



Goostrey Parish Council

STAFF WORKING GROUP MEETING

MEETING on TUESDAY 7th SEPTEMBER 2021, at 7.00pm Via Video Conferencing

Via Video Conferencing

Present: Cllrs Morris (KM)(Chairman), Rathbone (TR)(Vice-Chairman) and Ross (CR)

In Attendance: S Jones, Clerk to the Council

MEETING NOTES

1. **Declarations of Interest** – None declared.
2. **Apologies for Absence** – Apologies were received from Cllr Lord.
3. **To approve the confidential notes from the meeting on 11th May 2021**
Decision: The confidential notes from the meeting on 11th May 2021 were approved.

PART TWO

MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE ASKED TO RETIRE.

In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as extended by the Local Government Act of 1972, the press and public are excluded from the meeting for the discussion of the undermentioned items on the grounds that the publication of the matters would be prejudicial to public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Items for discussion:

4. **Staff Matters**

The Clerk resigned on 23rd August 2021 giving notice that she intends to leave the position at the end of February 2022.

The Staff Committee needs to make a recommendation to the Council regarding the actions to be taken to replace the Clerk. Which will include

- i) Procedure for recruiting and new Clerk/RFO – see draft document on **page 3** which outlines standard practice for recruitment of a Clerk.
Decision: KM, TR, and another councillor to be nominated to interview the candidates, no decision was made on a selection panel. KM announced he would create the Job Description, Person Specification, Contract of Employment, and the Job Advert from the model documents, in time for them to be considered at the Parish Council meeting on 28th September 2021. **Action:** Clerk to obtain the model documents from ChALC.

- ii) Plan for recruitment – **Action:** Clerk to update the plan of with new dates. See updated plan on **page 5**.
 - iii) Communication of the Clerk’s resignation to other employees –Clerk advised that it was standard practice to put the resignation of the Clerk as an item on the agenda of the next Parish Council meeting (28th September 2021) and that she would notify the staff prior to the notice being made public.
Decision: The Staff Committee requested the Clerk add an announcement of resignation to website on Friday 10th September 2021 to prevent “leakage”, subject to approval of all councillors. To notify the staff the Clerk will be accompanied by Chairman to meet with staff at 2.20pm on 9th September 2021 to inform them of her resignation. The Chairman to be present to reassure staff of continuity.
 - iv) **ChALC** – to consider if the Council wishes to take advantage of the Services Provided – Clerk to Advise. **Decision:** KM to seek advice from ChALC after producing the draft documents.
 - v) Clerk to outline any support that she can provide during the recruitment and handover process. **See page 5**. The amount of support post-handover would depend on the skills and experience of the new Clerk.
5. **Date of Next Meeting** – Date of next meeting to be advised.
6. **Close Meeting** – Meeting closed at 19:45

i). Procedure for recruiting a new Clerk/RFO

Council should appoint a Selection Panel of 4 councillors who should work with the outgoing Clerk to

1. Carry out a review of the role. To include;
 - a. Determine whether the job is the same as when the incumbent was recruited,
 - b. do we need someone with the same knowledge, skills, and experience as last time?
 - c. Are the terms and conditions still suitable?
 - d. Review whether the hours are set at the right level to get the job done?
2. Review and amend as necessary the:
 - a. current job description and contract (decision to use model documents)
 - b. person specification. (Ask ChALC for advice)
3. Only when the above is complete should an advertisement be created. (Annex A)
4. An interview panel of not less than 3 councillors should be agreed, this should include the Chairman of the Council and the Chairman of the Finance committee. All interview panel members should be appropriately trained in recruitment legislation.
5. All applications should be returned to the Chairman, once received they should be distributed to all members of the selection panel
6. Each member of the selection panel will be asked to short list applications judging their suitability against the Person Specification
7. A shortlist of candidates should be agreed, and those candidates invited to attend an interview. The Clerk will be responsible for organising a venue, time slots and communication with the shortlisted candidates
8. An agreed set of competency-based interview questions should be agreed based on the Person Specification – Ask ChALC for advice.
9. Each Member of the panel should keep clear notes and score each candidate on the provided score sheet.– use a version of the form used for the VH Supervisor Role
10. Based on the interview scores each member of the panel should nominate their preferred candidate. The successful candidate is the one with 2 of the panels vote. (It is suggested that if there are two or more candidates with close scores 2nd interviews should be held. If there are no preferred candidates, the process needs to re-start).
11. The Council Chairman should without delay offer the post to the successful candidate. Once verbally accepted the unsuccessful candidates should be notified and provided with feedback on their interviews. The appointment must be approved by the council at a council meeting and if necessary, an extraordinary meeting may need to be called.
12. The Chairman should write to the successful candidate within 3 days of the panel confirming the offer of the role including the essential terms of the offer, salary, hours, holiday, etc
13. Once the candidate has accepted the role a start date can be agreed.

14. The Parish Council must provide an Employment Contract within 8 weeks of the start date.

NALC/SLCC have produced some template documents for the Clerk and RFO, which you may wish to use.

ANNEX A: ChALC can also offer advice on creating the job advert.

ADVERTISING THE ROLE Advertisements should be worded so as to give sufficient concrete information to potential applicants about the council and the job to enable them to decide whether they have the right background for the job. An advertisement should:

- give a clear and accurate description of the job and its level of seniority, where applicable • describe the type of person the council is seeking to recruit in specific terms e.g., obtained, or willing to work towards the Certificate in Local Council Administration
- neither overstate, nor understate the level of the job
- be pitched at the right level
- include any features of employment that are likely to be attractive to potential applicants, for example if the council operates flexible working or offers regular opportunities for career and personal development
- briefly describe the council's activities
- if possible, provide an indication of the salary, rather than meaningless and pointless expressions, such as "NJC Scale Point X", "excellent pay and conditions" or "generous benefits package"
- state clearly how potential candidates should apply (CV and Covering letter) and by when, all applications should be returned to the Chairman.
- If possible, interview dates should be included
- Advertisements should be placed on the following;
 - o ChALC and Parish Council web site
 - o All Parish Council Notice Boards
 - o The Villages Mag, Love Goostrey, Parish Magazine and Parish Council Newsletter

Example of an information pack for a parish clerk

[https://www.capalc.org.uk/ UserFiles/Files/Little%20Downham%20Recruitment%20Pack.pdf](https://www.capalc.org.uk/UserFiles/Files/Little%20Downham%20Recruitment%20Pack.pdf)

ii) Plan for recruitment of a new Clerk/RFO

The dates are approximate and there are dependencies which need to be investigated further:

The most significant date is that a Clerk needs to be in place by 1st February 2022 in order to allow at one month handover.

Dates for:

1. Reassessing the Job and agreeing a job description/grade/salary at the PC meeting on 28th September 2021
2. Create Job advert by 28th September 2021
3. Advertising Role from 1st October 2021 (after PC approval of 1 & 2)
4. Interviewing: from 1st November 2021
5. Job Offer By 15th December 2021 (appointment must be approved by the PC prior to formal offer being made) *
6. New Clerk start date: In January but, no later than 1st February 2022

* If a suitable candidate is found earlier an extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council can be called by the Chairman to approve the appointment of the new Clerk

v). **Support from Clerk during transition and going forward.**

By giving 6 months' notice I have tried to allow the council time to recruit a suitable replacement and provide handover, as did the previous Clerk. However, I am open to providing some further assistance if required. Some examples are listed below:

- Continue as RFO to complete year end and if necessary, process the paperwork and liaise with external auditor (hours to be agreed to complete the tasks required).
- Continue on a contract basis to update and add to the website. The new Clerk may be comfortable to add documents and news items but if not, these tasks could be carried out along with the creation of additional pages when required. Dependent of skill of new Clerk.
- If the successful candidate is very inexperienced, I may consider continuing as Assistant or Deputy Clerk in a reduced hours capacity and limited duties for an agreed period to enable the new Clerk to take formal training to come up to speed.