenda items 7 – 9 in committee due to their confidential nature in accordance with Standing Orders.

134/15 **Staff Training:**

a) **Policy Statement on Staff Training:** The Clerk had prepared a draft Statement of Training Intent, based on an SLCC document. The Council also considered the Training Policy of Calne Town Council. Cllr Baines felt that the Calne Document had some good points that could be considered for adoption by the Council, such as sponsoring employees for training either in house or externally. A discussion took place with regard to a clause requesting repayment of training fees by an employee should they leave employment with the Council. Under query was the monetary value of any training and duration from when it was undertaken as criteria for any potential payback. It was noted that the Council had a responsibility to rate payers to spend money wisely. However, it was also noted that some employees may leave employment due to ill health, and that some employees may not have the financial means to pay back expensive training fees. Additionally

the legality of such clauses would need to be investigated.

**Recommended:** *The Council adopt the Calne Town Council Policy on Training and Study Leave, with an amendment to the clause with regard to the paying back of training fees. The amendment to read, "The Council reserves the right to seek re-imbursment for any training with a cost of over £1,000." Cllr T Chivers voted against this recommendation.*

- b) **Staff Training Record:** The Council noted training recently attended by staff.
- c) **Clerk's Continual Professional Development (CPD):** The Council noted that to hold Quality Council Status at Foundation Level the Clerk needs to have earned 12 points of CPD. The Clerk explained that points were gained by qualifications, i.e. CiLCA, attending conferences and training events, in-house assessment, learning at work, reading sector publications, e-learning and developing the sector, i.e. membership of organisations. The Clerk reported that she considered that she would gain 19.5 points in 2015; 18 points are required to maintain her membership of the ILCM (Institute of Local Council Management).

135/15

#### **Review of Risk Register:**

##### **a) Lone Working Policy:**

i) Cllr Baines queried whether the Caretaker/Allotment Warden carried a first aid kit, stating that this needed to be checked regularly with any items used recorded and replenished. The Clerk reported that she would check this. **Recommended:** *If required, a new first aid kit to be bought for the Caretaker/Allotment Warden under the Clerk's delegated powers.*

ii) The Council reviewed an updated draft of the "Working Alone Policy and Procedure". The Clerk reported that the wording in the first sentence made the document sound negative; a rewording in order that the first sentence reads, "Melksham Without Parish council recognises that staff could face particular problems" would be more congenial. It was noted that due to holidays, illness and off site meetings on occasion members of staff were on their own on days when the office was open to the public. A discussion took place with regard to the possibility of having a stable door installed, similar to the public window at the Town Hall, or to consider personal or silent alarms linked to a call centre. It was however noted that due to the intercom system that members of the public could not gain access to the office without first being let in by a member of staff.

**Recommended:** *The Working Alone Policy and Procedure be adopted with the wording change in the first sentence.*

**b) Procedure for Handling Difficult Members of the Public** The Clerk reported that the recent review of the Risk Register had highlighted the fact that it stated that the Council had a policy and procedure for handling difficult members of the public, which it did not. She stated that to date staff had not had any concerns with difficult members of the public,

however the lack of any policy or procedure left the Council vulnerable to possible future litigation. The Staff had been asked their views and they all considered that they needed to improve the way that they answered the intercom, asking more robust questions from members of the public with regard to the reason for their visit, however they did not feel that they needed formal training on this issue. It was noted that on occasions members of staff from Total Equipment Ltd had let visitors for the Parish Council into the building. Options were discussed with regard to improving security within the office, including silent alarms and the possibility of installing a stable door, however it was noted that the main door into the office was a fire door, so this would probably not be a viable option.

**Recommended:** *Cllr J Chivers, Cllr Baines and the Clerk investigate possible office safety options and the creation of a policy and procedure for consideration at the next Full Council meeting.*

**c) Options for Increased Security for the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Office:** The Staff felt that they needed to discuss security parameters and have an understanding between them what to do in different scenarios. There was a reciprocal agreement with the management at Total Equipment that when leaving for the day it would be highlighted who was last person in the building. Additionally, if a Parish Council member of staff was in the office on their own they should make Total Equipment Ltd aware of this. It was noted that there were lots of new members of staff working for Total Equipment Ltd, it would therefore be an ideal time to speak to them, to clarify if they were still happy with this agreement and to let the new members of staff know about this.

