

## HERSTMONCEUX PARISH COUNCIL

### Agenda Item: Committee Reports – F&GP

**Minutes** of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on **Monday 22 February 2016** at the Meeting Room, Herstmonceux Village Information Centre, Gardner Street, Herstmonceux.

Present: Councillors: Mrs J. Angear (Chairman), M. Bradshaw, M. Goodsell, Mrs H. Kenward, S. Nash, I. Stewart.

S. Goacher, RFO, attended and took the Minutes.

Members of the Public: None.

**FIN.10.02.16 APOLOGIES:** None.

**FIN.11.02.16 DECLARATIONS of INTERESTS:** None.

**FIN.12.02.16 DISPENSATION REQUESTS:** None.

**FIN.13.02.16 CURRENT YEAR EXPENDITURE:** None.

Councillor Stewart suggested to the meeting that as this was an extraordinary meeting discussing confidential matters regarding the position of the Clerk to the Council, that the recording of the meeting should be suspended. This proposal was Seconded by Councillor Bradshaw. All in favour. The Finance Officer turned off the recorder at this point in the meeting.

It was also agreed that only the recommendations to Full Council arising from the debates on the items on the Agenda should be recorded in the Minutes.

**FIN.14.02.16 EMPLOYMENT LAW ADVICE:** The Finance Officer had obtained the Employment Advice from SALC as requested, but that Councillor Bradshaw had brought the attention of the SALC Advisor ACAS Service guidance regarding the length of a suitable period between any period of employment in respect of an employee which would be classed as a sufficient 'Break in Continuity of Service', this being four weeks. The SALC Advisor had replied by stating '.... I do not believe that any claim for continuity would be successful with a week's break as suggested. Certainly a longer break would provide greater distance between the two periods of employment and would therefore reduce any risk'.

It was recognised by the meeting that any extension of the break in service period would have an impact and would need to be reflected in the Neighbourhood Plan schedule

Councillor Bradshaw proposed four weeks, Councillor Goodsell suggested three weeks and this was seconded by Councillor Nash. Councillors Kenward, Stewart, Bradshaw, Goodsell were in favour. Councillor Mrs Angear voted against. The meeting, therefore, **RECOMMENDS to FULL COUNCIL** that should the Parish Council consider the offer from the Clerk to continue as Clerk to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group that there should be a three week break of service.

**FIN.15.02.16 CONSIDER CLERK'S OFFER and TERMS & CONDITIONS:** The meeting debated consideration of the Clerk's offer to continue in a Casual / Temporary position of Clerk to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, envisaged to be for a period from 01 April to approx. the end of May 2016. The meeting was not unanimous on the vote and the Chairman, Councillor Mrs. Angear decided not to use her casting vote in the circumstances. The Finance & General Purposes Meeting, therefore, leaves the final consideration of whether to accept the Clerk's offer to an Extraordinary Full Council meeting to be convened prior to the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting scheduled for Tuesday 01 March 2016.

The Finance Officer suggested that the meeting should make recommendations to

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Full Council for its terms & conditions under which any further employment of the Clerk would be required, should the Parish Council decide to accept the Clerk's offer. After a lengthy debate the following **RECOMMENDATIONS to FULL COUNCIL** were agreed:

- The rate of pay should be £15 per hour
- That all hours and nature of work should be recorded on a timesheet, on a day to day basis, and authorised by Council prior to being paid.
- That the hours be restricted to 65 hours in any one calendar month. Hours required above 65 hours must be authorised by the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group prior to being worked.
- The Clerk shall be subject to PAYE deductions, and that all payments to the Clerk in the way of salary and approved expenses be charged to the Neighbourhood Plan project.
- The term of employment shall be to the completion of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan submission or to any decision on the part of the Parish Council to terminate the Neighbourhood Plan should this arise and be earlier.
- Location of Employment: access to the Parish Office, working from home, working in the Village Information meeting room, and access to photocopier. Use of existing laptop, and landline.
- The webmaster to set up a dedicated email address: [nplan@herstmonceuxparish.org.uk](mailto:nplan@herstmonceuxparish.org.uk) and transfer off any other documentation and data appertaining to the Parish Council to a new computer to be purchased after 01 April 2016.

Proposed Councillor Mrs. Angear, Seconded; Councillor Nash. All Councillors in favour.

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**NEW CLERK TERMS & CONDITIONS and EQUIPMENT:** The Finance Officer reminded the meeting that there was provision made within the Annual Estimates for 2016-17 for a new computer system and a mobile telephone for the use of the Clerk. The Finance Officer was asked to investigate possible smartphone deals, EE or 3 being suggested. The Finance Officer said that the Parish Council should be looking at a required specification for a new computer, the meeting agreed it should be as a high a specification as possible within the budget.

The new Clerk would be required to work in the Parish Office, and service all committee meetings, which are held in the evenings. That the Parish Office should be open at least two hours per week to the parishioners, by arrangement with the new Clerk and in conjunction with the requirements of the meeting schedule for the Clerk's attendance at meetings.

The meeting **RECOMMENDS to FULL COUNCIL** that suitable equipment is sourced and purchased as soon after 01 April 2016, as possible.

The meeting discussed a suitable Retirement Gift for the present Clerk, which would be presented at the Annual Parish Meeting on 21 March 2016.

### FIN.17.02.16

**Close of Meeting:** There being no other business, the Chairman, Councillor Mrs. Angear thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 21.40pm