

CROWTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY
26 NOVEMBER 2019, AT THE UPPER CONFERENCE ROOM, PARISH HALL, HEATH
HILL ROAD SOUTH, CROWTHORNE AT 10.00AM

Present: Cllr B McKenzie Boyle – in the Chair
Cllr R Price
Cllr S Sever
Cllr B Wade
Mrs M Saville - Clerk
Mrs J Robertson – Assistant Clerk
0 member of the public

Apologies: Cllr G Robertson

MINUTE 1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
There were none.

MINUTE 2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES
The minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 24 July 2019 as circulated, were taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

MINUTE 3 MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON 24 JULY 2019
1 Min 3.1 – Litter picking
The Clerk spoke to the CPC litter picker about the various litter hotspots identified in the Parish and these have been included in the litter picker's schedule. CPC's litter picker is proactive and clears and reports any obvious signs of fly tipping discovered on his route. CPC has begun to report these on to BFC as BFC's officers did not appreciate the ongoing problems e.g. the frequent high volumes of waste at the car park at Wellington Business Park, as CPC's litter picker was regularly clearing the waste. CPC has also requested that an additional litter bin is provided at this location by BFC as the existing one cannot be seen from the car park where the littering occurs. BFC have, to date, declined to fulfil this request.

Legal & General have advised that they are unable to supply new litter bins with lids at the Morgan Recreation Ground as their community fund budget was allocated to the Summer of Fun event. CPC's Finance Officer is including the replacement of some of the Morgan Recreation Ground bins with litter separator bins with lids in the budget for 2020-21.

2 Min 4.2 – Work experience
Further to the decision by CPC to offer a work experience placement to a Year 12 pupil at Edgbarrow, this decision was communicated to the careers department (Ms Robinson) and the scheme was oversubscribed. The Clerk met with Ms Robinson and agreed that 2 pupils could be supported and that the hours could be split, with attendance at Council meetings counting towards each pupil's hours.

The successful applicants' letters of interest were sent to the Staffing Committee members for review. Subsequent to this Toby and Sophia have commenced their placements with CPC and attended their first full Council meeting in

November. They have also spent an afternoon in the office finding out how the Council operates day to day carrying out the decisions of Council and gathering information to support 'papers' for Council's debate and resolution. Toby has also agreed to help set up and run the Parish Council Christmas lights and carols event.

A Year 10 Edgbarrow pupil, Connie, is working with Carley as part of her Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award on the planning and delivery of community events.

3 Min 5 – Appointment of Buckler's Park Consultant

This was an agenda item (minute number 5).

4 Min 6 – Appointment of a Part Time Fixed Term Projects and Events Officer

Carley Greenwood has been appointed into this role following a successful recruitment exercise. A further update was provided under the confidential agenda item (minute number 9).

MINUTE 4

CLERK'S REPORT

1 General staffing update:

- Finance and Administration: The administration and finance staff continue to be extremely busy with workloads increasing as various long-term projects such as the Buckler's Park development, Bracknell Forest Local Plan, Crowthorne Parish Neighbourhood Plan and event organisation require resourcing. The appointment of an Events and Projects Officer, although beneficial, has not entirely solved this problem as her time has been heavily focused on the delivery of the new Christmas lights and carols event which took place on Sunday 24 November. The appraisal panel recognise the impact on admin staff workloads at present of the ongoing projects and plans and the fact that these demands will continue to increase if CPC resolves to take on the new community facilities as proposed at Buckler's Park. As the Parish builds towards longer term staffing strategies to resource this project, the appraisal panel considered the potential for increased hours for the Assistant Clerk to ensure all work and tasks can be completed in contracted hours; further details were provided in the confidential item discussed under minute number 9.
- Grounds/caretaking staff: The grounds and caretaking staff continue to work well together. The staff are covering for each other's holiday leave ensuring an uninterrupted service to CPC. Generally, feedback from the public is very complimentary concerning the upkeep of CPC facilities by grounds and caretaking staff. Unsolicited positive feedback has been received on both the caretakers for the Parish Hall and Morgan Centre.
- Longer term staffing requirements: A business plan for the new Buckler's Park facilities will be brought to the Staffing Committee for discussion once there is a clearer picture from the consultant engaged to advise on the planning and modelling for the potential new enterprise for CPC.
- Training: A training plan is in place for staff. Training will be booked in accordance with the plans as and when time allows. Current workloads of existing administration staff have made it difficult for staff to commit time to training this year, however priority is being given to First Aid training for all staff in the budget for the coming year. The caretaking/grounds staff have all undertaken the training identified in their training plans and provided certificates evidencing successful completion.
- Admin: Staff have attended BFC training on planning policies, consultation portal responses, local SLCC network meetings and Connecting Communities in Berkshire (CCB) conferences related to their areas of responsibility.

- Developmental training for the Clerk and Finance Officer are detailed in the training update provided under minute number 6.
- Appraisals: All staff appraisals have been undertaken in accordance with CPC HR policies and recommendations for pay reviews and variations to contracts for 2020-21 were discussed under confidential minute number 9.

MINUTE 5

UPDATE ON TENDERS AND SELECTION PROCESS FOR BUSINESS/ COMMUNITY FACILITY PLANNING CONSULTANTS FOR BUCKLER'S PARK COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Members discussed the planned community hub facility, the revised specification for the hub and the 3 tenders provided by planning consultants at length.