**d) Training Options for Handling Difficult Members of the Public:** This item was discussed under Min. 124/15b.

**e) IT Recommendations:**

**i) Councillor E-mail Addresses:** The Clerk reported that currently any e-mails sent directly to councillors by the public went to a generic Parish Council e-mail address, which was published on the website and on noticeboards. However, this e-mail address currently forwarded to their own personal e-mail accounts and thus when councillors replied this then gave their personal e-mail address rather than the Council one. This is not in accordance with the Risk Register, which states that the Council protects the councillors' privacy. The Council's approved IT contractor could address this issue by setting up Council e-mail accounts to councillors' home e-mail accounts, he would however need access to their individual private computers to set this up. A discussion took place with regard to the pros and cons of these email options with some councillors happy that the public know their personal email addresses.

**Recommended:** *1. Councillors that wish to have a separate Council e-mail address to contact the Clerk to organise this with the approved IT Contractor. 2. The wording of the Risk Register be amended to read that Councillors have a choice with regard to which e-mail option they prefer to use.*

**ii) Remote Access to E-Mail & Cloud Storage:** The Clerk reported that if officers work from home they currently do not have access to any documents and have to rely on e-mailing the documents they wish to work on to their home e-mail addresses. Additionally, the Clerk can access her work e-mails from home, but when she reads them or replies from home this does not update her e-mail account in the office and thus she cannot access her responses at work if she has made them from home. The current system of backing up the office computers is to run a back up programme and save this to a memory stick. This is done on a daily basis; there are two memory sticks that the Clerk alternates in taking home. The Clerk takes one memory stick off the premises for safety in the event of a fire, however, this then opens up other safety issues in that there is the potential for the memory stick to be lost, and clearly it holds both personal and confidential information. The approved IT contractor has recommended Cloud storage; the information is then stored securely via the Internet and allows remote access for officers. The options available are:

- Microsoft Office 365 Business Essentials – this provides 1Tb of Cloud storage and online access to Outlook, Word, Excel and PowerPoint at a cost of £3.10 per user per month.
- IMAP could be used as the e-mail storage and this would make remote access easier. There is no cost to this option, however it would slow down the system and there is a limit to the amount of e-mails that can be stored. A separate system would be required to provide Cloud back up of other documentation.
- Some Cloud providers provide free storage, but for a limited amount of space. Microsoft One Drive and Google Drive have 15Gb of storage for free and 100GB for approximately £2.00 per month – this is aimed predominately at home users rather than business users.

***Recommended:*** The Council provide Microsoft Office 365 Business Essentials for the three Council Officers at a cost of £3.10 per Officer per month.

**iii) Windows Upgrade:** The Council noted that the Officers are currently using Windows XP, an old and unsupported version of Windows, which will in time not allow access to documents sent to the Council using an upgraded version of Windows. There are two available options to upgrade the three officer PCs:

- Windows 7 is very similar to Windows XP; launched in 2008 it will be supported for a long time by Microsoft but will need to be replaced sooner than more recent versions.
- Windows 8 is the current version, but very different to Windows XP, although it can be made to look more like Windows 7.

In the next few months Windows 10 is due to be launched; qualifying users of both Windows 7 and Windows 8 will be able to upgrade to Windows 10 for free within the first year of its launch. The price for both

Windows 7 and Windows 8 are similar at approximately £110.00 for the professional version with a cost of £30.00 per PC for installation by the approved IT Contractor. **Recommended:** *The Council upgrade the three Officer PCs to Windows 7 Professional, with the option of a free upgrade to Windows10 once launched, at a cost of £110.00, plus £30.00 x 3 officer PCs.*

*The Assistant Parish Officer left the room at 8.43pm whilst Agenda Items 7 – 9c were discussed.*

136/15 **Staff Appraisals:** The Clerk gave a verbal report on the outcome of the all the staff's appraisals that had been undertaken in the last couple of weeks. It was evident that all the Job Descriptions needed to be updated to reflect all the tasks undertaken by the Officers and Caretaker/Allotment Warden. The staff did not have any particular difficulties and were happy with the hours they worked. It was noted that the Officers had lots to do and were constantly prioritising with not all tasks being done immediately.

The Committee reviewed the Objectives set by the Clerk for the Assistant Parish Officer and Finance Assistant for the following year. They also noted the Clerk's objectives that had been set by the Chair and Vice Chair in October.

