

Minutes of the Meeting of Personnel held in Doggetts Barn on 19 October 2023 at 10:30 am

Present: Cllrs. Angela Baker, Michael Gemmell Smith, Alan Layland, Margot McArthur (*Chair*), Stuart McGregor

In attendance:

Meeting started 10:30 am

1 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received, noted and accepted from Cllr Todd.

2 Declarations of interest or predetermination

None.

3 To confirm the minutes of the Committee meeting held 05 September 2023 (2023-016-1-3)

Resolved: that the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 05 September be duly signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting; pages 2023-016-1-3.

4 Matters arising not covered elsewhere

Members received a request to consider approving travel expenses for the Apprentice to cover travel to and from Plumpton College each week. Members unanimously,

Resolved: the Apprentice could claim their travel expenses whilst attending college.

4.1 To ratify the appointment of the Grounds Apprenticeship - Kai Day

Members unanimously,

Ratified: the appointment of the Grounds Apprenticeship - Kai Day.

4.2 To ratify the appointment of the Community Warden - Kevin McGovern

Members unanimously,

Ratified: the appointment of the Community Warden - Kevin McGovern.

5 To discuss Personnel Issues

5.1 To receive update on staff attendance/absence for 2023/24

Members noted staff absence to date, 21 days.

5.2 To note: Apprenticeship and fixed term contracts are not exempt from the pension scheme

Members noted the grounds apprentice was legally eligible at the age of 22 for the pension scheme and upon the advice of the HR consultant, this had been included in the contract of employment. The employee can opt out of scheme, but under the automatic enrolment regulations they will be automatically enrolled.

Certain employees must be auto-enrolled into a pension:

- 1. aged between 22 and State Pension age (SPA) and*
- 2. earns above £10,000 a year / £833 a month / £192 a week (current tax year) – known as the earnings trigger and*
- 3. working or ordinarily working in the UK.*

Under Auto- enrolment rules, these employees must be put into a pension scheme and have money paid into their pension pots on a regular basis.

5.3 To receive an update on the Open Spaces vacancy, with possible appointment

Members noted the interviews for the Open Spaces Officer had taken place and an offer was about to be made.

5.4 To consider appointment of temporary meeting minutes Clerk

Members unanimously,

Resolved: to support the appointment of a Minutes Clerk for Council and Committee meetings to assist during the current period of staff shortages and training for the new Open Spaces Officer; with payment at the same rate as the administration and tourism officer.

Members also suggested the Town Clerk approach EDGE IT for assistance with the Finance admin or approach other local Clerks to see if any had EDGE experience and the time capacity to help. Based of £200 per day, Members unanimously,

Resolved: a proposed budget of £1,000 per month to help with Finance during the period the RFO was off.

6 To receive an update on the budget, and consider a view for 2024/25

Members received an update on the current budget 2023-24: The budget had allowed 432,536k, the estimated budget underspend was estimated at £5,751. Looking at the budget for the new financial year, 2024-24 based on current staffing allocations, with the expected NJC pay award for 2023, and an allowance of 4.04% increase across all scales from 1 April 2024, this would require a budget of £464,579k. This equates to 6.9% budget increase. Members noted the NJC pay awards were not something they were in control of and the Pensions contributions had been assumed the same rate 23.9%; there was no information from Kent Pensions to advise otherwise yet. Members supported and,

Resolved: to make recommendations to Finance Committee when preparing the draft budget to allow a staffing budget of £464,579.

Meeting closed 11:10 am