

Didcot Town Council

Personnel and Administration Committee Monday 7th February 2022 at 7.30pm Ladygrove Room, Didcot Civic Hall



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)

Public participation

None

48. Apologies

No apologies needed.

49. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations.

50. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6th December 2021

It was proposed by Cllr D Macdonald and seconded by Cllr E Hards and RESOLVED to approve the minutes as a true record with one amendment. In minute 37, the sentence was to be changed from "It was noted" to "It was felt that Didcot residents get the best service if the staff are working in the town rather than from afar." This change is to make it an opinion rather than a factual statement.

51. Questions on the Minutes

There were no further questions.

52. To review a policy for flexible working

The last meeting of the full Council agreed for the staff to have the option of one day a week working from home if their work allows them to do this. The draft policy is an opportunity to make the conditions of the flexible working clear to staff. The content was discussed. The Town Clerk was instructed to ask South East Employers (SEE) about the following:

- Contractual rights and whether a flexible working from home arrangement can be added to holiday or TOIL or transferred from one leave year to another. The Town Clerk informed the Committee that we do not currently allow TOIL to be taken over.
- Payment for staff working from home – the Town Clerk said that the answer during the pandemic is for staff to contact HMRC direct but this was for full time working from home so it would probably not be appropriate here

The Committee asked to revisit the policy once advice had been received from SEE.

53. To review an amended Petition Policy to allow for electronic or online petitions

The draft was discussed in detail. It was AGREED that two petition policies were required – one for the tradition paper petition and another for electronic or online petitions.

54. To consider the legal right to cancel an exploratory meeting

This item was put on to the agenda by Cllr P Davies. The situation was summarised by a report by the Town Clerk with the conclusion as follows: *“Although the meeting was set up with the best intentions, it was contrary to our standing orders and disrespectful not to invite the two Chairs or at least to let them know that a meeting was happening to allow them to participate in any way possible.”*

Cllr P Davies disagreed with this interpretation of Standing Order 121 and felt that it was equally disrespectful to cancel the meeting which had been agreed by other participants. He said that he took time off from work in order to be available. It was an exploratory meeting where the options would have been fed back to the next Committee meeting. This specific meeting has not yet been re-scheduled but a similar meeting requested by the Environment & Climate Committee has been held and covered the same projects.

55. Progress report

The poor response to the opportunities on the Kickstart project has been poor. All three possible applicants had been contacted and would be invited for interview. It was noted that recruitment to cover the Sunday openings at the Civic Hall had still not been resolved.

56. 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.

57. To consider the confidential staff report

The report covered an up-date on recruitment – once positions are filled this would lead to Sunday opening for the Civic Hall and longer opening hours for Willowbrook. A review of the training programme. Up-date on the occupational health assessment interviews and cover for the Outdoor Services Manager position.

It was AGREED that appropriate compensation would be recommended to the next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

Signed _____ Chair Date _____