

# Sandy Town Council

To: Cllrs N Aldis, S Baker, A Effiong, A Lock, R Lock, P Sharman (Chair) and S Sutton  
cc Cllrs B Blackley, J Hewitt, R Lacey, C Osborne, M Pettitt, M Scott and N Thompson

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Human Resources Committee of Sandy Town Council to be held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024 commencing at 7.30pm.



Town Clerk  
10 Cambridge Road  
Sandy, SG19 1JE  
01767 681491  
26<sup>th</sup> June 2024

## A G E N D A

- 1 Apologies for Absence**
- 2 Election of Human Resources Committee Deputy Chairman for the Council Year 2024/25** Nominations to be put forward for the position of Deputy Chairman for the Committee.
- 3 Declarations of Interest**

*Under the Localism Act 2011 members of Council are not required to make oral declarations of interest at meetings but may not participate in discussion or voting on any items of business in which they have a Declarable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) and under Sandy Town Council's Standing Orders must leave the room for the duration of all discussion on such items. (All members' register of interests are available on the Sandy Town Council website or on application to the Clerk.)*

*This item is included on the agenda to enable members to declare new DPIs and also **those who wish to do so** may draw attention to their stated DPIs and also any non-declarable personal interests which they have declared under Sandy Town Council's adopted Code of Conduct and which may be relevant to items on the agenda.*

  - i) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests*
  - ii) Non-disclosable Interests*

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## *iii) Dispensations*

### **4 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

To consider the minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

### **5 Public Participation Session**

Members of the public may ask questions or make representations to the committee about items of business which are on the agenda.

### **6 Health and Safety / Accident Report**

To note that one incident has occurred since preparing the last meeting of the Human Resources Committee agenda.

Appendix I

### **7 Training Report**

To receive a report on employee and Councillor training undertaken or planned.

Appendix II

### **8 Changes to HR Law**

To receive and note a report from the Clerk outlining HR law changes in 2024.

Appendix III

### **9 Budget for Team Building Activities**

To receive a request from the Clerk that a small annual budget be set aside to cover the cost of team-building activities across the year. Suggested annual amount £500 which equates to £50 a head for 10 staff.

### **10 Member/Officer Protocol**

To receive a reminder from the Clerk of the protocols Members need to follow when making a request for staff resources or materials.

Appendix IV

### **11 Employee Code of Conduct**

To receive PNC's Employee Code of Conduct and to consider adopting it to supersede the current Disruptive Behaviours and Conversations at Work Policy.

Appendix V

### **12 COMMITTEE IN PRIVATE SESSION**

RECOMMENDED 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, RECOMMENDED that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (admissions to

# Sandy Town Council

Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

## 13 STAFFING MATTERS

- i) To receive and note employee sick leave figures for the financial year to date.
- ii) Staff Salary Request:
  - a) Outdoor Team Member
  - b) Caretaker.
- iii) Admin Team Leader contract

Confidential  
Appendix VI

Confidential  
Appendix VII

Confidential  
Appendix VIII

## 14 PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 READMITTANCE OF THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC

To resolve that the confidential business having been concluded, the Press and Public be re-admitted to the meeting.

## 15 Staff Changes

- Civic officer has been employed to undertake an extra 8 hours a week on a temporary basis following the departure of the administrative temp. This started on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024.
- A temporary outdoor operative has been employed on a rolling contract to support the Outdoor Team during a time of prolonged staff absence. This contract started on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

## 16 Chairman's Items

## 17 Date of Next meeting:

23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024

**SANDY TOWN COUNCIL**

**COMMITTEE:** Human Resources

**DATE:** 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024

**AUTHOR:** Town Clerk

**SUBJECT:** Health and Safety/Accident Report

The following accidents have been recorded since the last meeting of the committee:

<b>Date</b>	<b>IP</b>	<b>Nature of Injury</b>	<b>Nature of Accident</b>	<b>RIDDOR Y/N</b>	<b>Actions</b>
13.06.2024	Town Clerk	Bruised elbow/forearm	Fire door closed on right arm when exiting office kitchen and reaching in to turn off the light.	N	Make sure door is not taken off the closer until route is clear.  Electric door closure needs replacing/floor needs to be levelled to ensure the electric door closer can work.

