

MINUTES of the Staffing & Resources Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 4th April 2016 at Crown Chambers, Melksham at 8.40 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Jan Chivers (Staffing Committee Chair), Richard Wood (Council Chair), Mike Sankey, Alan Baines, Terry Chivers and Pat Nicol.
Officers: Teresa Strange (Clerk) and Jo Eccleston (Assistant Parish Officer).

Apologies: Cllr. John Glover (Council Vice-Chair).

Housekeeping: Cllr. Wood welcomed all to the meeting and explained the evacuation procedures in the event of a fire.

591/15 **Declarations of Interest:** The Clerk and the Assistant Parish Officer declared an interest in agenda item 4 as it related to staffing matters.

592/15 **Public Participation:** There were no members of the public present.

593/15 **Business Administration Apprentice Position:** As resolved under Min.581/15, the Council had agreed to take on an apprentice and look into the details of the process further. The Clerk explained that now was the optimum time to consider recruiting an apprentice as young people were considering their next steps after school or college. She explained that the level 3 course in Business Administration was aimed at those people wishing to take on a supervisory role, and so advised that the Council consider offering a level 2 apprenticeship position. A requirement of the apprentice scheme is that the apprentice works a minimum of 16 hours per week. The Clerk recommended that the apprentice worked the same hours as the Assistant Parish Officer, 20 hours per week (5 hours per day, Monday to Thursday), to ensure that the apprentice was not left unsupervised or unsupported at any time. There would also be a requirement for an apprentice to attend some evening meetings to be able to put into context the work that they were carrying out in the day. Additionally the college course works alongside the employment, which would leave a Friday free for an apprentice to address any course work. In addition to offering a work based learning opportunity for a young person, having an apprentice would relieve the workload for the Clerk and the other Officers.

The cost of employing an apprentice and whether there was any government funding attached was queried. The Clerk reported that the course fees of £1,700 would not apply to anyone aged 16 to 18 years old and that there was a one off bursary of £1,500; which would need to be used to purchase equipment, such as a new computer and relevant software. The rate for a 16 year old apprentice is £3.30 per hour; at 20 hours per week that would equate to £3,432 per year. Employers do not have to pay National Insurance contributions for any employee under the age of 21 years. If the Council decided that an apprentice was eligible to join the pension scheme and they took up this opportunity, this would then cost £724 per year. Therefore the total cost for the year for a 16 year old apprentice would be £4,156. This financial commitment equates to a saving of 5 hours per week for the Clerk's time. The principle however is not that an apprentice would relieve the Clerk of her workload directly, but that an apprentice would take on some of the duties currently

carried out by the Assistant Parish Officer and the Finance Assistant, which would then enable the Clerk to delegate more tasks to those members of staff.

Cllr. Sankey stated that the Council staff would need to give up time in order to train an apprentice, which also showed a financial commitment.

Cllr. J. Chivers queried the funding levels once an apprentice was over 18 years old and then again once they were over 23 years old. The Clerk to investigate this.

The Committee reviewed the job description and job information form that the officers had prepared based on the Business Administration Level 2 apprenticeship requirements and the tasks to be carried out in the Council Office. It was noted that there may be applicants who are older and hence the application should state that the salary would be the national minimum wage dependent upon age. Staff terms and conditions should also apply to any apprentice.

Cllr. Sankey asked about the level of support offered by Learning in Wiltshire (the providers of the Apprenticeship scheme). The Clerk to investigate this. It was noted that some employers provided a mentor; Cllr. Nicol offered to become this.

The Committee felt that it would be prudent to start advertising the post as soon as possible whilst students were making career choices; however the starting date does not have to be until September when other students are beginning courses. A discussion took place over the duty of care the Council had in having a young person working for them, especially when attending evening meetings. It was decided that for due diligence all staff should have a DBS check and that a Child Protection Policy and Risk Assessment for Younger People attending evening meetings is drawn up.

Recommendations: 1. *The Council adopt the job description and information form for the position of Business Administration Apprentice as drawn up by the officers.* 2. *The position of Apprentice to be advertised straight away in the Melksham Independent News, Parish Council Website, NAS Website, village magazines, local Secondary schools and social media sites.* 3. *Interviews to be held at the end of June with the position of Apprentice to start on the 5th September, 2016.* 4. *All office staff to have a DBS check.* 5. *Officers to draw up a Child Protection Policy and Risk Assessment for Evening Working for a Younger Person.* 6. *All Staff Terms & Conditions to apply to an Apprentice Employee.*

Meeting closed at 9.37pm

Chairman, 18th April, 2016