



**TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES
1 PARK ROAD
SHEPTON MALLET
BA4 5BS**

01749 343984

info@sheptonmallet-tc.gov.uk

www.sheptonmallet-tc.gov.uk

Minutes of a Meeting of **Shepton Mallet Town Council's Human Resources Committee** held via Zoom on **Tuesday 29th September at 7.00pm.**

Present: Cllrs Kennedy, Manley (Chair) and Mayall

Absent: Cllrs Hobbs and Frapple

In attendance: Charlotte Starkie, Town Clerk

Public and Press: No members of the public attended.

Public Question Time. There was no public question time.

HR2.1 To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Tolson.

HR2.2 Chair's Announcements

The Chair invited the Town Clerk to make a statement about recent concerns:

The Town Clerk stated that there was deep concern amongst the staffing team about the poor attendance at meeting by councillors and that the important business that was being considered and pushed forward was being dealt with by committees that had poor attendance. That the staff were working harder than ever to produce good quality reports for councillors, to undertake more PR and communications for the council, and yet there was very little feedback, support of the staff or willingness to get involved outside of a meeting. Despite the publication of the ambitious town plan, ambition and progress was being stifled by the lack of support from councillors.

Thanks were given to the Town Clerk and the staffing team for all their contributions and hard work, and it was recognised that there needed to be new councillors on committees to energise them and councillors needed to encourage others to get involved as otherwise the public were not being well served. The Town Clerk stated that the workload on the staff was growing and yet there was no recognition of this concern that was being expressed.

HR2.3 To receive any declarations of interest in matters on this agenda

There were no declarations of interest.

HR2.4 To receive the minutes from the last meeting held on Tuesday 22nd October 2019

These minutes were accepted as a true record of proceedings.

SIGNED: (CHAIRMAN) DATE:.....

Resolved that:

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 22nd October 2019 to be signed.

HR2.5 Staffing update

A verbal update from the Town Clerk was received.

Staff were working both from home and in the office when needed. They had made arrangements between themselves to have an officer contactable on the phone each day, and had made arrangements to ensure that there would be an officer available over the Christmas period, other than on the bank holidays.

The staff participated in weekly meetings on line and has a process to ensure that the work flow was being achieved

Resolved that:

The verbal update be noted.

HR2.6 To Receive an update on Training and Development

Councillors received a report from the Town Clerk on training undertaken by council staff and a staff development plan for the next 12 months.

Resolved that:

Councillors noted the report.

The Town Clerk was due a personal development plan progression meeting. It was agreed that Cllrs Manley and Mayall would conduct this meeting in October 2020.

HR2.7 Staffing Expenditure at Month 5 and budget requirements for 2021/22

Councillors received a written report from the Responsible Financial Officer. The national pay awards had agreed a 2.75% increase for local council staff employed under the terms of the NJC and the staff had been given this award, backdated to 1st April 2020, as per their contracts of employment.

Staff had been in receipt of a working from home allowance during the initial lock down, but this had now ceased as staff were working partially in the office.

A budget for 2021/22 had been proposed, that assumed a national pay award of 3% plus staff progressing through their spinal column bands and receiving an annual pay increment, in line with their contracts.

A budget proposal, assuming that the staff establishment stay as it is with same hours, was presented as below.

| | 2020/21 (this year) | 2021/22 (next year) | Variance |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Gross Salaries Inc NI | £156,668 | £162,000 | |
| Pension | £25,351 | £28,000 | |
| Total | £182,019 | £190,000 | £7,981 |

Resolved that:

The report be noted.

SIGNED: (CHAIRMAN) DATE:.....

That the budget as proposed above be agreed to be accepted as the base line budget for the staffing team, with further consideration at the next item.

HR2.8 To consider a proposal for a future change to established staff

Councillors received a written report from the Town Clerk on the proposal for new role of a Communications/Information Officer, Environmental Officer and Grants Officer and to consider the impact on the future budget

The Town Clerk explained that the RFO has requested to reduce her working week from full time to 3 days a week and this had been accepted by the Town Clerk. At the same time the Town Clerk had offered an additional day a week to the part time Project Officer on a temporary basis, to be ratified by this committee. Therefore, a proposal was considered to make the project officer a full time member of staff on a permanent basis and this was agreed, with immediate effect.

