

LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE
RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 29 APRIL 2021 VIA VIRTUAL MEANS**

PRESENT: Councillors Bannister, Eakin, Knight and Vesma (Chair)

ALSO PRESENT: Angela Price – Town Clerk

R117. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Harvey.

R118. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

**R119. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES
OF A MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 7
MARCH 2021**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Resources Committee held on 7 March 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

R120. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, in the public interest the press and public were excluded from the remainder of the meeting.

R121. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED:

To note that the next meeting of the Resources Committee is scheduled for 2 September 2021, subject to approval at the Annual Meeting of Council on 24 June 2021.

R122. RECRUITMENT

Members were provided with an update on the progress in respect of recruitment of three roles, Deputy Town Clerk, Community Development Officer and Accounts/Burial Clerk.

The Clerk advised that as a result of the recent recruitment process it had not been possible to recruit to any of the three roles listed above

and asked that members of the Resources Committee review the job descriptions/personal specifications for each role prior to a further advertisement being submitted.

Councillor Vesma advised that they had three choices:

- To advertise again with the job descriptions/person specifications unchanged
- Wait for the market to improve
- To advertise on an adjusted basis

It was noted that a current employee had applied for the position of Community Development Officer and Councillor Vesma asked members of the Committee their thoughts on offering the current employee the position on a temporary-permanent basis and then back fill their current position on the same basis. Other Members were in agreement with the suggestion, and it was agreed that the internal candidate had experience of Ledbury, the Council and working in Local Government, however it was agreed that the employee should be invited to an informal interview process at which they should be asked to provide a presentation on "How do they think the role of the Community Development Officer will benefit the Town".

It was agreed that if after the trial period the internal candidate was not taken on in the role of Community Development Officer a temp-perm process for the two roles would provide for them to return to their current role.

Members also agreed that should the internal candidate be successful in securing the position following their presentation and informal interview they should start on SCP 14.

It was agreed that the remaining two roles should be readvertised and that a date for the interviews should be established and included in the advert.

RESOLVED:

1. That the internal candidate be invited to an informal interview, and that they be asked to give a presentation on "How do they think the role of the Community Development Officer will benefit the Town"
2. That subject to the outcome of the informal interview process, the internal candidate be offered the position of Community Development Officer on a temp-perm basis and that their current post be filled on the same basis and that the review time be agreed following the informal interview process and prior to advertising the internal candidate's current role.

3. That if successful the internal candidate be started on SCP 14.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm

Signed Dated

DRAFT

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

1. To receive information in respect of sickness absence figures in respect of all council staff
2. To receive information on the training and development of all council staff and councillors
3. To monitor the implementation of the Council's appraisals scheme, enabling all staff to be appraised on an annual basis
4. To ensure that all staff contracts are compliant with legislation
- 5.. To make decisions on the Training and Development budget process for staff and Councillors
6. To receive and consider applications for vacant posts within the Town Council, in respect of Senior post i.e. Clerk & Deputy Clerk and to interview successful shortlisted candidates
7. To appoint Appeals Panels as required noting members' independence to any given situation
8. To be responsible for monitoring Health and Safety through a standing agenda item, keep under review staff working conditions and ensure that all policies/procedures are being implemented
9. To be responsible for the handling of complaints and grievances

BY WAY OF RECOMMENDATION TO FULL COUNCIL OR THE FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

1. To review and make recommendations concerning amendments to or introduction of new policies and procedures in accordance with legislation and agreed legislations
2. To make recommendation on requests for vocational training.
3. To give consideration and make recommendations on general staffing and establishment issues, staff structures, working patterns and associated budget implications
4. To contribute to the formulation and implementation of the corporate plan, making appropriate recommendations
5. To consider and make recommendations on requests for job evaluations
6. To make recommendation on the appointment of all Senior Council staff

7. To feed into the annual budget setting cycle
8. To make recommendations on the Training and Development budget process for staff and Councillors

LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES COMMITTEE	5 NOVEMBER 2020	AGENDA ITEM: 5
---------------------	-----------------	----------------

Report prepared by Angie Price – Town Clerk

TOWN CLERK TIME OFF IN LIEU (TOIL) ACCRUED

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the Resources Committee of TOIL accrued by the Town Clerk due to attending meetings, conferences, events, and workload pressures for the period August 2020 – August 2021.