137/15 **Update of Job Descriptions:** The Clerk explained that the staff's Job Descriptions had been updated and agreed with the appropriate member of staff during the appraisal session. **Recommended:** *1. The Council approve the revised Job Descriptions for the Assistant Parish Officer, Finance Assistant, Parish Caretaker and Allotment Warden. 2. A Job Description be written for the Office Cleaner.*

138/15 **Pavilion Cleaner:** The Clerk reported that Cllr Sankey had asked the Staffing Committee to consider if the cleaning at the new Pavilion could be added to the contract of the Office Cleaner. The Committee discussed this and agreed that a contract company for the cleaning of the Pavilion was still the best way forward as the Pavilion was not cleaned on a weekly basis but based on usage, and the Council would not have to be responsible for providing cover for the cleaner during periods of leave.

138/15C **Contracts:**  
a) **Salary Scales for Staff:** The Committee discussed the salary scales for staff in line with the budget figures and projections/scenarios provided. **Recommendation:** *The following changes to salary scale points be made with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015. No change in Scale Point for Terry Cole. Increase from Scale 14 to 15 for Jo Eccleston. Increase from Scale 16 to 18 for Lucy Key.*

- b) Continuation of Finance Assistant’s Contract:** It was noted that the Finance Assistant’s initial contract period was for 15 months which commenced on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2014. **Recommendation:** *The Council make Lucy Key’s contract permanent.*
- c) Travel Allowance & Fuel Reimbursement:** The Committee noted the SLCC Advice Note on Car Usage and the National Joint Council “Green Book” provisions for car allowances for essential users.

	451-999cc	1000-1199cc	1200-1450cc
<b>Essential Users</b>			
Lump Sum per annum	£846	£963	£1,239
Per mile first 8,500	36.9p	40.9p	50.5p
Per mile after 8,500	13.7p	14.4p	16.4p

It was noted that the Parish Caretaker received a lump sum of £500 per annum and that staff and the Caretaker were reimbursed at 40p per mile. The Clerk advised that the Caretaker’s latest car had a much bigger engine size. It was noted that the lump sum was taxed, and the HMRC would tax any mileage reimbursement over 45p per mile.

**Recommendation:** *The Clerk discuss with the Caretaker whether he would like to see his mileage reimbursement rate increased as this would require it to be taxed.*

*(The Assistant Parish Officer rejoined the meeting at 9.20pm and the Clerk left the room whilst Agenda Item 9d was discussed.*

- d) Clerk’s Working Hours:** The Clerk referred the Committee to the report showing the additional hours worked by the Officers and the Clerk for the past 15 months. It was noted that these hours included hours for meetings attended. The Clerk was grateful for the concern of Councillors with regard to the additional hours that she worked, but was happy to continue in this way as due to the nature of the role it meant that some weeks were more demanding with meetings than others but she was happy to continue with this arrangement as it suited her own personal circumstances.

*(The Assistant Parish Officer rejoined the meeting at 9.20pm and the Clerk left the room whilst Agenda Item 9d was discussed.*

Cllr Baines reported that the Clerk had been in post for just over 15 months. In that time the Council had recognised that she had grown into the job very well, some very difficult issues have cropped up that she has had to cope with and she has dealt with them well. He recommended that her pay scale be increased to scale 35. This was

unanimously agreed. **Recommended:** *The Clerk's salary increased to pay scale 35 effective from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015.*

*(The Clerk rejoined the meeting at 9.30pm)*

139/15

**Crown Chambers Office Accommodation:**

- a) **Changes to Reception Area:** The Clerk reported that an issue raised in appraisals was that the reception area was a wasted opportunity. All staff reported that it was difficult to work when meetings were taking place during the day and it had been suggested that the reception area was turned into an informal meeting area. **Recommendation:** *The reception area to be turned into an informal meeting area. The Clerk to investigate whether Wiltshire Council still have any appropriate furniture available at no cost.*
- b) **Decoration of the Office:** The Clerk reported that the Council were able to stay at Crown Chambers for the foreseeable future and that now the paintwork was looking very tired. **Recommended:** *The Clerk seek quotations for the redecoration of the office.*
- c) **Health and Safety Record:** The Council noted the Health and Safety Record.

140/15

**ACAS Advice Update:**

- a) **Fit for Work:** The Council noted the latest guidance for employers from the Department for Work and Pensions on employees being Fit for Work.
- b) **Holiday Pay:** The Council noted the latest guidance from ACAS on calculating Holiday Pay.

Meeting closed at 9.44pm

Chairman, 13<sup>th</sup> July 2015