

Wonersh Parish Council

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Minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Committee of the Wonersh Parish Council held on Thursday 28 September 2023 at 9.30am, at the Wonersh Sports Pavilion.

Present: Cllrs Mike Band, Chris Howard and Stephen Lavender.

In attendance: Lisa Davison.

HR23/24 14 To consider and approve apologies for absence.

No apologies were received.

HR23/24 15 Wonersh Parish Code of Conduct – Declarations of disclosable interests.

The Clerk declared pecuniary an interest items HR 23/24 21.

HR23/24 16 Open meeting for members of the public to raise matters about planning issues.

There were no members of the public present.

HR23/24 17 To receive progress reports about matters previously considered and approved by the Committee and Council.

The Clerk noted the requirement to finalise the handbook in terms of formatting and inclusion of overtime, it was confirmed that the November 2023 Council Meeting would be an appropriate time for this.

The Clerk provided an update as to the overtime in relation to recent unscheduled projects. It was noted that the Personnel Committee might be best placed to monitor the Clerk's over time. Council considered the increasing staff time as a budget recommendation.

It was noted that current staff had limited availability to work additional hours but increases for defined projects or over a defined timescale might be agreeable. Looking at the direction of the Council a potential part time role for an estates manager was considered by the Committee.

Cllr Howard reviewed other items discussed at the June Personnel Committee Meeting and of those not on the agenda below it was noted that HR-related policies would be included in the spreadsheet being developed for the Risk and Audit Committee with the Personnel Committee responsible for their development and update.

HR23/24 18 To receive the Assistant to the Clerk's Appraisal Paperwork and approve next steps including recommendations to Council.

The Clerk updated the Committee as to Jeannette Stevenson's appraisal. The Committee recommended to Council that this be approved, and the following actions be put in place and reviewed to meet agreed key objectives.

Action: Assistant to the Clerk to set up the new accounting system.

Assistant to the Clerk to attend training relating to the new accounting system.

Ensure any new councillors are authorised signatories on the bank accounts, if required.

Set up a deposit account, if approved at the next R&A meeting.

Understand the process and requirements for the 3-year finance / budget plan. Link in with the new accounting system and use budget 2024/25 from October 2023.

Raise invoices for the allotments and community room in a timely manner.

In addition, it was agreed that the Assistant to the Clerk should attend the whole Council training.

Action: Assistant to the Clerk to attend whole Council training.

HR23/24 19 To receive the Clerk's Appraisal Paperwork and approve next steps including recommendations to Council.

Cllr Howard updated the Committee as to Lisa Davison's appraisal. Noting the delay with CILCA and other actions required of the role. Areas of delegation to the Assistant to the Clerk are being explored. Budgetary considerations in relation to this and outstanding tasks were highlighted.

Action: Clerk to speak to the CALC trainer regarding an extension.

Recommended key objectives by Council strategy area and therefore broad actions are:

Improving Council Operations

- **Clerk to assist Council in employing a suitable alternative to WBC to complete the Tree Hazard Assessment of WPC common land and GW within a reasonable timeframe, due Autumn 2023. To extend this to relevant areas of the leased land, once leases are signed and the newly purchased land.**
- **Officers to consider further where the Assistant to the Clerk can take on some of the administrative roles, particularly in relation to the finances, e.g., the asset register and organisational aspects, e.g., working with me on scheduling tasks.**

Improving amenities and infrastructure

- **Clerk to support Councillors / Working Party with a management plan for the newly acquired Barnett Hill Fields by the end of 2024/5.**
- **Clerk to work with Council and other stakeholder to sign the lease of the land with WBC, Spring 2024.**
- **Clerk to continue to support councillors and resident members of playgrounds rejuvenation working party with introducing new items of play equipment during the 2023/24 financial year in Wonersh and 2024/25 in Lords Hill.**

Respond to the Climate and Biodiversity Emergencies by considering all Council actions through the lens of carbon reduction and improving the environment.