Detailed Information

The Town Clerk's contract states that any hours worked in addition to the normal 37 hour working week will be managed as follows:-

Hours worked Monday – Friday in addition to normal working hours will be reimbursed as Time off in Lieu (TOIL). Hours worked on Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays will be reimbursed as overtime at basic rate.

However, due to the number of additional hours the Clerk has had to work due to staff shortages and the amount of work, it was agreed with the former Mayor (Line manager) that any additional hours worked could be paid as overtime at basic rate. The reason for this was to ensue that the Clerk did not accrue an excessive amount of TOIL that she would be unlikely to reduce. It was also agreed that the Clerk would attempt to reduce the outstanding TOIL balance.

Unfortunately, the Clerk's TOIL has remained unchanged, except for a reduction of 4 hours which have been taken since the last report was provided to Council in November 2020. The lack of staff and workload has made it difficult to take time off in respect of TOIL and annual leave and as a result the Clerk did not have the opportunity to use all of her leave in 2020/21. However, it is hoped that now that new staff have been recruited to fill the vacant posts there will be an opportunity for this to be reduced further.

Currently the Clerk's TOIL balance is as shown below:

Carried forward	95.75
Aug-Oct 2020 outstanding total	<u>4.25</u>
Overall total TOIL hours accrued	<u>100.00 (as at 29.10.2020)</u>
TOIL Taken (Nov 2020-Aug 2021)	<u>4.00</u>
TOIL outstanding as at 27.08.2021	<u>96.00</u>

Recommendation

That Members receive and note the above information, noting that the Clerk's outstanding TOIL total as at 27 August 2021 is 96 hours owed.

RESOURCES COMMITTEE	2 SEPTEMBER 2021	AGENDA ITEM: 6
----------------------------	-------------------------	-----------------------

Report prepared by Angela Price – Town Clerk

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Resources Committee with an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the Council, Councillors and Clerk within a town council.

Detailed Information

Following the recent co-option of new councillors and the recruitment of a number of new employees, the Clerk felt now would be a good opportunity to provide an overview on the how the different roles and responsibilities of the Council, Councillors and Clerk and employees are managed within a town council.

The following information has been taken from the Society of Local Clerks (SLCC) Working With Your Council (WWYC) training manual.

1. The Council

- The Council is an “it”. In law, a council is a single corporate body and the decisions it takes are the responsibility of the Council as a whole.
- The Council is responsible for the services it provides. It establishes policies for action and decides how money will be raised and spent on behalf of the community. It is responsible for spending public money lawfully and without risk, and for achieving the best value for money
- The council represents and serves the whole community. Most communities are made up of many smaller communities, often with different interests; a council’s duty is to serve them all. The council balances the needs of different elements of the community to get the best result. Frequently it has the difficult task of deciding what the best result might be
- Parish Councils are local authorities first created by the Local Government Act 1972 (LGA).
- Parliament has given parish councils the power to raise and spend money – a power shared by other local authorities.
- The Community Council is the tier of local government closest to the people.
- Each parish council is made up of individual councillors who contribute to the work of the whole council by:
 - Suggesting ideas
 - Engaging in constructive debate
 - Responding to the needs and views of the community
 - Representing their constituents
 - Behaving in an ethical way and being open about interests
 - Commenting on proposals to ensure the best outcome

- Voting – to enable the council to make decisions.
- No individual councillor (including the chairman) can make a decision on behalf of the Council.
- The chairman, assisted by the clerk, guides these activities by managing the meetings of the council
- The council as a body decides whether to work in partnership with other organisations and can agree to serve on other bodies. A parish council often appoints councillors to represent it on the partnership, but they may not make decisions on behalf of the council.

