

# Castle Bromwich Parish Council

## MINUTES OF STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ONLINE via 'ZOOM'

WEDNESDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020, 6.30pm



**Committee members:** Cllrs J MacDonald, Committee Chairman  
Mrs A Shaikh Ahmed, Mrs P Allen, S Beechey  
+ 1 vacancy

**Committee quorum is 3 members**

- Members Present** Cllrs: Mr J MacDonald (Committee Chairman)  
Mrs A Shaikh Ahmed, Mrs P Allen, Mr S Beechey
- In attendance** Officers: Miss Gemma Burgess – Clerk to the Council  
Mrs Gill Lungley – Support Officer (Host of Meeting)
- Non-committee members/Members of the public: none
- The meeting was electronically recorded for minute-taking purposes only.
- Staffing 20-09/01 **Chairman's Welcome**  
Cllr J MacDonald welcomed everyone to the meeting and a particular welcome to the new Clerk, Gemma Burgess with best wishes in her role.
- Staffing 20-09/02 **To note apologies for absence**  
None, all members present (one vacancy yet to be filled)
- Staffing 20-09/03 **To receive members' declarations of disclosable interests**  
None received.
- Staffing 20-09/04 **To consider any dispensation requests if any**  
None received
- Staffing 20-09/05 **Public Question Time - to hear from members of the public**  
Not required
- Staffing 20-09/06 **To consider the minutes of the meeting held 19/08/2020 for approval**  
The minutes of the previous meeting held 19/08/2020 were approved a true record.
- Staffing 20-09/07 **To note the committee's revised Terms of Reference, approved by the Parish Council at the Extraordinary meeting held 26/08/2020.**  
The committee's revised Terms of Reference, as approved, were noted.
- Staffing 20-09/08 **To resolve to close the meeting to members of the public via the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, to allow for discussion of confidential matters.**  
The meeting was closed to the public
- Staffing 20-09/09 **To approve in principle reimbursement to an employee for damage to personal property used while performing official duties.**  
An appropriate amount in the way of compensation for damage to personal property whilst carrying out council business would be offered to the employee.
- Staffing 20-09/10 **To report on issues of Occupational Health for employees and to consider any adjustments necessary.**  
Members were appraised of the staffing situation relating to two members of staff and measures taken to cover their roles whilst on sick leave.

It was noted that appropriate procedure should be followed when asking other staff members to provide absence cover, to ensure clarity of what is expected of them.

Peninsula HR would be asked to provide advice on procedure relating to members of staff in such circumstances:

- a) The two staff members who are absent due to ill health
- b) The staff members who are covering the absences.

Staffing  
20-09/11

#### **To consider any outstanding staffing issues:**

##### **a) welcome and induction of new Clerk**

It was noted that Gemma Burgess has started work on a part-time basis (5 days over two weeks) and will be full time from 28/09/2020; an informal induction process has been undertaken with introductions to members of staff and a tour of the Arden Hall facilities and familiarisation of the council's e-system, policies and procedures. Support is provided via parish council office staff.

##### **b) position of Interim Acting Clerk**

The Acting Clerk would like to revert to the role of Assistant Clerk from 28/09/2020 having undertaken the full-time Acting Clerk's role since the previous post-holder's absence as well as continuing with the Assistant Clerk duties, all of which necessitated working over-time. Having heard that support is available to the new Clerk, members agreed the council had benefited considerably from the Assistant Clerk's willingness to cover the Clerk's absence and agreed to her reverting to the role of Assistant Clerk working 22½ hours per week.

With regard to office support, the agreement in principle of taking on an apprentice was discussed. It was noted that starting an apprenticeship scheme requires considerable input to ensure the appropriate training and oversight is in place, and the Clerk is not yet in a position to meet that requirement.

##### **c) staff training updates and establishing a staff Training Needs Analysis**

The Hall Manager had attended online training via ACAS on 03/09/2020 on grievance and disciplinary matters and had provided a report to this.

Peninsula HR have issued a notice on a Health and Safety review.

It was noted that staff will require updated Health and Safety training and continuing professional development and that there is a budget for training staff during the year.

##### **d) timetable for the staffing review**

Members agreed to work with the Clerk and staff on this review. It is possible Peninsula HR will have templates for contracts, but there is scope to follow the NALC template which is focused for use with parish council employees. The Clerk will also contact SMBC for information.

Staffing  
20-09/12

#### **To review holiday entitlement for employees.**

The Assistant Clerk's holiday entitlement regarding number of days' holiday allowed based on the National Joint Council for Local Government Services 'Green Book' arrangements, was accepted by members henceforth. As a part-time worker, holiday entitlement would be based on 'annualised hours' and the payroll provider would be asked for advice.

The committee was asked about cover in the office during holiday periods. What is the council's expectation of office cover should members of staff be on holiday at the same time? It was believed the council office is expected to be continually manned and it would be unusual to have no cover. The Support Officer was asked to provide cover during such times.

Staffing  
20-09/13

**To consider Working from Home allowances for staff who have been required to work from home whilst the offices were closed due to COVID-19 regulations.**

From 23/03/2020, the Government ruled that due to the Coronavirus pandemic, staff members who could work from home should work from home. Thus the Hall Manager and Interim Acting Clerk worked from home using their own equipment (laptops, phones and printers). HMRC provides a tax-free allowance of up to £6 per week may be paid to each employee under such circumstances.

Expenses for incidental items, such as printer ink, would be refunded through the usual system of office purchases.

**Members agreed** to the payment of this allowance for the 8-week period to 18/05/2020 amounting £96 (£48 per employee) and to do the same in future instances of 'lock-down'.

Staffing  
20-09/14

**To note the NJC Pay Award 2020-21 and that this is backdated to 01/04/2020.**

The award of a 2.75% pay increase to all council staff, negotiated on the council's behalf through the employers' representatives and the unions, was noted.

Staffing  
20-09/15

**To support the requirement to improve office IT connectivity to enable online communications and office meetings**

Firstly, the IT equipment in the office is not sufficient for staff to be able to join online meetings or training from the office; none of the office computers can be used in this capacity. This also means it is not currently feasible to hold hybrid council meetings where some members may meet face-to-face whilst others join in online. Additionally, it is not appropriate for members of staff to use their own laptops, either in the office or if working from home, due to security and confidentiality issues.

Secondly, it was noted two new mobile phones have been purchased as part of the new telephony system, used by the Hall Manager and the park wardens, whose phone is to be used for record-keeping processes. A mobile phone would also be of use to parish council office staff to ensure continuity of process when working away from the office, eg HMRC 2-step account confirmation.

Thus the request was put forward for this committee to recommend approval for the purchase of 3no. functional laptops for use by the Clerk, Assistant Clerk and Hall Manager, and a mobile phone each for the Clerk and Assistant Clerk. This is to ensure continuity of process and build in flexibility of the office to adapt to working away from the office.

Members noted it had already been agreed by the council to purchase an e-tablet for each council member and for each to have their own parish council email address, which would further assist with security of council emails. The Clerk would meet with Cllr Beechey to progress this matter. The council's budget includes an amount for IT equipment.

Staffing  
20-09/16

**Date and time of next meeting of this committee**

Date of next meeting (staff review) to be notified.

**This meeting ended at 8.04pm**

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Signed as a true record of the business transacted  
Chairman, Staffing Committee

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Dated