In summary, the following points were agreed:

- Lesley Doyle from BFC to continue negotiating on the 2 year running cost of the community hub.
- CPC to feedback communication to BFC on the 2nd specification of the community hub plans.
- CPC needs to know what the revised S106 agreement will provide by way of delivery dates for the hub.
- Staffing Committee members to undertake their own assessments of the submitted 3 tenders and to score them according to the criteria as provided at the meeting. This would then be fed back to next Staffing Committee meeting for analysis.

Members also agreed that it would be beneficial to arrange for a representative from the Community Buildings Advice Service (CBAS), which CPC has joined, to attend a future Council pre-meeting to advise on the community hub project. This follows the Environmental Impact Conference that the Clerk and Cllr B McKenzie-Boyle attended on 7 November which focused on the impact community buildings have on the local environment and what can be done to improve things.

MINUTE 6

TRAINING UPDATE

A table showing the training undertaken by all staff in the calendar year 2019 was circulated.

£1000 for training in 2019/20 has been allowed for in the budget estimates. At the present point in the financial year, only £10 of the training budget has been spent as much of the training accessed by staff has been free of charge via BFC and memberships with the SLCC and CBAS.

The training for caretaking/grounds staff required by their appraisals for last year was undertaken and certificated before December 2018 hence does not appear in the training records for 1.1.19 to date, nor in the training budget expenditure from April 2019 to date, but has been completed.

The following requests for training were unanimously APPROVED as proposed by Cllr Sever and seconded by Cllr B McKenzie-Boyle:

- The Clerk to attend the SLCC Practitioners Conference on 26-27 February 2020 which will cover topics that are very relevant to areas the Parish Council is focused on at present. The cost of the conference is £299 + VAT.

- The Finance Officer to attend role specific training which can count towards her professional CPD requirement for the year. This is subject to the training identified being relevant and beneficial to the Parish Council’s activities and being within the remaining training budget provision for the 2019-20 budget year.
- First aid refresher training by all staff early in the 2020-21 budget year. The Finance Officer is investigating the cost of on-site training for all staff to enable the training to be delivered to all staff at the same time and avoid the need for staff to go off site. At present the cost of the training has not been confirmed but will be included in the budget estimates for next year.

MINUTE 7 INFORMATION ITEMS

It was noted that Cllr Mrs T McKenzie-Boyle had been erroneously included in the membership list for the Staffing Committee when the list was drawn up in May 2019. Consequently, Cllr Mrs T McKenzie-Boyle is no longer a member of the Staffing Committee.

MINUTE 8 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

- Future staffing/budget requirements

Meeting closed: 11.35am

Signed

Dated

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, it was resolved that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the press and public were excluded from the meeting whilst the following confidential items were considered:

MINUTE 9 STAFFING MATTERS

All staff are appraised on an annual basis to review their performance, increase motivation and discuss existing and future job requirements. Staff appraisals were held in September and October 2019. Without exception, all staff were reported to have worked hard and developed within their roles. All staff were set objectives and training was agreed related to the postholder and role.

The CPC Appraisal Policy links appraisal outcomes and the achievement of objectives to the annual pay review process.

The committee were informed that the local labour market for trained, experienced and competent staff remains difficult at the moment with local councils reporting skills shortages and having to train new recruits ‘on the job’ as they do not have local council experience. The committee were therefore advised of the importance of utilising pay reviews as a retention tool, subject to any budgetary constraints.

At the time of meeting NALC had not issued their annual salary advice paper, and this may not be released until early in 2020 due to ongoing pay settlement negotiations between the NJC and unions, and the fact that a general election is due on 12 December 2019 meaning government cannot consult or settle future pay awards during its ‘Purdah’ period.

An advisory paper had been prepared for the Staffing Committee, by the Clerk, with salary projections based on the spinal point/pay scale increments recommended by the appraisal panel and provision for up to a 10% pay award on top of the scale points dependent on the outcome of the pay settlement negotiations.

The Staffing Committee felt it likely that any pay settlement agreed by the NJC with the union would most likely be spread over a number of budget years. As a result, it was recommended by Cllr Price, seconded by Cllr Mr McKenzie-Boyle and unanimously RESOLVED to award the spinal point increments recommended by the appraisal panel with provision for up to a 5% increase on the incremented scale points to ensure there is sufficient salary provision included in the 2020/21 budget.

The Staffing Committee also noted that there are increasing pressures on the Parish Office staff due to a number of ongoing large scale projects (Crowthorne Neighbourhood Plan, Bracknell Forest Local Plan, Buckler’s Park, costing and delivering CIL infrastructure projects and Council events). The Committee is particularly keen to ensure that staff workloads are kept at a manageable level but that the CIL monies and projects are delivered within the set timeframes permitted by legislation to ensure funds are not recouped. It was therefore recommended by Cllr Price, seconded by Cllr Wade and unanimously RESOLVED to include budgetary provision in the 2020/21 budget for up to 5 hours per week additional hours for the Assistant Clerk (ideally to be worked on a Friday to relieve the pressure on the office on Fridays) and 5 hours per week for the Projects and Events Officer in the 2020/21 budget.

Meeting closed: 11.50am

Signed

Dated