

THETFORD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE HELD
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KING'S HOUSE, THETFORD, ON
THURSDAY 3RD JUNE 2014, STARTING AT 5.00 P.M.

Present:

Councillors

Mrs S J Armes
Mrs B J Canham
D M Crawford
Mrs P A Spencer

Miss C A Fulford
D W R Sully
D G Mortimer
T J Jermy

Officer in attendance:
Maurice Howard Town Clerk

Minutes

- 142/14 DECLARATIONS OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS
None
- 143/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
None were received.
- 144/14 MINUTES
Resolved that the minutes of the Committee's meeting held on the 8th May 2014 received by the Council on the 27th May 2014 be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Chairman.
- 145/14 REVIEW OF FOLLOW UP ACTIONS
- Book CiLCA Course for TC & Dep – Ongoing awaiting availability.
 - CBC Priorities now on Agenda for next CBC meeting.
 - Town Clerk had passed on all compliments and letters of thanks.
 - Booking of training courses ongoing.
 - Job Descriptions for senior positions completed (Item 149/14).
 - Interview panel dates for Sessional workers still to be sorted.
 - Job description and ToCS for CBC Manager not yet forwarded to TC for advertising.
 - Staff Handbook amended but not forwarded to staff at present.
- 146/14 HEALTH & SAFETY
Councillor Mrs B J Canham reported that the next Health and Safety Meeting was scheduled for Thursday 5th Jun 14 and that the minutes from this would be presented to the next Personnel Committee meeting in July. She also went on to say that the letters notifying of the forthcoming annual Health and Safety Inspections were in the process of being sent out.
- 147/14 COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS
One comment had been received from a member of the public concerning the fact that the Town Council Webpage appeared to show that the majority of Personnel Committee meetings were all fully below

the line. He asked why, when the Agenda's clearly showed certain elements above the line, had the minutes for these not been published. He also quoted a note of guidance from NALC which suggested that a statement should be made for each item taken below the line to explain the reason why this was so. The Town Clerk had subsequently forwarded this e-mail to all Councillors agreeing that this should be the case. He stated that in fact in recent months minutes that were above the line had indeed been published but that this had clearly not been the case in the past. Much discussion took place over the difficulty surrounding the addressing of personnel matters without wandering into an area which would be personal or confidential in nature. The Chairman stated that although this should be the case in all Council meetings it placed increased emphasis on the Chair of Personnel to stop any discussion that may, during the course of a meeting, move towards that of a personal/confidential nature. It was agreed that the e-mail was correct in nature and that the personnel committee would attempt to adhere to this principle but committee members were reminded of the additional burden placed on them not to bring confidential information into an agenda discussion without notifying the Chairman of the requirement to, at that point, take a vote to move below the line. As agreed, this would be carried out by vote and the reason for this would be stated in the minutes. The Town Clerk agreed to remind other Chairs of meetings at the next Full Council meeting.

148/14

TRAINING REQUESTS

The Town Clerk stated that he believed that progress had been made by the Works Foreman in booking the courses approved at the previous meeting. Unfortunately, the Works Foreman was currently off sick and therefore he had been unable to obtain an update. He would update the committee at the next meeting.

He was also asked if there was any news from the Works Foreman on whether he had passed his NEBOSH training. The Town Clerk stated that, based on timelines from previous courses, notification of this result would be imminent.

The Health and Safety representative mentioned that the Manual Handling and Working at Heights element of the induction course that had been offered to staff and volunteers but was cancelled, due to worries concerning the length of the days training, still had not been completed. The Town Clerk stated that he had not been made aware of this and would set up the training at a time to be convenient, but as soon as possible.