**AGENDA ITEM 7****APPENDIX II****SANDY TOWN COUNCIL****COMMITTEE:** Human Resources**DATE:** 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024**AUTHOR:** Town Clerk**SUBJECT:** Training and Conferences**Training**

The following upcoming training has been arranged.

<b>Training</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Date</b>
Managing the 'unmanageable'	ACAS	Online	£295	30 <sup>th</sup> and 31 <sup>st</sup> July
Councils and roles under the new Civility & Respect Pledge: This will be specifically designed training for both new and existing councillors and staff to help everyone understand their roles in terms of the Civility & Respect Pledge that Sandy Town Council has signed up to. All to attend.	BATPC	Council Chamber Sandy	£350 for all councillors and officers	Date (TBC)
Emotional Intelligence and Personal Resilience (EI&R) for Clerks, Council Officers, and Councillors	BATPC	Online	£17.00 per user (£170.00 total)	Within 12 months of booking
Cemetery Management and Burial Records	ICCM through SLCC	Civic Officer	£144.00 per candidate	1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2024
ILCA	SLCC	Civic Officer and Community Engagement Officer	£144 per candidate	Within 12 months

**AGENDA ITEM 7****APPENDIX II**

The following training has been identified for completion as soon as it becomes available at a suitable location. Interest has been flagged with each of the training providers listed below. However, this list will be informed by Staff Appraisals.

<b>Training</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Abrasive Wheels	High Speed Training	Grounds Team	£30.00 per candidate
Basic Welding	TBC	Chris Dainton	TBC
Principles of Safe Handling and Application of Pesticides (PA1) Level 2	Shuttleworth College	2 X Grounds Team Members	£265.00
Basic Tree Survey & Inspection	Bedford College	Grounds Team Member	£195
Grounds Maintenance and Management	Grounds Maintenance Association (Previously Institute of Groundsmen)	Outdoor Team	Circa £900 – agreement to undertake this training was taken pre-covid. With circumstances moving on and the Council's decision to sign up to the Pitch Perfect, the Deputy Clerk is currently investigating the most appropriate training options for the outdoor team that will fulfil the Council's requirements.
Dealing with local and regional media	SLCC	Clerk/Admin Team/Councillors	£35.00 per candidate
Crisis Communications for Local Councils	SLCC	Clerk/Admin Team/Councillors	£35.00 per candidate
Microsoft Office for Local Councils	SLCC	Admin Team/Outdoor Team Leader	Unknown
Managing difficult people and conversations	SLCC	Admin Team/Outdoor Team	£35.00 per delegate

**AGENDA ITEM 7****APPENDIX II**

Contracts and Procurement	BATPC	Clerk – N Sewell	£30.00
Local Government Pension Scheme	Local Government Association	Admin Team Leader	No Cost
FILCA – Finance for Local Council Administration	SLCC	Clerk and Admin Team Leader	£144.00 per candidate
CILCA – Certificate in Local Council Administration	SLCC	Deputy Clerk	£375.00 Training (Training not required for Deputy Clerk) £450.00 Qualification
ILCA – Introduction to Local Council Administration	SLCC	Community Engagement Officer and Civic Officer	£120.00 per candidate.
Budgeting for Clerks and Finance Staff	BATPC	Clerk and Admin Team Leader	£30.00 per candidate.
Internal Controls	BATPC	Clerk and Admin Team Leader	£30.00 per candidate
Data Protection & GDPR for Clerks & Officers: Part 1 (Foundations & Theory)	SLCC	Clerk/Admin Team	£35.00 per delegate
Data Protection & GDPR for Clerks & Officers: Part 2 (Accountability and Lawfulness)	SLCC	Clerk/Admin Team	£35.00 per delegate
Data Protection & GDPR for Clerks & Officers: Part 3 (Rights and Information Security)	SLCC	Clerk/Admin Team	£35.00 per delegate
Freedom of Information for councils	SLCC	Clerk/Admin Team	£35.00 per delegate

**Financial Implications**

2.0 The training budget for Admin Staff was set at £3,000.00 with an additional £2,000 for the works team and £500 for Members allowances.

2.1 Spend to date has left £2,705 in the Admin Team's training budget, there is £2,000 still in the works team budget and £500 left in the Members Allowance. Totals consider earmarked funds for training as set out above but not yet processed.



