

## THETFORD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE HELD  
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KING'S HOUSE, THETFORD, ON  
TUESDAY 5<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2016, STARTING AT 4.30 P.M.

Present:

Councillors

R F W Brame	M P Brindle (Chairman)
Mrs B J Canham	T J Jermy
J C Moorman	Mrs S J Armes
Ms F Robinson	M Taylor

Officer in attendance:

Maurice Howard Town Clerk

Also attending: Councillor C Harvey

Minutes

1049/15 DECLARATIONS OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS  
None.

1050/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE  
Apologies were received from Councillor M S Robinson.

1051/15 MINUTES  
RESOLVED that the minutes of the Committee's meeting held on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016 received by Council on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2016 be confirmed as a true record and be signed/initialled by the Chairman.

1052/15 REVIEW OF ACTION POINTS

- Following the January meeting the arrival of the NJC Pay Scales were still awaited and once received a review of the implications of the Accredited Living Wage on the Pay Structure will be carried out.
- It was agreed in the January meeting that on arrival of the new NJC Pay Scales a decision would be reached on bringing Sessional Staff onto NJC Scales.
- The Health and Safety Policy was to be reviewed by the new Advisor. This would take place as soon as possible and the Town Clerk had chased for the name of our appointed person.
- The Town Clerk had obtained the Breckland Training Schedule but stated that at the moment it was unsure if they were able to offer these courses to other Town's/Parishes. BTS would be approaching Member Services to clarify this point and would let the Town Clerk know the result. However, he pointed out that any of these courses could be delivered at a cost of £550 per session. Once clarified the Town Clerk will distribute to Councillors asking for preferences and areas that they may require further training. In the interim gauge the potential take up for courses.
- The Planning Advisory Service had been approached but they will only offer training to Principal Planning Authorities (i.e. County and District). They had referred the Town Clerk to an organisation called 'Locality' but they only offer Neighbourhood Planning advice.

- The Town Clerk had spoken to the Finance Manager with regards to developing a Finance Training session for councillors and as there was to be a special Full Council following the next Finance meeting this training would be prior to a future Finance meeting.
- A new Nominal Code (7009) had been set up for 'Councillor Training' and the balance of the training budget at year end would be transferred into this (agreed by Full Council).
- The advert for Sessional Caretakers/Bar Members had been extended and also sent to Councillor Robinson but no further applications had been received. An update would be provided at Agenda Item 1057/15.
- The Outsourced Contracts Task and Finish Group had sat subsequent to the Agenda for this meeting being sent out. Its findings will therefore be presented to the next Personnel Meeting in June 2015
- An update on the appointment of the Apprentice would be provided at Agenda Item 1065/15.
- The press release for the Apprentice had been sent out as a result of the appointment to be discussed under Item 1065/15.

1053/15

BUDGET REVIEW

It had previously been agreed that any remaining training budget would be transferred to a 'Councillor Training' nominal code for 2016/2017. Therefore, attention turned to Recruitment and Health and Safety. It was felt that there was no need to accrue sums for either Nominal Code.

1054/15

HEALTH & SAFETY

The Town Clerk reported that no direct contact had been forthcoming from our new Health and Safety providers. Therefore, no review of the Health and Safety Policy had taken place as yet. It was less important that the annual inspection dates had not been set as it was still less than a year since the last inspection. However, the Town Clerk had let his feelings be known and as a result had now obtained the name of our nominated personal advisor. This had been passed on to the Deputy Town Clerk for her to make contact.

1055/15

COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

None were received.

1056/15

TRAINING REQUESTS

The Town Clerk presented information on two conferences that had been sent to him. The first was the combined SLCC AGM and Training Day on Friday 15 April. The Town Clerk felt that the subjects to be covered did not warrant the expense and time away from the office. However, the second event was the Norfolk ALC Spring Conference on 28 April 2016. The subjects to be covered were all elements that were pertinent and up to date (Pensions, Auditing, Budgeting, Community Services, Funding and Apprentices). He therefore felt that, at a cost of £45 + travel to Great Yarmouth, this represented good value. A proposal was made by Councillor Mrs S J Armes that the Town Clerk attend the Norfolk ALC Spring Conference on 28 April 16 at a cost of £45 plus travel. This was seconded by Councillor J C Moorman. This was agreed by all present.

**RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk attend the Norfolk ALC Spring Conference at Great Yarmouth on 28 Apr 16 at a cost of £45 + travel.**

1057/15

SESSIONAL CARETAKERS/BAR STAFF RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The Town Clerk reported that following the extended deadline no further applicants had replied specifically to the advertisement although two further applicants had found out through other means and had applied. Therefore, an interview process had been carried out for the three applicants. One of the applicants failed to interview but the other two were found to be suitable had been particularly impressive during interview. They had subsequently been appointed and training will now be arranged as necessary. One of the applicants was already an existing staff member and therefore the training will be pertinent to both roles.

1058/15

REVIEW OF TOWN COUNCIL POLICIES

The Town Clerk presented a list of all Town Council Policies and their relevant review dates (Appendix 1). It was found that all policies are fully up to date and no review of any policy was imminent other than the Health and Safety Policy (discussed under Agenda Item 1054/15).

1059/15

LEAVE POLICY

Reference was made to a previous agreement whereby Town Council staff were not allowed to take holidays during Civic or other major events of the Council. The Town Clerk pointed out that in recent years many more events took place which required the attendance of Town Council staff. These events included the Thetford Festival, the extended Christmas events (over the weekend of the Christmas Light Switch On, Heritage Open Days etc as well as partnership events at the relevant hire facilities. As a result a blanket leave ban was impracticable as it meant that there were fewer times in the calendar when staff could take leave. Currently this therefore usually meant that more staff were off together in those periods where leave was banned. It was hoped that councillors understood that this was a management issue and that the Town Clerk had to make best use of resources at appropriate times. Spare capacity would always be factored in to any event, but he felt that he was best placed to manage this. However, as a word of caution there may always be a time when leave is granted and then two separate issues arise that cause problems (i.e. two personnel sick at the same time). The Town Clerk asked for forbearance if this should ever arise. Members asked how this would be managed and the Town Clerk detailed usage of the 'Events Calendar, the shared 'Outlook Leave Diary' and the onus on line managers to check both before approving leave. It was proposed by Councillor Mrs S J Armes and seconded by Councillor Mark Taylor that the Town Clerk be given full control over the management of leave whilst recognising the Town Council's role and that the blanket leave ban for all events therefore be lifted. This was agreed by all.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the Town Clerk be given full control over the management of staff leave whilst recognising the Town Council's role and that the blanket leave ban for all events therefore be lifted.**

1060/15

TASK AND FINISH GROUP SALARY REVIEW

Although the new NJC Pay Scales had still not been received it was felt that it would be appropriate to determine who would carry out the full review of the salary structure, as detailed in the previous meeting. It was felt that this should be decided in advance so that once these rates were received they could be stood up immediately rather than wait until the next meeting. It was felt by all members that the Chair and Vice-Chair should carry this out in consultation with the Town Clerk.

**RESOLVED: The Chair and Vice-Chair in conjunction with the Town Clerk would carry out a full review of the salary structure once the new NJC rates were received.**

1061/15

OFFICE OPENING HOURS

As part of the normal monthly staff meeting following Full Council it is normal practice to discuss particular issues arising and also better ways of working. At the most recent, the Town Clerk had been asked to request that a review of working hours be carried out with a view to determining the merit of having one morning a week, in addition to the one following Full Council, where minimal manning could be introduced. This would allow both staff training and undisturbed office meetings. It would also give all members the chance to work uninterrupted on specific elements of their work where concentration was paramount. This was discussed at length by committee members and options were considered. It was decided that the monthly staff meetings were crucial but that there had to be an emergency point of contact during the period when staff were in the meeting. In addition, the option of reduced manning on all other Wednesday mornings was investigated. Again it was felt that as long as the public could obtain assistance during this period then this would be acceptable (i.e. there would be no noticeable loss of service to the public).

