

Minutes of the Meeting of Personnel held in Doggetts Barn on 26 February 2024 at 11:00 am

Present: Cllrs. Angela Baker, Alan Layland, Margot McArthur (*Chair*), Stuart McGregor, Bob Todd
In attendance:

1 To receive apologies for absence

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

2 Declarations of interest or predetermination

None.

3 To confirm the minutes of the Committee meeting held 27 November 2023 (2023-029/01)

Resolved: that the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held 27 November be duly signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting; pages 2023-029-01.

4 Matters arising not covered elsewhere

None.

5 To discuss Personnel Issues**5.1 To receive update on staff attendance/absence for 2023/24**

Members noted attendance 2023/24: Total leave across both departments, is 128 days. The office had one member on long-term sick, hence the higher than usual sickness. Two employees has had Covid but continued to work.

5.2 To receive an update on other staff matters**5.2.1 To receive update on new employees following probation periods**

Members received a report on three employees following their three-month probation period. All were do really well, had settled in and work was to a good standard. It was noted that one employee had some personal issues, but for now these would be monitored.

5.2.2 Disciplinary & Grievance update

Members noted one matter, which was being monitored.

5.2.3 Sick pay update

Members received an update on an employee on long-term absence. They were reminded of the Council's sickness procedures and allowances, which had also been checked by the HR Consultant. It was noted this person had always worked additional hours unpaid throughout their employment, had stayed in touch throughout the absence providing advise and support to colleagues where needed including coming into the office to do some work, as well as checking emails remotely. The budget had already allowed for full pay. Members agreed as a valued member of staff and should be looked after, and unanimously.

Resolved: to use its discretionary powers to continue full sick pay for March and April, to be reviewed in May.

5.3 Budget 2023-24 update

Members received an update on the budget, noting due to retirements and employment gaps, there was a forecasted budget saving of est. £11k. Members unanimously,

Resolved: to recommendation to Council to move staffing surplus 2023-24 to staff reserves and for Finance Committee to advise and consider actual final amount to transfer at year-end.

5.4 **Staff Appraisals**

Members noted the appraisals were underway.

5.4.1 **To confirm the annual pay increments**

Members unanimously,

Resolved: the recommendation for the staff annual pay increments (as per the contracts) and budgeted for 2023-24.

5.4.2 **To consider continuation of employee temporary remuneration**

Members unanimously,

Resolved: the continuation of the discretionary monthly payment, as agreed at its September meeting, in view of additional work and hours during the period of staff shortage.

6 **To receive an update on new office hours and staffing hours**

Members noted with staff shortages, down by two full-time employees until the Open Spaces Officer started in mid-November, and still with no RFO/Deputy, it had been difficult to do a proper comparison of the staff hours to evaluate if the change to the office opening hours (Monday-Thursday 9.00 am - 3.30 pm), and 9-day fortnight (Clerk and RFO) was having a positive impact on managing staff working hours. This said, closing the office to the public at 3.30 pm had helped with allowing staff to get on with certain tasks due to fewer interruptions. However, the Planning Officer and Town Clerk were still working excessive hours, but are forever hopeful that once back to full operational staff levels, these hours would come down. A comparison review would be reported in more detail at a future meeting.

Weekly office visits from residents and others ranged from 84 to 122 visitors. With the new office hours, mindful it had been the winter months, this was now average of 60-70 visitors pw, though when looking at February's visits this was higher with some days peaking at 30.

7 **To consider temporary staffing and additional expenditure in the 2024-25 budget**

7.1 **Minutes Clerk**

Members were reminded October Committee meeting, had supported 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. This had been of help, and were being asked to consider continuing for the coming months with ongoing staff shortages. Members unanimously,

Resolved: to recommend to Council the continuation of the Temporary Minutes Secretary for the foreseeable future during the staff shortages.

7.2 **Finance data input assistance**

Members noted it had previously supported a budget of £1,000 per month to help with Finance work. However, with the help of Planning and Admin Officer data inputting invoices and income onto the finance system, the office had been doing okay. Some assistance from EDGE IT for year-end had also been booked. However, whilst in the short term this was okay, there was work building up and nothing was being completed fully. With the continued staff shortages, the Clerk was asking for the minute secretary to be engaged further to help with some finance data inputting and other office support. Members noted the earmarked staffing reserves currently held £6k, and there was savings in the 2023-24 budget to help cover these costs. Members unanimously,

Resolved: the recommendation for the appointment of temporary finance/office support person for the foreseeable future during the staff shortages.

11:37 Meeting closed.