## Human Resources Committee

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<b>Date:</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> July 2024</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Changes to HR Law in 2024</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Town Clerk</b>

### Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update on changes to HR law being implemented in 2024.

### Recommendation

2. To note the report.

### Changes

3.0 From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, workers aged 21 and over will be entitled to the National Living Wage.

	<b>21 and over</b>	<b>18 to 20</b>	<b>Under 18</b>	<b>Apprentice</b>
<b>April 2024</b>	£11.44	£8.60	£6.40	£6.40

**3.1 Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act – In brief, a day one right to ask for flexible working** - This Act – set to come fully into force on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2024 – will improve current flexible working rights, allowing employees to make two formal flexible working requests in a 12-month period.

The right to make a flexible working application also becomes a day one right on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2024 – previously employees needed 26 weeks' continuous employment to make a request. Employers will need to consult with employees before rejecting any such applications and will have only two months to consider and decide the outcome. The eight statutory grounds for rejecting a flexible working request remain unchanged.

### 3.2 Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act

Employees will receive a day-one right to 12 weeks of leave if their child is receiving neonatal care. However, the right to receive neonatal care pay will require a minimum of 26 weeks' service. Leave does not need to be taken in one block and can be taken in individual days or half days. Neonatal care must have started within 28 days of birth and last for at least seven days. The leave must be taken within 68 weeks of the child's birth.

### 3.3 Carer's Leave Act

This Act – which comes into force on 6<sup>th</sup> April – allows carers to take one week's unpaid leave in any 12-month period to look after a dependant with a long-term care need, such as illness, injury, disability or old age. Leave can also be taken in individual days or half days.

### 3.4 Protection from Redundancy (Pregnancy and Family Leave) Act

Currently, protection is given to employees on maternity, shared parental or adoption leave, in that they have a right to be offered a suitable alternative role, if one is available, before they are made redundant and must be preferred for the role, all other things remaining equal. This new Act

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## **APPENDIX III**

implemented on 6<sup>th</sup> April – will extend this protection to pregnant employees and employees recently returning from maternity, adoption or shared parental leave.

**3.5 Workers (Predictable Terms and Conditions) Act. Later in the year – for zero-hour workers.** This Act – which is expected to come into force in around September 2024 – introduces a new statutory right for workers (including agency and zero-hours workers) and employees to request a more predictable working pattern.

Also covered are those on a fixed-term contract of 12 months or less, as long as they have worked at the employer for at least 26 weeks. However, given the aim of the legislation is to address the issue of ‘one-sided flexibility’ experienced by workers in the gig economy, workers may not have had to have worked continuously during that 26-week period.

**3.6 Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2020) Act** Legislation on the duty to **prevent sexual harassment** is expected to be in place from October 2024. Under the new law, all employers will be under a statutory duty to take reasonable steps to stop sexual harassment happening in the workplace. If reasonable steps have not been taken to prevent sexual harassment and an employee is sexually harassed and successfully brings a claim, then the Equality and Human Rights Commission can take enforcement steps, plus any successful tribunal claim will be subject to a compensation uplift of up to 25 per cent.

### **Financial implications**

4.0 None at this stage.

### **Policy Implications**

5.0 Current policies will need to be amended to reflect the changes and reported to the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee.

**Human Resources Committee**

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<b>Date:</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> July 2024</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Member/Officer Protocol</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Town Clerk</b>

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide a reminder to Members on the proper protocol to be followed when working with the Council's officers.

**Recommendation**

2.0 Members ensure they are fully conversant with the Civility & Respect Model Councillor/Officer Protocol document and that they abide by the guidance at all times when interacting with officers. The Clerk will ensure that all Council officers are also aware of the protocol and follow the guidance at all times.

- 2.1 To agree to the suggested solutions to overcome the issues being formed.

**Background**

3.0 On 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023 Full Council agreed to approve a recommendation from the HR Committee to adopt a number of new Model Documents that came from work undertaken by NALC on the Civility & Respect Pledge (**134-2023/2024**). These documents include the Civility & Respect Model Councillor/Officer Protocol (see copy attached separately).

3.1 Councillors and officers are indispensable to one another. However, their responsibilities are distinct. Councillors are accountable to the public, whereas officers are accountable to the council as a whole. At the heart of the Protocol is the importance of mutual respect and also of civility. Councillor/officer relationships should be conducted in a positive and constructive way.

