

Sevenoaks Town Council
Minutes of the Personnel Committee held on 26th October 2020

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 p.m.

Meeting Concluded: 7.32 p.m.

Cllr A Clayton (Chairman)	Present	Cllr R Piper	Present
Cllr A Eyre (Vice Chairman)	Present	Cllr S Raikes	Present
Cllr N Busvine OBE (ex officio)	Present	Cllr C Shea	Present (arrived 7.21 p.m.)
Cllr Dr JM Canet	Present	Cllr E Waite	Absent
Cllr R J Parry	Present		

In attendance Town Clerk

Noted that, following the decision by Council to roll over current governance arrangements until May 2021, the Chairman and Vice Chairman appointments made on 13th May 2019 remained in place:

266. Apologies for Absence

As noted above

267. Requests for Dispensation

No requests for dispensations had been received.

268. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Clayton declared a personal interest in the Code of Conduct item.

269. Notes of the Report of the Personnel Committee held on 30th March 2020.

It was noted that the date of the meeting had been incorrect on the agenda papers.

RESOLVED: To accept the notes of the Meeting as a true record.

270. Notes of Staff Meetings held virtually on 9th June, 12th August, 7th October

Town Councillors received and considered the notes of the staff meetings.

RESOLVED: To note and accept the Notes of the Staff Meetings and record the following in the Minutes:

- i) To congratulate the Town Clerk on the production of the Draft Sevenoaks Town Recovery Plan which has not only been useful locally but also to many councils across the country.
- ii) The Personnel Committee echoed the comments made by the Mayor and Chairman of Personnel Committee to the staff thanking them for the hard work and dedication during the pandemic.
- iii) The Personnel Committee wanted to specifically thank the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk for their hard work and commitment during the pandemic and keeping the Town Council operational.

271. Sevenoaks Town Council Staff

The Committee received and considered documents relating to the following information:

HR Management Information – Reports to March 2020

- i) Staffing Details
- ii) Pension Details
- iii) Absence Details
- iv) Turnover Details

HR Management Information - Reports to September 2020

- v) Staffing Details
- vi) Pension Details
- vii) Absence Details
- viii) Turnover Details

RESOLVED: To receive and note the information provided which was provided in a clearer and more consistent format than previously. The Committee recorded its gratitude to the Finance Officer for addressing the format of the reports.

272. Christmas Arrangements 2020

The Committee received and considered the reports relating to Christmas arrangements.

RESOLVED:

- i) The Town Council Offices and Departments be closed from 16.00 on Thursday 24th December 2020 until 08.45 on Monday 4th January 2021 inclusive and that two days be deducted from the leave entitlement and a third days leave is awarded to all as an extra days leave for all staff; and
- ii) Cafes and House in the Basement staff are given equivalent holiday subject to the opening hours of the premises.

RESOLVED: *under the Public Bodies (Admission of Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude the public and press for the following item by reason of the confidential nature of the business.*

273. Town Clerk's Report

- i) COVID-19
Since the lockdown in March 2020 Sevenoaks Town Council, like others in the workforce have been under sustained pressure to try and deliver functions and facilities for the community to be as close as possible to normal.

Anxieties and pressures are from several elements from the new world we are living in these could be related to working and not feeling safe when others are staying at

home under public health guidelines, being furloughed not knowing when it would end, anxiety about returning and working in the workplace, increased workload (other staff isolating, furloughed, increased public use of facilities, change of process, increased IT) and other pressures that all the public are dealing with concerns about personal and loved ones health. Added to this is the economic pressure of operating facilities with reduced income.

At the last Personnel Committee Meeting it was agreed to enter into a agreement to provide the EAP additional service offered through the Ellis Whittam HR & H&S Contract – Employee Assistance Helpline (Confidential counselling and advice). This commenced from 1st April 2020. All staff have been supplied with details.

During the lockdown period the Town Clerk has provided a weekly report to all staff and Councillors.

At the staff meeting held on 7th October 2020 the Mayor and Chairman of Personnel Committee formally thanked staff for their contributions.

ii) Cost of Living and Merit Pay Rises

Sevenoaks Town Council had originally placed a 2% Cost of Living pay rise and optional additional 1% Merit pay rise in the 2020 / 2021 budget.

Initially when lockdown happened in March 2020 the Town Council faced a very uncertain financial situation and the pay rise from April 2020 did not take place to help mitigate the financial situation. The Town Council finances were assisted following the government's decision that it could claim for furlough of staff. Unfortunately, it has not received any additional government funding.

Taking this into account most staff received the 2% Cost of Living pay rise from 1st September 2020.

iii) Finance Apprentice

It was noted that the Finance Apprentice would begin studying his next level of AAT studies – level 4. This is an apprenticeship over 2 years with a fee of £8,000. Sevenoaks Town Council would pay 5% of this, which would be £400 over 2 years (£200 per year). The rest would be government funded.

iv) Café Staff

There are some members of café staff who are on full time contracts and 'bank' hours not worked during the winter months for use in the summer months. Due to financial constraints the Town Council will be paying for hours worked up to April 2021. Professional employment advice has been provided.

v) Code of Conduct and Mediation

For the Town Council's record's, the decision of the Code of conduct panel was that the complaint was not sustainable, and the allegation not supported.

The recommendation was for mediation, which has taken place. Details relating to this matter remain confidential.

RESOLVED: To note and accept the contents of the Town Clerk's report and to also note that the cost of living pay rise assumption for 2021 / 2022 was currently being considered at 2 %, however it was likely that this would be reviewed in the new year.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting.

Signed
Chairman

Dated