

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Human Resources Committee of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 21 March 2016

Present: Cllrs P Aldis, T Cole, A M Hill (Chair), A Jackson, C Osborne, M Pettitt (Vice-Chair)

In attendance: Chris Robson (Town Clerk)

Absent: Cllr S Sutton

	<u>Action</u>
1 Apologies for absence (46 – 2015/16) Apologies had been received from Cllr. S Sutton	
2 Declarations of interest (47 – 2015/16) i) <i>Disclosable Pecuniary Interests - none</i> ii) <i>Non-disclosable Interests - none</i>	
3 Minutes of previous HR Committee Meetings (48 – 2015/16) RESOLVED to receive the minutes of a meeting of the HR Committee meeting held on Monday 30 November 2015 and to confirm them as a correct record of proceedings. RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the HR Committee held on 21 December 2015 and to confirm them as a correct record of proceedings with the amendment that Cllr. M Scott be included as present and item 4 be amended to '2016'.	Admin
4 Training (49 – 2015/16) Members received and noted a training report from the Town Clerk.	
5 Health and Safety/Accident Report (50 – 2015/16) Members noted there was nothing to report since the last meeting of the committee.	
6 Town Council Reception (51 – 2015/16) i) Members discussed the report from the Town Clerk, which included details on the number of people visiting the Council reception during its current opening hours. Members commented that; Lower numbers are most likely due to the time of year and that figures will increase during summer months. The winter period was not a true reflection of council visitor numbers over the year. A third of the queries received related to Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) matters. It was questioned to what degree the Town Council should carryout CBC services. A Member suggested CBC should be	

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taking more responsibility for ensuring their waste bags are distributed to residents and not leaving it to the Town Council as it is a CBC service.

A Member commented that the Town Council must offer this service and cover CBC shortfall. It forms part of a welcoming, positive and helpful Town Council. Members were informed food waste bags and recycling bags would soon both be phased out and this would take pressure off the Town Council.

A Member commented that the figures showed people are not using the service in the afternoons and he would like to see the office open everyday from 9am to 2pm. It was commented that the figures provided did not justify opening five days a week. The Council previously had to make the difficult decision to cut costs and reduce staffing, it can therefore not have it both ways and open everyday without increasing the need for more staff hours. A Member commented that a day closed per week was required for staff training.

Members agreed that a six week period was not a sufficient timescale in which to make an informed long term decision on opening hours and that another cycle should be allowed so as to get more figures from the spring/summer period.

A Member asked whether the figures included phone calls received and people with appointments. The Town Clerk confirmed it did not. The numbers in the report were simply visitors/walk in enquiries to the reception.

A Member requested that when the information comes back to the Committee it includes the numbers of visitors received on the days the office is closed to the public.

Town
Clerk

It was Proposed and **RESOLVED** that the matter be deferred until the next HR Committee meeting and that a decision on long term opening hours be made at that meeting.

Admin

- iii) Members discussed the naming and branding of the Council information area and **RESOLVED** that it was part of the Town Council and as such would be referred to as the The Council's Reception and Information Point.

7 **Chairman's Items (52 – 2015/16)**

The Chair informed Members that he no longer met on a weekly basis with all staff, but instead met with the Clerk who then cascaded information to the rest of the team.

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It was commented that the office would avoid having more than one person off on annual leave where possible to avoid the impact on the office workload.

8 **Date of Next Meeting: 6 June 2016 (53 – 2015/16)**

9 **COMMITTEE IN PRIVATE SESSION (54 – 2015/16)**

Exclusion of the Public and Press

It was proposed and agreed that in terms of schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and it is, therefore, proposed and agreed that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

10 **Staffing (55 – 2015/16)**

Members discussed the report from the Town Clerk and noted that the appraisal process was carried out. A Member asked whether any non-confidential information about training would be coming forward to the committee as a result of the appraisals. The Clerk informed Members he would put together a training schedule for the next three years and bring to committee.

Members went on to discuss the distribution of work following the departure of the committee/minute clerk. Members expressed some concern that minuting and clerking the meetings may put extra pressure on the clerk. It was noted the new set up would result in more of the Clerks office time being spent writing up minutes and more of the office staffs time in drawing up, copying and distributing agendas.

A Member proposed extending the current minute clerks contract to help cover some of the committee meetings. The Town Clerk clerking and minuting the Policy, Finance and Resources committee was highlighted as a particular concern as there was a lot of information and involvement from the Clerk during the meeting and a minute clerk would help reduce this pressure.

A Member expressed sympathy with this view and noted there had been a big improvement in agendas and minutes in the last 6 months and he would not like to see this jeopardised. However, the suggested way forward was previously agreed and it needs to be given a chance to run.

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A Member pointed out that the role of minute clerk had been extended in the past but was not budgeted for in 2016/17 and that the office should run with what was laid out in the Clerk's report and review the process after a cycle of meetings.

The Chair informed Members he would liaise closely with the Clerk to ensure the process is managed well and any problems are addressed sooner rather than later.

It was commented that there was confidence that the Clerk would bring forward any issues to Members and alter them if he was struggling and the process was not working.

It was **RESOLVED** that the clerking and minuting of Council meetings run as suggested in the Clerk's report and that this be monitored with feedback at the next HR committee meeting.

Admin