3.2 Since the last meeting of the HR Committee the Clerk has received reports from officers querying the correct protocol when a Councillor makes a direct request for work or resources from them. Their queries are largely for further clarity around what they should and should not be doing. Officers report they feel uncomfortable when a Councillor makes a direct request of them as they feel duty bound to agree to the action, even if it adversely affects their workload and priorities at the time. These requests have not been authorised by the Clerk prior to the Councillor going direct to the officer.

3.2 More concerningly recent requests have also now been made of staff via members of the public who, while members of a working group, are not Members of the Council. When staff have correctly refused these requests for Town Council resources they have been met with mild aggression from those responsible who have cited 'undertaking work on behalf of the Council' as a reason officers should comply. Again, this makes officers feel that they have no choice other than to action the request.

3.3 This report seeks to clarify certain matters that have recently been brought to the Clerk's attention, however, it is vital Members read and familiarise themselves with the full guidance.

3.4 The particular areas the Clerk has been made aware of that are becoming an issue for staff are the following, the lists below are not definitive and full guidance can be found in the *Civility & Respect Model Councillor/Officer Protocol*:

**Officers can expect from councillors:**

- **An understanding of, and support for, respective roles, workloads and pressures** – Increasingly officers are receiving last minute requests from Councillors to conduct certain actions e.g. prepare posters, print out photographs, gather other resources etc (mostly around the communication of events/organisation of events). While the requests are not unreasonable in themselves it is the timing of these requests that can have a negative impact on the officer's workload, creating stress and interrupting other work that officers have been tasked with in order to deliver the Council's services. **Suggestion:** If a Councillor requires resources or the help of an officer they complete a job request form (a template for which will be created), which will not only help officers understand the request more fully but also plan it in with other priorities. All requests, unless for an emergency, should be made with a minimum of 5 clear working days' notice. Councillors/the Clerk clarify the Council's position on non-Council members approaching officers to request actions/resources and agree that only official requests agreed in meetings be taken forward.
- **Respect, courtesy, integrity and appropriate confidentiality** – staff -related confidential matters discussed in HR Committee meetings, or during private session of any other Committee meeting, must not, under any circumstances, be shared with any person, whether Councillor or officer, who was not present at the meeting where the matter was discussed. To do so undermines the HR Committee's ability to support the Clerk in staffing matters, the Town Council's ability to efficiently manage its resources, and therefore how it delivers its services, as well as breaching the Councillors' Code of Conduct. It cannot be stressed enough how important this is. At no time is it appropriate or acceptable for a Councillor to speak either informally or formally to an officer about any staff-related discussion about that officer's conduct or capabilities outside of the agreed grievance and disciplinary procedure. If there is an issue then the matter should be raised formally through the Town Clerk, or the officer's line manager, who will seek to deal with the matter in the first instance and if matters cannot be resolved then the complaints and disciplinary procedure will be followed. Negative comments by Councillors to officers about other officer's conduct/ capabilities is also not appropriate. If Councillor's wish to share their views on officers' conduct or capability to undertake their role, this must only be discussed with the Clerk, who, should it be necessary, will raise with the HR Committee. If Councillor's wish to discuss the Clerk's conduct or ability to undertake their role then this should be taken formally to the Mayor and the Clerk's Management Committee. In addition, Councillors should not raise matters relating to the conduct or capability of an officer, or of officers collectively, in a manner that is incompatible with this Protocol at meetings held in public or on social media (e.g. questioning an officer's or team's capability or criticism an officer's actions during a Committee meeting or commenting on such through a social media post). In all instances matters should be raised in private through the appropriate channels. This is a long-standing tradition in public service. An officer has no means of responding to criticisms like this in public.

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3.6 Individual councillors should not actively seek to undermine majority decisions of the corporate body, as this could then bring them into conflict with officers who have been charged with promoting and implementing the council's collectively determined course of action.

**Financial implications**

4.0 None

**Policy Implications**

5.0 The Town Council's policies help ensure that as a corporate body it undertakes its duties and responsibilities efficiently and lawfully. Councillors and officers acting outside of those policies prevent the Council from acting appropriately and breach the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors and Employees.

## **Employee Code of Conduct**

The Town Council's Employee code of conduct sets out the standards of behaviour the Town Council expects from all employees. Rules in relation to the conduct of all employees are set out in this Code of Conduct and there are examples of what the Town Council considers to be gross misconduct which could result in summary termination of employment.