- **Clerk to support the Council with the development and implementation of a business plan, which is SMART and implemented with councillor ownership of key objectives and tasks, by May 2024 and assessed at least quarterly.**

Actions for the next year, not incorporated within the above objectives are as follows and in line with actions agreed by Council and Committees:

- **Clerk to have made a good start with CILCA.**
- **Clerk to return to the policy reviews and start updating / developing policies with Councillors at a realistic rate.**
- **Clerk to work with Working Party to have an effective action plan in place as to how to progress the repairs of the closed burial ground wall (underway).**

- **Clerk, with input from the Assistan to the Clerk, to streamline how they work with Contractors by agreeing programmes of works with Council rather than individual jobs and potentially consolidating works.**
- **Clerk to support Personnel Committee to develop plans to meet the civility and respect pledge.**
- **Clerk to work with Council to improve internal and external communication.**

Specific training requests in relation the above include:

- Whole Council training exploring dealing with difficult people.
- Working Party training on being responsible for the decent maintenance of a closed burial grounds.
- Council support for CILCA be extended and transferred to future years for the Clerk to become qualified.

Action: Council to consider the resource requirements in assisting the Clerk / Council to meet these objectives, with a view to approving.

HR23/24 20 To review the Council’s position in respect to the Civility and Respect pledge and to action plan in response, including a review of training needs.

The Committee noted that [Wonersh Parish Council has signed up to this pledge](#) and had general positive performance with respect to this and the commitment to develop this further through, e.g., whole council training, proposed “focus / away days”, concentrating on the Council’s collective responsibilities and aspirations and reflecting the ethos of this movement in policy updates.

Cllr Howard drew the Committee’s attention the [NALC mission statement](#):

“Civility and respect should be at the heart of public life, and good governance is fundamental to ensuring an effective and well-functioning democracy at all levels.

“The intimidation, abuse, bullying and harassment of councillors, clerks and council staff, in person or online, is unacceptable, whether by councillors, clerks, council staff, or public members.

“This can prevent councils from functioning effectively, councillors from representing local people, discourage people from getting involved, including standing for election, and undermine public confidence and trust in local democracy.

“NALC, county associations and OVW, as the membership organisations representing the first tier of local government in England and Wales, and the SLCC, as the professional body for clerks, are committed to working together to promote civility and respect in public life, good governance, positive debate and supporting the well-being of councillors, professional officers and staff.

“To that end, the Civility and Respect Working Group will be working to deliver tangible resources, actions and interventions in four main areas: providing councils with the tools to support good governance; lobbying to strengthen the standards regime and encouraging more people to get involved; training; and processes to intervene to provide support to struggling councils.”

She noted the [statement's prominent position by Council's including Farnham Town Council](#) in publicising the importance of this to the sector and suggested the Personnel Committee lead on this on behalf of the Council.

Action: Clerk and Council to consider the pledge when reviewing and updating policies.

Council to schedule an away / focus day to develop a business plan considerate of available resources.

Council to consider and commit a budget to assist with this.

HR23/24 21 To receive an update on Council contributions to Clerk pension and approve the Wonersh Parish Council percentage contribution.

The Committee considered this in the absence of the Clerk and are recommending a Council contribution of 10% the NEST pension.

HR21/22 22 Members' business and other correspondence for noting or including on a future agenda.

Cllr Lavender enquired as the forum to discuss how the Council might celebrate local volunteers, given the important role they play within their local community. It was proposed for inclusion on the November Council Meeting agenda in the first instance.

Action: Clerk to include celebrating local volunteers on the November Council Meeting Agenda.

HR21/22 23 To consider and approve the date of the next meeting of the Committee.

The Committee agreed that a policy-focused Personnel Committee meeting should take place in February or March, provisionally following a Planning Committee Meeting. Dates for these are:

- 15 February 2024 (half term)
- 7 March 2024
- 28 March 2024

Action: Committee to confirm availability for meeting in February or March, from dates above or other suitable dates.

HR21/22 24 To consider and approve that the official record of this meeting be presented at the meeting of the Council on 12 October 2023 for approval.

This was confirmed.