

Porlock Parish



Council

Minutes of Meeting of the Staffing & HR Committee for Porlock Parish Council 26.09.22

Present: D Stanyon (chair), L Allenby (taking minutes), I Fraser, S Ellicott

1. Apologies.

Apologies were received from Cllr Rayner (medical appointment)

Proposed: S Ellicott

Seconded: I Fraser

Vote: unanimous

2. Declarations of Interest and Disclosable Pecuniary Interest Dispensations.

None declared.

3. To appoint a Chairperson for this Committee.

This point was declared void as Cllr Stanyon was elected Chair at the previous meeting.

4. To review the Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer Job Specifications, monthly hours and pay scales.

It was noted that nothing has been done on this point (including advertising for the role) since the informal meeting of the Staffing & HR Committee on 09.09.22.

Annie Dalloway (temporary RFO) has expressed her willingness to continue in the role for as long as necessary. However, it will be required that she move to employee status rather than locum. This can only happen once she has some idea of the time commitments necessary to the role. It is recommended that her position be reviewed at the end of October and that the committee seek permission to move her to Payroll.

The committee agreed that the Clerk / Proper Officer be advertised without including the RFO role, with the intention of the new Clerk undergoing training for the RFO position during the initial months of the role, with a subsequent increase in hours. The committee recommended the following split in hours:

Proper Officer: 26 hours per week

RFO: 9 hours per week.

The payscale for the Clerk would remain at LC2 18-23 dependent on experience, with the expectation that without the RFO part of the role the applicant would likely hit the lower end of the scale initially.

This situation would be reviewed after 6 months.

Cllr Allenby agreed to review the job specifications and circulate them as soon as possible.

Proposed: I Fraser

Seconded: S Ellicott

Vote: Unanimous

5. To review where to advertise and the cost of advertising

It was decided that the Free Press was not an effective or cost-efficient point of advertising. The committee recommended advertising on the SALC website (no charge for member councils) and the Somerset Jobs website (charge: £25.00 for 28 days).

There was a discussion around advertising on Indeed but this was deemed to require further investigation as it is difficult to predict the costings (charge: on a price per click basis). It was agreed that Cllr Fraser and Cllr Rayner (if he agrees, having had experience of the website) should look into it further.

Cllr Allenby has agreed to revise and if possible, post the advertisements on the SALC and Somerset Jobs website, on condition that Somerset Jobs are happy to invoice the PPC.

6. To discuss the legality of a Council without a Proper Officer.

Cllr Stanyon has received conflicting advice on the legality of the council as an entity without a Proper Officer. SALC recommend electing a Proper Officer from among the council, citing minimal duties including preparing agendas and taking minutes.

The committee commented that it was hard to know who would take responsibility for advertising for / responding to applicants for the advertised position of Clerk / Proper Officer as currently nobody is able to access the council emails / post etc. It is hoped that this be remedied following Wednesday's full council meeting where a volunteer Proper Officer should be found.

The committee attempted to summarise the absolute bare minimum interim responsibilities that such a Proper Officer would need to undertake. These were:

- Writing agendas
- Publicising agendas appropriately
- Taking minutes of meetings
- Answering emails
- Checking and responding to physical correspondence (post)
- Dealing with job applications
- Dealing with current employees
- Submitting invoices to the RFO
- Liaising with Bill Hodgeson re website and passing information to website.

The following parishes are still to be approached for interim clerking assistance:

Watchet TC; Williton; Dunster; Old Cleeve; Cutcombe; Exford; Lynton TC

There could also be a discussion with Claire Gladstone about the possibility of a member of her staff helping out with some of the Proper Officer duties during office hours; this would be gratis to the PPC.

The Committee strongly suggests that a comprehensive list of the minimum legal requirements be discussed and drawn up in full council as a matter of urgency, and that if necessary the council state that it is acting in a *de minimus* standing for the foreseeable future. This would require notifications be made to Somerset West and Taunton Council.

The Committee suggests that an extraordinary full council meeting be held specifically to discuss this Staffing and HR meeting and its recommendations. It was noted that this can only be called by the Proper Officer or the Chair. As part of this,

SALC needs to provide a full and definitive list of legal requirements that the PPC needs to undertake during the interim period. An example would be the procedure following the standing down of a Councillor (as has happened in the past few days): Who is responsible for the advertising of this and what exactly happens next?

The meeting closed at 3.18pm