

Minutes

of the Extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council held on

Wednesday 26 July 2023 in the Parish Room.

Present: Councillors Chris Button, Ian Duffy, Vinny Hall, Martin Hoffman, Graham Lee (Chair), Norton Mahy (Vice Chair) and David Sims.

Also in attendance: Clerk (Jane Porter), two members of the public were present and one joined on Zoom.

Following a request from a parishioner the meeting was recorded.

The meeting commenced at 7.20pm

- 1 **Apologies.** To receive and accept apologies for absence.

None received.

- 2 **Interests.** a) To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda, b) To receive written requests for dispensations for declarable interests, and c) To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate.

2.1 Cllr Graham Lee and Cllr Norton Mahy each declared an interest in agenda items 6 and 8 and their intention to leave the room for those items due to their involvement in unresolved complaints.

2.2 Cllr Graham Lee, in relation to his declaration, stated that another councillor would need to chair those items.

A proposal was made and seconded that Cllr Chris Button should take the chair for items 6 and 8.

It was resolved that the proposal be accepted.

- 2.3 A member of the public requested permission to speak on this item.

A proposal was made and seconded that Standing Orders be suspended to permit this.

It was resolved that the proposal be accepted.

Standing Orders were suspended.

The parishioner put questions and raised his concerns with regard to agenda items 6, 7 and 8 and the Chair responded.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

3 Proposed terms of reference for HR committee and membership. (Agenda appendix A).

- 3.1** To note the draft minute from the July 2023 Council meeting: 35.2.1 'It was suggested and agreed that an amendment was needed to point 9 and that a revised draft incorporating this change would be an item for approval at the August council meeting.'

This was noted.

- 3.2** To agree, in the light of the recent employee resignation, that this be approved at this meeting so that the committee can convene and act as necessary.

A proposal was made and seconded that the draft be adopted.

It was resolved that the proposal be accepted.

Action: Clerk

- 3.3** To agree, in the light of the recent councillor resignation, membership of the HR committee.

A proposal was made and seconded that the members be Cllrs Graham Lee, Norton Mahy, Chris Button and Ian Duffy. It was noted that this would leave three other councillors to consider any appeals if that situation arose.

It was resolved that the proposal be accepted.

4 Banking/amendments to current arrangements.

- 4.1** To note the proposals agreed at the June council meeting (minute 30.2) and to agree, in the light of personnel changes, amended proposals.

A proposal was made and seconded that the previous proposals be amended to exclude the employee who was no longer in position.

It was resolved that the proposal be accepted.

Action: Clerk

- 4.2** To agree a proposal that the accounts supplier submit a request to the bank for a debit card to enable payments for (i) items that cannot be paid by bank transfer, eg accounts for Microsoft and Zoom, (ii) minor purchases, eg postage stamps, stationery items, that are currently purchased by the clerk and then reimbursed.

A proposal was made and seconded that a debit card be requested in the name of the supplier for the purposes stated, that an expenditure limit in line with those in the Financial Regulations for the clerk be imposed and that existing controls were adequate.

It was resolved that the proposal be accepted.

Action: Clerk

5 Parish councillor vacancy.

- 5.1** To note the formal 'Notice of Vacancy' issued by NHC and posted on the website and noticeboard.

This was noted.

5.2 To note the timetable for a by-election to be claimed and the estimated costs received from NHC should this occur.

This was noted.

- 6 **Exclusion of Press and Public.** To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of agenda items 7 and 8 as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, namely, and respectively, to consider matters re HR and Complaints.

Cllrs Graham Lee and Norton Mahy left the room and Cllr Chris Button took the Chair for this item - see item 2 above.

Cllr Chris Button reported that he had taken advice from HAPTC as to how items 7 and 8 should be dealt with. HR and employment issues, ie item 7, should be dealt with in private. Re item 8 the HAPTC advice had been that it was a matter for a parish council to decide whether exclusion of the press and public was appropriate or not. Advice from the NHC Monitoring Officer had been that complaints were a confidential matter.

A proposal was made and seconded that the press and public be excluded for items 7 and 8.

It was resolved that the proposal be accepted.

Cllrs Graham Lee and Norton Mahy returned to the room.

- 7 **Positions of Clerk and Deputy Clerk.** To discuss and agree actions for future office staffing arrangements.

The public and press were excluded for this item on the grounds that it included HR and employment issues -see item 6 above.

A proposal was made and seconded that the HR Committee would initiate action to address the staffing situation. The clerk would forward relevant documents including work specifications, job descriptions, budget implications, etc to inform this.

It was resolved that the proposal be accepted.

Action: HR C'tee/Clerk

- 8 **Implications of unresolved complaints.** To discuss and agree handling of Council business.

The public and press were excluded for this item on the grounds that it included matters that were confidential-see item 6 above.

Cllrs Graham Lee and Norton Mahy left the room and Cllr Chris Button took the Chair for this item - see item 2 above.

The Clerk was requested to leave the room on the grounds that the complaints that had been made against her would be discussed; she responded that she was happy to comply. The Clerk left the room for this item.

Cllr Chris Button read out a statement from the Chairman that (i) whilst there are unresolved complaints against him a temporary chair should be appointed for items where the Chairman has

a perceived conflict and (ii) that in relation to the complaint relating to the Clerk a discussion regarding how to investigate and resolve the complaint should be held by Councillors not subject to a related complaint.

This was noted and agreed.

A discussion was held in relation to outstanding complaints but no decisions were made as the Monitoring Officer had not informed parish councillors of any decision.

In relation to the complaint against the Clerk, the HR committee would investigate this complaint now the Monitoring Officer has confirmed that it is the responsibility of the Parish Council and following the decisions made at Item 3 of the agenda.

Meeting closed: 8.45pm

Signed

Date