2. The Chairman/Mayor

- The chairman is in a position of authority in presiding at meetings of a parish council. With advice from the clerk, the chairman is responsible for ensuring that effective and lawful decisions are taken at meeting of the council. In law the parish council must elect a chairman (LGA 1972 Section 33).
- The chairman should be consulted on the content of the agenda but, as the “proper officer” and legal signatory the clerk has the final say on the content of the agenda.
- The chairman works in partnership with the clerk to make sure that the council is properly informed for making lawful decisions during meetings.
- The chairman is responsible for involving all councillors in discussion and ensuring that councillors keep to the point. The chairman summarises the debate and facilitates the resolving of clear decisions.
- It is the chairman’s responsibility to keep discussions moving so that the meeting is not too long. It is unfair and ineffective to ask people to concentrate for long periods.
- The person presiding at a meeting of a parish council has a personal vote as councillor and, where there is a tied vote, the option of exercising a second, or casting vote as chairman. If there is a tied vote in the election of a chairman, the person presiding **must** use the casting vote.
- The chairman is often the public face of the council. The council may approve a chairman’s allowance – a useful sum of money in the budget to enable the chairman to represent the council in a civic capacity. It allows the purchase, for example, of a bouquet of flowers for a councillor who is ill, raffle tickets at the school and modest hospitality. The chairman must keep an accurate record of what is spent under this allowance.
- The chairman often speaks on behalf of the council but must remember to express the corporate views of the council and not personal views. If in doubt, the chairman refers to points agreed in the minutes. The clerk should be able to give the chairman guidance on the council’s corporate view.
- By law the chairman cannot make a formal decision on behalf of the council and the clerk must not act on any such decision. Moreover, it is unlawful to confirm such a decision at a subsequent meeting of the Council.
- It is the duty of the chairman to be satisfied (with the guidance of the clerk) that, in taking decisions, the legal principles of reasonableness are observed.

3. The Clerk

- The clerk should be employed by the council to provide administrative support and professional advice for the Council's activities. It is important that councillors, partner organisations and the local community appreciate that a clerk is a professional officer.
- The clerk is not answerable to any individual councillor – not even the chairman. The clerk is an independent and objective officer of the council as a whole, recognising that the council is responsible for all decisions and taking instructions from the council as a body.
- The clerk must be objective in responding to the interaction between councillors. It is not professional to favour one councillor or group of councillors over another.
- Where an officer is referred to in statute as the “proper officer” for a particular purpose the clerk is normally appointed by council to be the “proper officer”. The office responsible for the financial administration (under s151 of the LGA 1972) is known as the “responsible financial officer” (RFO). A parish council **must** appoint one or more “proper officers” and a “responsible financial officer”. The RFO is often, but not always, also the clerk.
- A clerk's workload can include a range of activities, outlined in a clear and meaningful job description. Similarly the duties and responsibilities of the RFO should be defined in writing (even if this officer is also the clerk).
- As an independent and objective professional, the clerk advises the council on whether proposed decisions are lawful and ways in which decisions can be implemented.
- The clerk can be asked to research issues for the council and provide unbiased information to help the council make choices.
- It is good practice for a council to delegate to the clerk the power to make decisions on its behalf – especially in an urgent situation. The clerk is encouraged to consult the chairman (or other members) prior to a delegated decision but the clerk is responsible in law and does not have to comply with the advice offered by councillors. Many councils indicate in standing orders the powers that are delegated to the clerk.
- The clerk keeps up to date with all developments affecting the work of the council and should therefore be alert to training needs and opportunities.
- The clerk is often a manager whose responsibilities might include for example, managing projects, sites, facilities, teams, staff, and money. If work includes management activity, the clerk should consider further training in management skills including:
 - Time management
 - Human resources management
 - People management
 - Project management
 - The management of records
 - Negotiating
 - Marketing and public relations
 - Information technology
 - Assertiveness

- It is useful to view the work of the clerk over twelve months to make sure that key dates (such as the deadline for submitting the precept demand to the billing authority) aren't missed.

