

## Didcot Town Council

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### **Personnel and Administration Committee** Monday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at 7.30pm Ladygrove Room, Didcot Civic Hall



### **Draft Minutes**

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a true and correct record by the next meeting of this committee.

#### **Councillors**

D Macdonald (Chair)  
E Hards (Vice Chair)  
A Dearlove  
V Haval  
P Davies

#### **Officers:**

Mrs J Wheeler (Town Clerk)

#### **Present:**

One member of the public.

#### **Public participation**

Di Chesterman has been involved with the organisation of the Town Fayre for a couple of years. She said that this year there seemed to be a lot of questions as to how the Town Fayre would operate and who was responsible. This lack of clarity had lead to some of the key organisers stepping away and this in turn meant that everything was very late for this year. She spoke of a group called the Didcot Community Partnerships who are keen to be involved in future years.

#### **58. Apologies**

No apologies needed.

#### **59. Declarations of interest**

Cllr V Haval declared an interest in confidential item 7 on the agenda – she is the treasurer of the Ladygrove Residents Association and has given a grant to Riverside Counselling in the past.

#### **60. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022**

It was proposed by Cllr D Macdonald and seconded by Cllr E Hards and RESOLVED to approve the minutes as a true record with two amendments. In minute 55 Cllr E Hards comments that the word “poor” is redundant and in minute 54 Cllr P Davies wished to delete the word “similar” and insert the words “albeit with no external parties attending”. The sentence would thus read: “This specific meeting has not yet been re-scheduled but a similar meeting requested by the Environment and Climate Committee has been held and covered the same projects, albeit with no external parties attending.” These amendments were agreed.

#### **61. Questions on the Minutes**

Cllr P Davies commented on minute 52 to say that the allowance for working from home is only if this is enforced. This was noted.

#### **62. To consider the organisation and manning of the Town Fayre 2022**

The report from the Town Clerk detailed the issues in organising this year’s Town Fayre. Some of the team from previous years were unable to continue to help and the overall management was now down to the Town Council staff – most of whom have no experience of leading a major event where thousands of people will attend. The report points out the lack of an Event Management Plan; Safety and Advisory (SAG) meetings and support both before and on the day. There is a need for a large event team to be available in the event of an incident and there is also a need for a leader to take responsibility immediately for next year’s Town Fayre.

Some of the Councillors knew of community groups who were interested in getting involved. Although the toilets and first aid was booked – there was little else organised at the time of this meeting. Cllr E Hards said that the main concern must be safety of holding this event. Cllr V Haval agreed and said that a smaller event was being planned at Ladygrove Park. The Residents Committee may be interested in being involved in future years. Cllr D Macdonald really wanted to Town Fayre to go ahead but she would not be able to attend this year.

It was proposed by Cllr P Davies and seconded by Cllr A Dearlove and RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that the Town Fayre for 2022 is postponed. The recommendation would go to full Council and the Town Clerk was asked to prepare a report to describe what we are lacking to enable the event to take place next year. Cllr D Macdonald stated that planning for next year’s event needed to start immediately and does not necessarily need to be a Town Councillor.

#### **63. Progress report**

The Chair read down the progress report. It was noted that the Kickstart scheme had not produced any recruits. It was AGREED not to pursue any further positions due to the workload on the staff. It was considered that the Local Council Award and the Vision and Objectives are nice to have rather than essential tasks. It was AGREED that a working group should be set up at 9<sup>th</sup> May meeting to report back to the June full council. It was also suggested that assistance from outside of the Council would help to get the Vision and Objectives finalised rather than taking up the rest of the Clerk’s time.

**64. Exclusion of the press and public**

It was **RESOLVED** to exclude the press and public from the meeting pursuant to Section 1 of the Public Bodies [Admission to Meetings] Act 1960 on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

**65. To consider the proposal from Riverside Counselling**

Riverside Counselling were responding to a request to provide counselling services to the Town Council staff on a retainer basis. The Committee discussed the proposal and agreed that transparency needs to be retained at all times. Everything should be charged at the tariff rate and suppliers of services to the Town Council should invoice for their services. Any agreement for a certain number of hours a year would need to be documented and the opportunity offered to other similar providers.

The Town Clerk was asked to pursue other quotes with the intention of paying for the services rather than giving away free use of the Civic Hall rooms in return.

**66. To consider the confidential staff report**

The up-date on recruitment for DTC and Willowbrook was noted. Mr Fred Lamb had started his position as the new Outdoor Services Manager and Jackie Scott was now on reception at the Civic Hall for week day mornings.

The back-dated national pay award negotiated by the NJC of 1.75% back-dated to April 2021 had been applied to all March salaries. The occupational health assessments have been completed but not yet reviewed.

One member of staff is seriously ill and, in light of the urgency of the situation, it was proposed by Cllr D Macdonald and seconded by Cllr P Davies and **RESOLVED** to early retirement on health grounds. The paperwork would be signed and completed by the Town Clerk.

**Request to move to incremental scale for two members of staff**

It was proposed by Cllr Hards and seconded by Cllr A Dearlove and **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND** that an amended contract would be offered to the two members of staff on approval of the Finance & General Purposes Committee at their meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chair      Date \_\_\_\_\_