### **Employee behaviour**

The following general standards are required by all Town Council employees:

- employees should behave in a respectful, professional and polite manner and ensure their behaviour does not breach the Equality Act 2010
- employees should comply with all reasonable management instructions
- employees should cooperate fully with colleagues and management
- employees should uphold and further the Town Council's positive public image at all times
- satisfactory standards of performance should be maintained at all times
- the Town Council's policies and procedures should be adhered to at all times.
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### **Equality, diversity and inclusion**

An important core value of the Town Council is the promotion of inclusivity and diversity. It seeks to ensure that the workplace is supportive of its staff and one where individual respect is shown to all members of staff, regardless of age, (dis)ability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, ethnic background, culture, sexual orientation, religion or belief, sex or any other factor. All staff will be supported and encouraged to perform to their potential.

For further information, employees should refer to the Equal Opportunities policy.

### **Bullying and harassment**

The Town Council has zero tolerance to bullying and harassment.

Disciplinary action will be taken against inappropriate behaviour that shows lack of respect for others, or causes people to feel threatened.

For further information, employees should refer to the Dignity at Work policy.

### **Gross misconduct**

The following offences are examples of gross misconduct:

- unauthorised use of the Town Council's assets and equipment
- insubordination e.g. refusal to carry out duties or obey reasonable instructions, except where employee safety may reasonably be in jeopardy

- intentional sexual harassment, harassment, bullying
- serious breach of rules, policies or procedures, especially those designed to ensure safe operation
- divulging or misusing confidential information
- theft or unauthorised possession of any property or facilities of the Town Council or of any employee of the Town Council
- consumption of alcohol or drugs, or intoxication by reason of alcohol or drugs, which could affect work performance in any way or have an impact on other employees
- having illegal drugs in the possession, custody or control of the employee while at work or on the Town Council's premises
- defrauding or attempting to defraud the Town Council, its customers, suppliers or fellow employees
- unauthorised or inappropriate use of email, internet and/or computer systems
- falsification of any Town Council records including reports, accounts, expenses claims or self-certification forms
- serious damage to Town Council property
- violent, dangerous or intimidatory conduct
- bringing unauthorised person(s) onto Town Council premises
- conviction of any criminal offence which may render the employee unsuitable for the role
- serious abuse of timekeeping and attendance procedures
- failure to follow a Town Council standard operating procedure.

### **Conduct outside work**

As a general rule, what employees do after working hours and away from the premises is a personal matter. However, the Town Council will become involved in the following circumstances.

- At office parties, drinks events and other work-related social occasions.
- At third-party (that is, clients and customers) occasions where the employee has been invited in their capacity as an employee and representative of the Town Council.
- At work-related conferences and training courses.

Where the employee is away on business on behalf of the Town Council. The Town Council's policies will continue to apply at all these events. An employee should not bring the Town Council's name into disrepute. Improper behaviour will lead to investigation and possible disciplinary action, including dismissal and in cases of gross misconduct, a summary dismissal.

For further information, employers should refer to the Town Council's Grievance and Disciplinary procedures.

### **Relationships with other members of staff and clients and customers**

The Town Council does not concern itself with the private lives of its staff unless they affect its effective operation or its reputation.

Members of staff who are relatives or who have a close personal relationship should not normally have a supervisory, assessing or authorising relationship with each other.

Employees must inform their line manager if they have a close personal relationship with another employee or a client or customer which could be considered by colleagues or other, as impacting on the way they conduct themselves at work.

### **Criminal offences**

For the avoidance of doubt, an employee must inform their manager in writing if they are under investigation for a criminal act (including road traffic offences) or have been arrested in connection with a criminal action. They must also inform their manager in writing if they have been found guilty and convicted of any offence or received a police caution. Failure to disclose this information may be treated as a disciplinary offence.

Furthermore, if an employee commits a criminal offence outside employment, the Town Council will investigate the matter to ascertain whether there is any connection between the offence and the individual's employment. If there is an adverse finding in this respect, this could result in the employee's dismissal under the disciplinary procedure.

### **Attendance and timekeeping**

Employees will not be paid if any working time is lost due to lateness or unauthorised absence. Persistent lateness will be dealt with under the Town Council's disciplinary policy.