4. Employee and Employer

- The clerk and other staff are employed by the council as a body and not by each individual councillor. Councillors should not intervene in the management of other staff who are the clerk's responsibility.
- The responsibilities of each member of staff should be clearly laid out in a job description attached to a proper contract of employment. A clerk's job description states that the clerk is responsible to the council; job descriptions for other posts make it clear to whom the postholder is responsible.
- The contract indicates that conditions of service have been agreed.
- The clerk is normally responsible for advising the council on staffing provision and for managing the recruitment process.
- The council should have a formal grievance procedure in place.
- Staff have a right to expect that the council discusses matters related to employment in private session. The council should always resolve to exclude the press and public for agenda items about staff.
- It is good practice for each member of staff and their line manager to participate in an annual appraisal process.

Recommendation

That Members of the Resources Committee receive and note the above information.

RESOURCES COMMITTEE	2 SEPTEMBER 2021	AGENDA ITEM: 7
----------------------------	-------------------------	-----------------------

Report prepared by Angela Price – Town Clerk

TOWN COUNCIL OFFICE CLEANING CONTRACT

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to request Members of the Resources Committee to provide the clerk with authorisation to carry out a review of the council's cleaning requirements in respect of the council offices.

Detailed Information

The Council's current cleaning contract requires the downstairs offices and areas to be cleaned and does not incorporate the upstairs offices that are now in use and whilst the cleaner is very accommodating and happy to undertake tasks to clean these offices, it is often at the detriment of other areas which are stated in the agreement.

Recently the cleaning company have advised that due to the rising cost of cleaning products and fuel they have had to increase their staff wages and as a result need to increase the hourly rate charged to their customers.

The current cleaning contract has been in place for a number of years, and it would seem sensible to undertake a review of the needs of the council in respect of office cleaning to take into account the additional spaces being used and the additional requirements due to the pandemic.

Recommendation

That Members of the Resources Committee instruct the clerk to undertake a review of the requirements of the council in respect of office cleaning and obtain at least three quotes to be submitted to this council for consideration, prior to a recommendation being made to a meeting of Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee.

RESOURCES COMMITTEE	2 SEPTEMBER 2021	AGENDA ITEM: 8
----------------------------	-------------------------	-----------------------

Report prepared by Angela Price – Town Clerk

TELEPHONE CONTRACT REVIEW AND UPGRADE

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the Resources Committee with information on the outcome of a recent telephone contract review.

Detailed Information

Following the recent recruitment process it was identified that one new desk top telephone was required with cabling for a second.

The clerk contacted Onecom, the council's current desk top telephone provider to advise them of the requirements. Onecom recently took over Glamorgan Telecom who Ledbury Town Council had originally set up the contract with. In response Onecom provided a review of the current contract, offering an amendment to the current contract which would result in a monthly payment reduction of £70 for the remainder of the contract.

Within the amended contract Onecom are offering the following:

Replace all existing phones within Ledbury Town Council (LTC) with one new additional

All users to have mobile apps made available to them to work remotely (this would allow staff to transfer between LTC and the user and vice-versa. This can also be done on a softphone app connected to a laptop or tablet.

All calls to UK 01, 02, 03 & 07 numbers would now be included

All maintenance charges

All training

All installation charges

All current contracts and lease agreement settled by Onecom

The length of the contract would be for 36 months, extending beyond the original date of the contract of 29 June 2024 to August 2024.

The reduction would be from £300 per month to £230.00 per month, a saving of £840.00 per year.

Following receipt of the proposal the Clerk met with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to discuss the proposal; both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor agreed that the outcome of the contract reviewed made sense and agreed that the clerk should enter into the contract as detailed above.

Recommendation

That Members of the Resources Committee instruct the clerk to undertake a review of the requirements of the council in respect of office cleaning and obtain at least three quotes to be submitted to this council for consideration, prior to a recommendation being made to a meeting of Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee.