

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **EXTRAORDINARY MEETING** of **LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL** held on **THURSDAY 6 APRIL 2017** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

Present:

Parish Councillors: Mr. W. Blunden (Chairman)
Mr. M. Allen
Mrs. J. Durrant
Mr. S. Henton
Mr. S. Hodgson
Mr. R. Plass
Mr. C. Snowling
Mrs. V. Upton

In attendance: Mrs. C. Irwin (Parish Clerk)

Absent: Parish Councillors: Mrs. M. Hersey and Mr. R. Pickett

The Chairman opened the Council meeting at 8.00 p.m.

260. APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.

260.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hersey and Pickett and the reasons were accepted.

261. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

261.1 There were no declarations of interest from Members in respect of items on the Agenda.

262. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

262.1 There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

263. STAFF VACANCIES: CLERK AND DEPUTY CLERK

263.1 Members considered a report from the Clerk and considered arrangements for recruitment for the posts of Clerk and Deputy Clerk.

The Deputy Clerk had submitted one month's notice of resignation with effect from 13 April 2017, due to retirement. However he had offered to remain available on a casual basis to provide cover in the interim period and assist with hand over to his replacement.

The Clerk had also given advance notice of her intention to retire on 30 September 2017, in order to allow the Council to take a strategic approach to recruiting and provide a decent hand-over period.

263.2 Advice from SSALC

The Chairman and Clerk had met with Trevor Leggo of SSALC and he had advised that the jobs as advertised needed to look attractive and pay well because currently the response to adverts was not very good. SSALC would assist with advertising, sending out application packs and shortlisting. Mr. Leggo had offered to attend a meeting with Members of the Council to guide Members through a discussion about what had been achieved for residents over recent years and what they would like to achieve, particularly where the Council could influence change. This would enable the Council to agree a statement of where the Council was today and an embryonic business plan for the future, on which the early tasks of the new Clerk could be based. Dates pencilled in were 6.30 pm on 11 May (before the Annual Meeting) or the evening of 23 May.

Clerk's post

A proposed timetable for the Clerk's post, to have someone in post by 1 September would be for the job to be advertised at the beginning of June for three weeks with interviews scheduled to take place by 1 July. A recruitment panel should be set up by the Council with authority to take all decisions up to confirming the

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appointment which would be offered subject to ratification by Full Council and a special meeting would be convened for that purpose in the evening of the day of the interviews.

For Clerks' posts a three stage interview was recommended by SSALC:

- A presentation by candidates to the panel
- An in-tray exercise with about 6 tasks for which candidates would write down the advice they would give to the Council
- Individual interviews

Mr. Leggo had also suggested having all candidates together at lunchtime on the day of the interviews to meet other members of the Council after which the Chairman would seek Members' first impressions.

Mr. Leggo had advised that for a Council of this size the Clerk should be on a salary in line with LC2 36 (higher than the current Clerk's grade). However it was noted that this Council did not manage facilities such as Village Halls, playgrounds and burial grounds and the suggested starting paygrade for the Clerk was therefore LC2 33. The recommended starting salary for a Deputy Clerk was 75 - 80% of the Clerk's pay, (which would equate to LC2 24 pro rata for part time hours).

Deputy Clerk's post

Mr. Leggo had suggested re-appointing Mr. McLean as Planning Administrator on a fixed number of hours a month, but Mr. McLean had expressed a preference for providing cover on a casual basis, being paid for hours worked.

The recommendation was to recruit for the Deputy Clerk immediately and the person appointed as Deputy may later consider putting themselves forward for the Clerk's post when it was to be advertised in June.

The timetable would be to advertise the following week, with a closing date of 8 May and interviews on 24 May.

263.3 During discussion it was **AGREED** to form a Recruitment Panel comprising Councillors Blunden and Henton and the Clerk, with full authority to do everything necessary up to making offers of appointment subject to ratification by Full Council. Councillor Plass was named as a reserve member of this Panel to act as substitute if one of the other members was unavailable for the interviews.

It was **AGREED** to retain Mr. McLean as Planning Administrator on a casual basis, with payment for hours worked at his normal hourly rate.

The recommendations made by Mr. Leggo in respect of pay grades were **NOTED**.

The suggested three stage interviews and lunch with Councillors were considered to be too elaborate and not practical, particularly in view of the limitations of the Parish Office accommodation. This would be difficult to manage without holding interviews over more than one day. It was **AGREED** to leave the method of the interviews to the discretion of the Panel.

On Member suggested that the Clerk's post should be filled before the Deputy's to enable the new Clerk to have an input in selecting a compatible Deputy. However other Members felt that both posts should be advertised at the same time. It was accepted that this could result in a period of being overstaffed. It was also **NOTED** that a locum clerk may be needed if the posts were not filled.

It was **AGREED** to use the services of SSALC for the administration of the recruitment process.

Adverts were to be displayed on the Parish Council noticeboard and posted on the website and that of SSALC. It was also **AGREED** to advertise the posts in the Mid Sussex Times and the website of the Society of Local Council Clerks. There was some discussion about putting the adverts on the vacancies board at the Job Centre and this was **AGREED**, on the understanding that strict shortlisting criteria are applied. The suggested deadline was the end of the first week of May.

264. CASUAL VACANCIES

264. It was noted that two casual vacancies had occurred due to the resignations on health grounds from Alan Gomme and Stewart Shortland. Letters had been sent to them both from the Chairman thanking them for their contributions and wishing them well for the future. The statutory notices had been displayed and provided no by-election had been called the Council would be free to co-opt from the end of the 14 day notice period. It was suggested that an article should be placed in Lindfield Life.

A Member suggested considering setting up a Youth Council which may help increase awareness of the Parish Council.

The meeting concluded at 8.20 p.m.