149/14

JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Chairman reported that as a result of the agreement at the previous meeting to adopt this new structure and the additional management position it was now incumbent on the committee to review the Job Descriptions that the Town Clerk had sent out prior to the meeting. Discussion took place over concerns that there was insufficient work for this position or at least that it could be perceived that way and that the Job Description appeared to pad out the requirements of the roll in that there were lots of standard requirements that were to be met by all members of staff. The Town Clerk pointed out that there was certainly adequate justification for the position and this should be evident in looking at the committees that

the position would serve. Should anyone look back over previous minutes for these committees it would become apparent the workload that the position would be taking on. He stated that, regarding the padding out, it was necessary when advertising a position to ensure that the full requirements of the job were specified (for example the need to service evening meetings, attending training courses etc.). However, simply by looking through minutes of meetings it should be obvious, the extent of the work, the Council Staff were now being asked to undertake. The Town Clerk had provided evidence in the previous personnel meeting over the increased number of meetings and more importantly the significant increase in the number of minutes and therefore the requirements dropping out of these.

Much discussion took place over the structure and content of the Job descriptions. Comment was also made and questions were asked over how the structure was arrived at and how and why the job roles were considered necessary. It was pointed out by the Town Clerk that Job Descriptions were fluid documents and that these could be amended as the roles bed-in together. As long as they were not amended significantly (usually greater than 50%) then this can be accomplished at a later date. After further discussion which saw the committee split in terms of agreement with those Job Descriptions presented, Councillor T J Jermy recommended and Councillor D Crawford seconded that the review of Job Descriptions be delayed for a further month until more investigations could be carried out. Councillor Mrs S J Armes made a counterproposal and this was seconded by Councillor D Sully that the Job Descriptions be accepted as they were. Councillor Miss C Fulford requested that a recorded vote be taken.

Votes for: Councillors Mrs S Armes, Mrs P Spencer, D Sully and D Mortimer = 4 votes

Votes against: Councillors Miss C Fulford, Mrs B Canham ,T Jermy and D Crawford = 4 votes.

The Chairman used his casting vote in favour of accepting the Job Descriptions as they were.

RESOLVED: The Job Descriptions be accepted as presented.

150/14

TOWN COUNCIL POLICY ON CHILD PROTECTION/CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

Councillor Miss C Fulford pointed out that the Council did not appear to be adhering to the agreements laid down within the Child Protection Policy on the use of what used to be CRB Checks. The Town Clerk stated that he had been involved in this aspect when recruiting the new Charles Burrell Coordinator and had requested information on the procedure for carrying out the new DBS checks. The information that had been provided from the DBS Vetting Agency suggested that it was not possible to obtain DBS Checks on positions of this nature. However, on closer inspection of the wording it would appear that this may be in relation to enhanced DBS checks. It was also mentioned that an agency would need to be approached in order to accomplish these checks. Councillor T J Jermy mentioned that he utilises a reputable company and the Town Clerk stated that Norfolk County Council can also facilitate this. It was proposed by Councillor Miss C Fulford and seconded by Mrs B J Canham that DBS Checks are to be completed for all current staff, irrespective of position held. In addition,

as councillors are required to attend and volunteer at many Council events this is to be extended to all Councillors.

RECOMMENDATION: All current staff, irrespective of position held, as well as all Councillors, are to be DBS checked.

Councillor Mrs B J Canham stated that she would take the training aspect of the Child Protection Policy forward at the next Health and Safety meeting.

151/14

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To give consideration to resolving that, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded for the remaining items of business on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

152/14

ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business

26/14

PRESS RELEASES

There were no press releases presented.

Chairman

ACTION POINT	BY WHOM	BY WHEN
Book CiLCA course for Town Clerk and Deputy.	Town Clerk	As available
Ensure Full Council briefed on requirement to minute reason for placing below the line	Town Clerk	24 June 14
Agreed training to be booked or further investigated as required.	Town Clerk	24 June 14
Interview Panel and recruitment process for Sessional Caretakers to be instigated.	Chair of CBC Committee	ASAP
Job Description and Terms and Conditions of Service for CBC Manager to be reviewed. Position to be advertised.	Town Clerk/ Chair of CBC Committee.	ASAP
Advertise position of PPP&C Officer	Town Clerk	ASAP
Training element of Child Protection Policy to be taken to H&S Cttee.	Councillor Canham	5 Jun 14