

**Minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 23rd July 2025
at 4:00pm in the Council Chamber, Diamond Jubilee Lodge, Hellesdon**

Present: Cllr David Maidstone – Chair of the Committee
Cllr David Britcher
Cllr Shelagh Gurney
Cllr Bill Johnson
Cllr Andrew Lock

The Chairman welcomed Councillors and opened the meeting at 4pm.

1. Apologies and acceptance for absence

Cllr Greg Britton and Cllr Roy Forder tendered apologies for this meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no Declarations of Interest or Requests for dispensations received.

3. To Approve the Staffing Committee Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st May 2025 and record abandoned inquorate meeting called for 2nd July 2025

Draft minutes of the meeting held on 21st May 2025 had been circulated previously. The minutes were AGREED as a true record of the meeting and duly signed by the Chairman. It was duly noted that the meeting called for 2nd July 2025 was inquorate.

4. Public Participation

(Public participation shall be in accordance with Standing Orders and shall not exceed 15 minutes unless such time is extended by the Chairman).

There were no public present.

5. To consider a resolution under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude the press and public exclude the press and public for the duration of items 6 to 13 in view of the confidential and personal nature of the business to be transacted.

This was AGREED

The meeting was closed to the Press and Public.

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6. Update on Legal Proceedings

It was noted that at the Full Council meeting on 8th July 2025, a sub-committee was duly appointed to see matters through to a swift conclusion. The sub-committee by majority vote, took the recommendation from the legal adviser to the third party and have reached agreement. The matter is dully regarded as RESOLVED. Full details shall be retained in a confidential report.

7. Update on Grievance and Investigation

This matter is still in progress, with interviews conducted and a report imminently expected. It was generally AGREED that it would be sensible to review internal procedures on receipt of any recommendations contained in the forthcoming report, including informal and formal procedures.

It was further noted that it was AGREED by Full Council to reinstate four panels for Grievance, Disciplinary, Appeals and Complaints, each with three councillors. The clerk had been tasked to review policies and reinstate these panels. The appointments and details such as the terms of reference would need to be in draft for the Council to consider on 9th September.

8. Update on Probations (2) – report from Locum Clerk – personal development/training courses

The Locum Clerk reported that he had carried out satisfactory probationary reviews in respect of the two staff concerned and recommended that both are taken on as permanent/substantive staff. It was explained that the current situation had dictated the timing of the reviews, one was slightly earlier than normal and one was considerably later. It was AGREED by the committee to accept the recommendation for both members of staff. The clerk would amend/update their contracts of employment and reissue accordingly.

There was a brief discussion regarding annual appraisals and personal development plans, the two are usually linked. It was AGREED if time allows for the Locum Clerk to review the annual appraisal process, to include personal development plans for all staff. The review would also look at who is carrying out the appraisal, whether this is just the clerk, or more appropriate for the line manager and AGREED that the clerk should be appraised first, prior to any other staff, with a panel of no more than three councillors to carry out this task. Appropriate attention/reference would be made to either Key Performance Indicators (KPI) or Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART) objectives, both designed to achieve desired outcomes.

After further discussion the policy on probationary reviews was AGREED to be amended to read that probationary periods of six months are only required for the senior positions of Parish Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Facilities Manager and Café Manager. All other staff would have a three month probationary period.

The Locum Clerk outlined all of the training courses that he had discussed with the incoming clerk, the deputy clerk and admin assistant. It was AGREED that the training courses could be booked and where necessary, the new clawback clause would apply from the redrafted Training & Development Policy.

9. Update on appointment of Parish Clerk – start date – office visit – and confirm training courses

The Locum Clerk reported of a recent constructive ‘teams meeting’ with Martin Ferguson the newly appointed parish clerk. Forthcoming training courses/events were discussed (AGREED

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above), as was preparation for the new clerk starting on 10th September 2025 and this includes a substantial handover file, which is in progress.

Arrangements had been made for a visit to the Parish Office on Wednesday 30th July at 11am, just to briefly meet with the staff and have a walk around the Councils facilities.

There was a brief discussion regarding the issue of a new laptop for the parish clerk, as this could also serve the purpose of having the locum clerk retaining the existing laptop for the crossover period. It was thought that the Facilities Manager could then take this over when the locum support ceases. It was AGREED to purchase a new laptop for the incoming parish clerk.

10. Update from Locum Clerk interim issues – temporary contracts for admin staff (3)

The Locum Clerk identified a build up of time off in lieu (TOIL) due to the Deputy Clerk of in excess of 80 hours. There followed a brief discussion where various options were put forward as possible solutions. In view of the current circumstances, it was AGREED to pay the Deputy Clerk to clear the build up of time off in lieu; this was coupled with a tightening of council policy in respect of time off in lieu – to the extent of not building up more than three working days (or 24 hours).

Further clarification of how the above mentioned policy would be managed within the temporary contracts for the three admin staff, if the TOIL got to the maximum of 24 hours, then either the time should be taken within a 14 day period and/or further hours would be paid. The temporary contracts would be drafted for immediate use and to cease on 31st October. There would be a combination of relaxing the current contractual arrangement on TOIL, i.e. to allow payment within reason, and to allow the Locum Clerk to sanction additional hours to be worked to cover some of the workload build up issues and management of annual leave due in this same timeframe.

AT THIS POINT THE MEETING HAD REACHED THE TWO HOUR LIMIT.

The Chair proposed an extension to 7pm to complete the final items on the agenda, AGREED.

Cllr David Britcher had to leave the meeting at this point.

11. Update on capability issue

The Chairman outlined this issue and stated that he had spoken at length with the Facilities Manager. Clearly there was a need to look carefully at the job description and assess whether all tasks are appropriate and one-size fits all for all staff. In regard to the 'capability issue' this is being managed by the Facilities Manager and is currently under control. All details are kept on file and will continue to be closely monitored. There was no recommendation to escalate at this stage.

12. Record resignation of Caretaker – discuss and agree recruitment process for the vacancy

A discussion that followed evolved into looking at the structure and responsibilities of the outside staff and caretakers. It was AGREED to set up a Working Group of three Councillors as follows: Cllr Shelagh Gurney, Cllr Bill Johnson and Cllr Andrew Lock; who would meet with the Facilities Manager at 9.30am on 31st July.

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The purpose of the meeting was to look at whether previous applicants were suitable for the current vacancy. To discuss whether the vacancy would be part-time or full time and to look at how the combined roles of Groundsman/Caretaker is working, whether this is suitable or not and if it should be returned to separating the roles of outside and inside, as previously. The issue of temporarily using agency staff in this regard was also briefly discussed, as occasionally this can also lead to the right person being in post.

The Group would then report back to the Committee in due course.

13. Receive and consider model Training Statement & Development Policy (NPTS)

This matter was briefly taken to Full Council, but some amendments were necessary in respect to clawback from councillors. It was AGREED for the Locum Clerk to amend accordingly and bring the amended draft back to the committee or to full council.

14. To confirm the date, time and venue of next meeting

It was AGREED to meet on Wednesday 20th August 2025 at 3pm.

Meeting closed at 6.55pm

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