**RESOLVED:**

- **The morning of the Staff Brief following Full Council would be covered by a telephone message giving an 'emergency only' number which would be answered during the meeting. A similar message would be placed at reception.**
- **Subsequent Wednesday mornings to 1.00 p.m. would see the reception manned by at least one member of staff with all telephone calls answered. A rota would be instigated by the Town Clerk.**
- **The website would be updated to show that emergency calls only would be taken on the last Wednesday of the month and that Staff training on other Wednesdays would see reduced manning, but that all urgent calls would be attended to.**

1062/15

ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

a) Memorial/Reception – Riddlesworth Polish Camp.

The Town Clerk stated that he had received an invitation to the subject event on 22 Apr 16. He informed committee members that these type of invitations were rare but he felt that they were sometimes necessary either, because of personal involvement as a point of contact for the council, but also as organisations knew of his military background and therefore they felt it appropriate that he attend. He therefore wished to confirm that the committee were content that he accepts these types of invitation. It was made clear

to the Town Clerk that the committee felt that acceptance of these types of invitation could only be seen as a positive thing from the Council's perspective.

b) Cleaners Hours

The Town Clerk stated that he had received a further request from the cleaner of King's House to amend her hours. He had discussed this with her as this involved a reduction of one hour per week. However, he felt certain the remaining hours would ensure no detriment to the council occurred. He had therefore agreed a one month trial with her and subject to satisfactory completion would formalise this for a 1 May 16 start.

c) Resignation of Deputy Town Clerk

The Town Clerk informed the committee that, just prior to this meeting, he had been informed that the Deputy Town Clerk had been offered another appointment which she was minded to accept. As a result it was likely that he would be handed a letter of resignation the following day. This was not a decision that she had taken lightly but her new role would be at a high level and would include a substantial salary increase.

The committee asked that the Town Clerk pass on congratulations from the committee.

The Town Clerk stated that he would liaise with the Chair to get the advert out for a replacement as soon as possible. The Deputy Town Clerk position would be treated separately from the recruitment of the Amenities Land and Property Officer role, but could be carried out at the same time.

1063/15

PRESS RELEASES

There were no press releases arising from this meeting.

1064/15

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was resolved that, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded for any 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.

1065/15

TOWN COUNCIL APPRENTICE

The Town Clerk stated that since the last meeting the interview selection panel had sat and had interviewed a total of three personnel. As a result the new apprentice (Miss C Ashmore) had been appointed. He went on to extol the virtues of the individual based on his initial impressions.

Chairman

Appendix:

1. Index of Town Council Policies.

## ACTION POINTS

ACTION POINT	BY WHOM	BY WHEN
Await arrival of NJC Pay Scales and then Chair and Vice Chair with Town Clerk to carry out a full review of the salary structure with the aim of meeting the NMLW (as set by the Living Wage Foundation).	Chair/Vice-Chair/ Town Clerk	On receipt of new Pay Scales
Await NJC Pay Scales and then look to bring Sessional Staff on to NJC Scales.	Town Clerk	As above
Following review by new H&S Adviser, Agenda the H&S Policy for Recommendation.	Town Clerk	ASAP
Await information from Breckland Training Services concerning participation on Breckland courses. In the interim distribute the list to councillors to gauge take up.	Town Clerk	ASAP
Devise a training session with the Finance Manager which is to be offered to all Councillors prior to next Finance meeting.	Town Clerk/ Finance Manager	7 Jun 16
Instigate a Task and Finish Group to review Standing Order format and presentation.	Town Clerk	June?
Ensure results of Out-Sourced Contracts Task and Finish Group presented to next meeting.	Town Clerk	7 Jun 16
Contact to be made with new H&S Providers to set dates for Inspections and to review Policy and other H&S Documentation.	Deputy Town Clerk	ASAP
Book NALC Spring Conference	Town Clerk	ASAP
Instigate rota for cover of reception on Wednesday mornings	Town Clerk	ASAP
Update website to show emergency calls only on Wednesday following Full Council and reduced manning on other Wednesdays	PPP&C Officer	ASAP
Accept invitation to Memorial Unveiling Ceremony at Riddlesworth Polish Camp	Town Clerk	ASAP
In consultation with the Chair ensure the vacancy for ALP Officer is advertised ASAP. Confirm procedure for separate appointment of Deputy Town Clerk	Chair/Town Clerk	ASAP