

MARLBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL

STAFFING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on **Monday 14th April 2008** in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Marlborough** at 8.15pm

PRESENT	Councillor G. Francis Councillor Mrs P. Dow Councillor A. Ross Councillor Mrs E. Fogg	Chairman Town Mayor
ALSO PRESENT	Mrs Pam Dobson Mrs Linda Chapman Councillor B. Castle Councillor A. Kirk Wilson Councillor S. Radnedge	Town Clerk Civic Secretary Observing Observing Observing

NOTICE OF MEETING – Public Notice of the meeting has been given in accordance with Schedule 12 paragraph 10 (2) of the Local Government Act 1972.

600/07 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor's Mrs E.M. Hannaford-Dobson, Mrs M. Rose and Councillor R. Pitts.

601/07 DECLARATION(S) OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 7 Mrs Pam Dobson, Town Clerk

602/07 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

It was unfortunate that I had to leave the Annual Parish Meeting before the end of proceedings as I understand that questions were raised from the floor about the Council Office staffing levels and possible savings on the budget.

Since I believe there was no response from the Chairman I feel that I would like to put the record straight and say, that we are most fortunate in having a hard working and conscientious staff in the Office who are often required to listen to quite difficult customers at first hand. They are fully stretched at this time and, as a result, we as a Staffing Committee feel that there is room for an office junior to assist with the work.

It is not helped either by unwarranted and unpleasant letters and e mails from certain members of the public who regularly write in but will not accept a reasoned and considered answer to their questions. I hope that it is not true that certain councillors are actually aiding and abetting these parishioners to cause mischief and upset the routine of the office.

All Councillors should stand behind the staff and recognise the difficult and often diplomatic task that they have to perform on a regular basis.

UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ITEMS

- a) **Relief Macebearer** – The Town Clerk gave a verbal update as follows –
We have received two responses to our request in the Newsletter, both from persons who already assist, Mr. Sherratt and Mr. Smithers. It would be helpful to have one further person. Consideration will need to be given at some stage to the honorarium being paid pro rata to those who are involved.

The Committee asked that the subject of the honorariums be raised at a future Finance & Policy Committee Agenda.

- b) **Update on Training requirements and confirmation of training arranged** –

The Town Clerk gave an update as follows -

A number of on-line training opportunities have been identified that may be of interest.

The training is provided through IRRV (Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation) and cover a variety of topics such as Freedom of Information, Data Protection, Managing workload, Managing relationships, Managing within the Team, they have a duration of 3 hours and cost £25 per course. The on-line courses may be useful to a variety of staff members.

The Committee noted the availability of this training and asked the Town Clerk to get more information on how the courses are conducted.

Training is booked in May to update the First Aid Certificates for the Office Manager and Senior Grounds Man (this was arranged for April but had to be cancelled due to staffing problems). The weed -spraying has been booked for the Senior Grounds man and chainsaw training for the Relief Senior Grounds man, although dates are to be confirmed due to the current difficulty with staffing levels. However, it is anticipated that with the return to work of the Town Hall Caretaker later this week, the relief caretaker will be free to resume outdoor duties and this with the employment of a temporary outdoor grounds man should enable the remaining training to take place.

Funding still has to be approved for other training but these will be addressed when the current workload has returned to normal.

APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY GROUNDS MAN

The Town Clerk informed members of the temporary appointment of a grounds man. The Shaw Trust assists with the Government Workstep initiative that enables persons who have a disability return to work through a supported employment programme. The Town Council were made aware of a man who wished to pursue a career in horticulture. Following consultation with the Chairman of Staffing, and Chairman and Vice Chairman of Amenities and Open Spaces the Town Council have appointed a part time grounds man on a temporary 6 month contract initially to take the place of Mick Plank who would also have been going part time. There is a fund available from the Shaw Trust to assist with training requirements; this will be assessed in due course.

The Chairman confirmed that he had spoken to the Senior Grounds man who felt Mr. Jones will be able to fulfil all the required tasks and fit in well with the other members of staff.

605/07

DISCUSSION ON STAFFING STRUCTURE

The Town Clerk stated that following comments made at the Annual Parish Meeting, which the Chairman has already mentioned, staffing structures at other councils in Wiltshire, such as Calne, Devizes, Malmesbury, Cricklade etc. were being explored. These investigations are incomplete at this time however the Staffing Committee may wish to carry out a review of our current structure compared with other council with similar responsibilities.

Councillor Mrs. Fogg pointed out that the letter from WCC regarding delegation of services clearly stated under capacity and capability that the Council “should have, or plan to have, adequate staff capacity, knowledge and skills to deliver or manage the services”.

The Chairman stated that the Staffing Committee is promoting training for all staff, the Office Manager is working through training to achieve promotion to Assistant Clerk and we have included sufficient funds in the budget to employ an apprentice officer junior and outdoor grounds man.

Following a discussion it was -

Proposed by Councillor G. Francis, seconded by Councillor Mrs P. Dow and –

RECOMMENDED: unanimously that this committee feel that whilst staffing levels are sufficient at this time they will need to be reviewed in the light of possible delegation of services and future projects.

The Town Clerk Declared an Interest and left the room at 8.39pm

606/07

REQUEST FOR POST HOLDER OF TOWN CLERK/RFO TO JOIN COUNTY COUNCIL PENSION SCHEME – to make recommendations thereon

Following a discussion it was –

Proposed by Councillor G. Francis, seconded by Councillor Mrs E. Fogg and -

RECOMMENDED: unanimously that the request from the Town Clerk to join the County Council Pension Scheme be granted.

The Committee requested that the Town Clerk should look at the current situation of the pension scheme including the cost implications and the present situation of employees who are or are not in the pension scheme.

The Town Clerk returned to the room at 8.44pm

The meeting closed at 8.45pm