

Present

*Cllr F J Hawke – Chairman

*Cllr L M Barnes – Vice-Chairman

*Cllr P F Allen

*Cllr T de Galleani

*Cllr I A Pritchard

*Cllr S E Thomson

Observers: Cllr M Baillie
Cllr R W I Cooke
Cllr R F Rendle

*Denotes attendance

#Denotes apology for absence

The Chairman advised the meeting that there would be cost implications due to extra staff covering the Clerk's absence and that he would be able to give the actual cost at the next Full Council Meeting.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllr de Galleani declared a personal interest in agenda item 8c– Future Staffing Provision – Market.

2. COUNCILLOR TRAINING.

The Chairman had hoped to have a date for the Councillor training to be able to bring to this meeting. The training would be based on the course by Lesley Smith MBE, that both Cllr Rendle and Cllr Baillie had already attended. The training would be for all members in order to ensure that they are all kept up to date with regulations and laws. An invitation to the training would be offered to Kingswear, Dittisham and Stoke Gabriel Parish Councils.

Cllr Allen requested that once a date had been set that an email sent to members to ask them if they have any specific topics they would like to be addressed.

3. PRESS RELEASES.

After a discussion it was agreed that it would not be practical to have a group of Councillor's to produce press releases and that no one Councillor can speak on behalf of the whole council.

Proposed: Cllr P F Allen

Seconded: Cllr S E Thomson

Recommended: Press releases to be issued by the Clerk after agreement at Full Council and at other, more urgent times, in conjunction with the Mayor.

4. TO PRODUCE AN ADVERTISING POLICY.

This was discussed looking at two different aspects.

1. The written scope of authority that the Clerk has in regards to advertising.

Proposed: Cllr F J Hawke

Seconded: Cllr S E Thomson

Recommended: If this is not covered in the Clerk's job description then it will be added.

2. An advertising policy where we can actually check that the advertising schedule is cost effective.

Proposed: Cllr L M Barnes

Seconded: Cllr P F Allen

Recommended: To be referred to General Purposes Committee on the 23rd March 2016.

5. TO CONFIRM TOWN COUNCIL'S POLICY ON STAFF/COUNCILLOR TRAINING.

**Proposed: Cllr I A Pritchard
Seconded: Cllr S E Thomson**

Recommended: That all staff and Councillor's will be encouraged to attend training courses as appropriate.

6. TO CONSIDER A POLICY ON CIVIC FUNCTIONS.

**Proposed: Cllr L M Barnes
Seconded: Cllr P F Allen**

Recommended: To be referred to General Purposes Committee on 23rd March 2016.

7. FUTURE STAFFING PROVISION.

A) GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

The Chairman had placed this item on the agenda to enable a recommendation to be made to Full Council. There was a full and frank decision regarding the creation of a Grounds Maintenance Team versus the various contracts been put out to tender. Members commented on devolution at South Hams District Council.

**Proposed: Cllr T de Galleani
Seconded: Cllr S E Thomson**

Recommended: That the Town Council meet with the Chief Executive and the Leader of the South Hams District Council, in order to discuss devolution. This would then enable The Town Council to consider the various options and allow for budget planning.

J Robertson, Cllr de Galleani and Cllr R Cooke left the meeting at 6.55pm

B) OFFICE STAFF

The Chairman informed members that with the Clerk to the Council being on sick leave until at least 22nd March, the Town Council was operating with one full time Administrator and one part time Finance Officer.

It was the Chairman's opinion that we did not have sufficient staff to carry out Council duties. He reminded members that at one time we operated with three full time staff and one part time Finance Officer. He felt it was time we needed to increase our staff by at least 20 hours. At the moment the Finance Officer was working part time as the Finance Officer as well as additional administration duties. The Chairman believed we should make the Finance Officer post full time as this would be a cheaper option in the long run.

Cllr Thomson said that she had discussions with the Mayor regarding the promotion of the Guildhall and that when the refurbishment had been completed she felt an Events Organiser would be required for three days a week.

Proposed: Cllr P F Allen

Seconded: Cllrs S E Thomson

Recommended: After completion of the Guildhall a review should take place and a report by the Clerk to the Council should be placed before the Personnel Committee for discussion.

C) MARKET STAFF

This will be a separate report by the Market Working Party.

D) CURRENT MAINTENANCE TEAM

The Chairman explained how the team worked. Members raised concerns about how duties were allocated, who issues the instructions to the team, the purchase of tools etc. and general supervision. The Chairman felt the Committee was being highly critical when very few members spent any time in the office. One member had been told they had to make an appointment to come into the office.

The Chair explained that visiting the office and meeting with Finance Officer or Administrator could be achieved immediately. However,

appointments were required for meetings with the Clerk due to her workload and other pre-arranged meetings.

Members requested that the Chair and Vice-Chair meet with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to raise their concerns.

Proposed: Cllr L M Barnes
Seconded: Cllr I A Pritchard

Resolved: That in view of the confidential nature of business about to be transacted, it was in the public interest that the press and public be excluded and that they be instructed to withdraw.

8. MARKET LEASES.

The cost to instruct solicitors to produce the market leases cost approximately £850.00 per lease. The Chairman suggested that this could be done in house. Cllr Allen requested that the legality of this needed to be checked. The Chairman agreed to report back on the matter.

9. ADVICE TO MEMBERS.

Members need to remember that they cannot lawfully act as individuals and make decisions on the Councils behalf but can only act and take decisions as a corporate body.

10. INCREMENTAL ENHANCEMENT.

Proposed: Cllr P F Allen
Seconded: Cllr I A Pritchard

Recommended: That as payment was at the discretion of the Council it should not be paid. A salary review would take place in April 2016.