The following rules are required of employees:

- employees should be present and ready to start work in line with their contractual working hours. They must also remain in the workplace and continue to work until they have completed their contractual working hours
- employees should ensure they notify their line manager in accordance with the Town Council's absence procedure if they are going to be absent from work
- employees should liaise with their line manager if they wish to leave early or arrive late.

### **Communications**

Employees should have their personal mobile device either switched off, or in silent mode, during working hours. Discretion should be exercised when using a personal mobile device and any use must not cause a distraction from work for the employee themselves or their colleagues. Personal calls and text messages should not be made during working hours; they should only be made during your lunch or other breaks. Employees should obtain authorisation from their line manager if they need to make or receive an urgent personal phone call. In addition, it is forbidden to:



- give personal phone numbers or home phone numbers to customers or clients
- take pictures of colleagues, Town Council premises, customers or clients using personal mobile devices other than for work-related purposes. These images once stored on the Town Council's server should be deleted from the device.
- transfer files via Bluetooth or other insecure mobile networks.

Only certain job roles require the provision of a Town Council mobile phone. Where provided, they are for business use only.

Employees should ensure they keep the Town Council mobile phone in good working order. The mobile phone should remain charged and connected to the network (as far as coverage permits) during working hours so business calls can be received as necessary.

When visiting clients and customers, or on other sites, you may be required to turn off your Town Council mobile phone. Employees must observe any such requirements and ensure they comply with them.

The cost of line rental and normal business call usage will be covered by the Town Council.

### **Email and internet use**

The Town Council will not tolerate the use of email and internet for unofficial or inappropriate purposes, including:

- any messages that could constitute bullying, harassment or other detriment.
- accessing social networking sites such as Facebook using Town Council equipment or during work time, unless required to do so for your job role
- on-line gambling
- accessing or transmitting pornography
- accessing other offensive, obscene or otherwise unacceptable material
- transmitting copyright information and/or any software available to the user
- posting confidential information about other employees, the Town Council or its customers or suppliers.

Although our email facilities are provided for the purposes of our business, we accept that you may occasionally want to use them for your own personal purposes.

Employees are not permitted to send personal emails during work time unless in the case of an urgent matter when you should seek the approval of your line manager before sending the email. Employees' work email addresses should not be used to send personal emails.

Employees may access their personal email accounts during break times. This is permitted on condition that all the procedures and rules set out in this policy, and the Town Council's code of conduct, are complied with.

Employees are not permitted to use the internet during work time for personal reasons unless in the case of an urgent matter when you should seek the approval of your line manager before use.

Employees may use the internet during break times. This is permitted on condition that all the procedures and rules set out in the Town Council's Code of Conduct are complied with.

## **Social media**

For details, please refer to the Town Council's Social Media Policy.

## **Representing the Town Council**

The Town Council recognises the importance of work life balance. Whilst we do not intend to restrict outside activities, it is important to remember that activities whether during or outside of working hours which result in adverse publicity to the Town Council, or which cause us to lose faith in your integrity, may give us grounds for your dismissal.

When attending any work-related social function an appropriate standard of conduct is expected from all employees. This includes but is not limited to any Christmas lunch, nights out, dinners or other social events with suppliers, customers, etc.

Work-related social functions can be a great opportunity to celebrate and get to know your colleagues better. However, it is important to remember that our policies on anti-harassment and bullying, personal harassment, disciplinary and equal opportunities apply fully at these events.

## **Fraternisation**

Whilst you are encouraged to be friendly towards our clients/customers it is important that employees do not cross the professional boundaries. Employees should maintain professionalism at all times and under no circumstances should become overfamiliar or fraternise with clients/customers in a way that may be seen to disrupt the operations or reputation of the business.

Employees who are found to have acted unprofessionally or inappropriately may be liable for disciplinary action in line with Town Council procedures.

## **Alcohol and drugs**

Use of drugs and alcohol during working hours is not permitted. If an employee is suspected of use during working hours, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action under the Town Council's disciplinary policy.

Employees must not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol during working hours and must not support or influence others to use alcohol or drugs. Employees suspected of using or dealing drugs in the workplace will be reported to the police.

## **Health and safety**

Any accidents, however minor they may appear, should be recorded in the Town Council's accident book as soon as possible.