Councillors discussed the proposal to employ additional staff and agreed that the full time communications/engagement officer was important to allow the council to deliver, alongside the projects officer, the priorities as laid down in the town plan. It was recognised that the town council did require a larger staff base to deliver the outputs and to celebrate achievements. It was also achievable as the council was able to increase its precept/council tax. The projects identified in the town plan would require additional work, and currently councillors wanted to see the plan converted into action plans with timetables and targets.

Therefore, this new post would be aimed at someone with experience in managing the press, understanding the strategic direction of the council and who could update the council's website. Councillors fully supported the proposal to add additional costs in the budget for 2021/22.

Councillors also asked if the Town Clerk could put a proposal together, with the Job Description and recruitment plan, for employment sooner, rather than wait until 1st April 2021. The Town Clerk would need present this proposal to the full council meeting for consideration and agreement, as this fell outside the budget requirements of this committee.

The Town Clerk has identified that there was the opportunity to become involved in a wide range of environmental projects, and to apply for environmental grants, but that the current staff base was lacking in this areas of expertise. It was therefore proposed that the council employ someone on a part time basis who has a range of skills to manage projects linked to the environment, in Collett Park, across town and also involved with the Pollinator Project. This would not be a warden's role and did not impact on the current grounds care contract. Councillors supported the proposal in the report.

It was also proposed that in the interim the Town Clerk identify someone who might be able to take on this role on a short time temporary basis, and that responsibility be delegated to the Town Clerk to employ someone who could support the council in the short term, either employed or on a consultancy basis, and to engage them no more than 2 days a week for 3 months.

The Town Clerk has also identified that there were many grants available for the council to apply for, but that this was a specialist area and the council would benefit from someone employed, or on a freelance basis, to make grant applications. This was discussed, and it was proposed that the Town Clerk

SIGNED: (CHAIRMAN) DATE:.....

undertake further research but that the idea was supported in principle and funds but into the budget for 2021/22.

Therefore, councillors were asked to support the following increase on the overall staffing budget and make a recommendation to the Policy and Resources Committee that the Staff budget for 2021/22 was as follows:

| Post | Total proposed salary costs |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Communications Officer | £42,000 |
| Environmental Officer | £16,000 |
| Grants Officer | £8,500 |
| Remaining Staff Budget for 2021/22 | £190,000 |
| Total | £256,500 |

Resolved that:

The recommendations in the report be supported as follows:

The Project Officer be made full time on a permanent basis with immediate effect, utilising the savings from the RFO reducing the working hours.

The above budget of £256,500 be proposed as the staffing budget for 2021/22 and a recommendation be made to the Policy and Resources Committee to include it in the overall budget.

The Town Clerk prepare details on the engagement and employment of a Communications/Engagement/Information Officer for full council to consider and agree, for consideration of employment prior to 1st April 2021.

The Town Clerk be given delegated authority to engage on a short term basis, for no more than 3 months and 2 days a week, an environmental officer and for the Town Clerk to prepare details of employment for a part time role from 1st April 2021.

The Town Clerk to prepare further details on the employment of either an employed Grants Officer or a consultant, within the budget costs of the report.

HR2.9 Date and time of next Meeting

The next meeting would be held in February 2021

HR2.10 To resolve to exclude the public and press due to the confidential aspect of the following items

Councillors agreed to exclude public and press from the meeting for the purpose of discussing a confidential matter

HR2.11 To consider some confidential staffing matters

Councillors were updated on a staffing issue that Councillor Manley was supporting the Town Clerk with. Councillors requested that Councillor Manley continue to support the issue and they thanked her for her ongoing support.

Resolved that:

The matter be pursued with the Town Clerk and Cllr Manley.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm

SIGNED: (CHAIRMAN) DATE:.....