Employees are responsible for ensuring they are familiar with the Town Council's health and safety policies and procedures, including the consequences of breaching these.

If employees are attending the premises of a third party or service user, they are required to familiarise themselves with the applicable policies and procedures.

Employees should ensure they handle any hazardous materials with care.

Breaching any rules surrounding health and safety may lead to disciplinary action. A breach may be considered gross misconduct which can result in summary termination of employment.

## **Smoking**

In accordance with the Health Act 2006, the Town Council does not permit smoking in the workplace, either on Town Council premises or in Town Council vehicles. The Town Council promotes a working environment which is smoke-free, pleasant and healthy. This prohibition extends to the use of e-cigarettes or similar devices.

## **Bribery**

Bribery is, in the conduct of the Town Council's business, the offering or accepting of any gift, loan, payment, reward or advantage for personal gain as an encouragement to do something which is dishonest, illegal or a breach of trust. Bribery is a criminal offence. No gift should be given nor hospitality offered by employees to any party in connection with the Town Council's business without receiving prior written approval from the employee's line manager.

Employees will face disciplinary action if it is discovered that they have accepted, offered or given any bribe, which could include dismissal for gross misconduct. Accepting a bribe also carries separate criminal liabilities for the employee personally and for the Town Council.

The Town Council's anti-bribery policy contains more information on this area.

## **Flexibility**

The Town Council may request, from time to time, that employees work extra hours at short notice, subject to the needs of the business.

Employees may also be requested to perform work which is additional to their usual duties and/or to carry out their role at a workplace other than their usual location of work.

These requests will be made to employees as the need arises through the employee's line manager.

## **Confidentiality**

All information gained during the course of your employment is considered confidential, for the duration of your employment and post-employment. Employees are expected to keep this information confidential, unless required by law not to do so.

## **Clothing**

As employees are liable to come into contact with customers and members of the public, it is important that you present a professional image with regard to appearance and standards of dress. Where uniforms are provided, these must be worn at all times whilst at work and laundered on a regular basis. Where uniforms are not provided, you should wear clothes appropriate to your job responsibilities, and they should be kept clean and tidy at all times.

Upon termination of your employment, you will be required to return any uniform which has been provided to you. Failure to return such items will result in the Town Council making a deduction for the cost of the uniform from your wages/salary. This is an express written term of your employment.

## **Property and equipment**

Employees who cause any damage to Town Council property through misuse, recklessness or carelessness may be required to repay to the Town Council the cost of repair or replacement. The Town Council reserves the right to recover this cost by way of a deduction from your next salary payment.

When an employee's employment is terminated, employees should return all Town Council property, including IT equipment, stationery, Town Council mobile phone or tablet, and any other items belonging to the Town Council.

## **Searches**

The Town Council may require searches to be conducted of employees, by authorised persons. The Town Council may reasonably request to search employee's person, clothing, bags, lockers or vehicles.

The Town Council's authorised person will conduct the search, with an independent witness also in attendance. If an employee refuses to permit such a search, the appropriate authorities may be contacted to carry out the search for the Town Council.

Failure to permit to a search may lead to disciplinary action. A refusal may be considered gross misconduct which can result in summary termination of employment.

## **Personal property**

The Town Council is not responsible for the loss, theft or damage to any personal property brought by employees on to Town Council premises or stored in Town Council vehicles. Employees are responsible for the security and safety of their

personal possessions at all times. Employees should keep these items safe in their lockable desk drawers/lockers.

Lost property should be handed to an employee's line manager if found.

### **Environment**

The Town Council aims to keep use of consumables to a minimum by promoting the effective and efficient usage of equipment, facilities, supplies and services.

Employees should make every effort to reduce wastage, turn off excessive lights or heating/cooling equipment, use water resources appropriately and switch off any electronic equipment which is not in use.

### **Handling money**

Employees that have been authorised to handle monetary transactions on behalf of the Town Council are responsible for those transactions they carry out.

If the Town Council suffers any loss due to a monetary transaction where the loss is caused by the carelessness or negligence of an employee, there will be a deduction from pay from that employee's next salary payment to cover the loss suffered.

### **Breaches**

Breaches of the Town Council's Employee code of conduct are likely to be regarded as an act of misconduct to be addressed under the Town Council's disciplinary procedure. Some of the above sections indicate the level of offence that could occur if breaches are found.