



Astley Village Parish Council

Personnel Committee

19 January 2021 at 7pm

Present

Councillor Chris Lennox (Chair) (in the Chair); Councillors Arnold Almond, Rod Fraser (ex-officio), and John McAndrew.

1. Apologies for Absence

None

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillors and officers were invited to declare any interests they had in any of the items on the agenda for the meeting.

Mr C Ainsworth (Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer) declared an interest in item 6 "Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer – Proposed Increase in Contracted Hours" as the report concerned himself.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 12 February 2020 (copies of which had been circulated) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED – That the Press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of items 6 "Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer – Proposed Increase in Contracted Hours" (Minute 6) and 7 "Village Caretaker" (Minute 7) due to the confidential nature to be discussed pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

5. Review of HR Policies/Documents

The Parish Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) proposing changes to the HR policies/documents referred to in the report. At the Parish Council Meeting on 4 November 2020, the Personnel Committee was requested to review the following HR policies/documents:

Document 15. Bullying and Harassment Policy (Appendix A)

RESOLVED – (1) That the amended policy be approved subject to the following amendments:

Paragraph 1.3 Examples, changing the last sentence to read "Bullying and

harassment may occur face -to-face, in meetings, through written communication, including e-mail, **social media**, by telephone or through automatic supervision methods. It may occur on or off work premises, during work hours or non-work time.”

Delete the last sentence of the policy “A review of the policy shall be undertaken each year (or as appropriate) and necessary amendments will be undertaken by the Parish Clerk and reported to the Personnel Committee for approval.”

(2) That the policy be published on the Parish Council Website.

Document 16. Equality and Diversity Policy (Appendix B)

RESOLVED – (1) That the amended policy be approved subject to the third paragraph being amended to read “The Personnel Committee has responsibility for implementing and monitoring the Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy supported by the Parish Clerk and, as part of this process, all personnel policies and procedures are administered with the objective of promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating unfair or unlawful discrimination.”

(2) That the policy be published on the Parish Council Website.

Document 17. Health and Safety Policy (Appendix C)

RESOLVED – (1) That the amended policy be approved.

(2) That the policy be published on the Parish Council Website.

Document 18. Grievance Procedure (Appendix D)

RESOLVED - (1) That the amended policy be approved subject to the following amendments:

Paragraph 3.3 Investigations, the insertion of the following sentence

“The Parish Council will appoint an independent advisor to support the process including attending all meetings and be responsible for maintaining written records of the nature of the grievance raised, the employer’s response, action taken (with reasons), details of any appeal and subsequent developments to be retained and kept.”

Paragraph 3.5 Appeal be amended to read:

“If the employee is dissatisfied with the decision of the Personnel Committee on his/her complaint s/he should inform the Chair of the Personnel Committee considering the matter that had considered the matter within five working days, in writing and giving reasons for the appeal. An Appeal may be raised if:

- The employee thinks the finding or penalty is unfair
- New evidence has come to light
- The employee thinks that the procedure was not applied properly

Where possible the Appeal will be heard by the Chair of the Parish Council and two Parish Councillors who have not been involved in the original grievance hearing conducted by the Personnel Committee, who will view the evidence with impartiality and will consider the issues and shall then take all such steps, as s/he may consider necessary to resolve those issues. The employee will have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or accredited official employed by a trade union or lay member at the appeal hearing. The outcome of the appeal and reasons for it will be advised to the employee as soon as possible after the meeting and be confirmed in writing. The decision taken at the Appeal hearing will be final.”

The deletion of paragraph 3.9.

Document 19. Disciplinary Procedure (Appendix E)

RESOLVED – (1) That the amended policy be approved subject to the following amendments:

Paragraph 3.1.2 delete the word “excessive” from the sixth bullet point.

Paragraph 3.3 Meeting or Hearing, the insertion of the following sentence

“The Parish Council will appoint an independent advisor to support the process including attending all meetings and be responsible for maintaining written records of the nature of the grievance raised, the employer’s response, action taken (with reasons), details of any appeal and subsequent developments to be retained and kept.”

The deletion of paragraph 3.9.

Document 20. Councillor Employee Relations (Appendix F)

RESOLVED – (1) That the amended policy be approved subject to under ‘Complaints about employees or services’, the second paragraph being amended to read:

“Parish Councillors must avoid undermining public respect for employees and should therefore avoid making any criticism of an employee at a public meeting, in the press or by way of any other public statement. **Similarly, employees should not criticise in public individual Parish Councillors when acting in their capacity as Parish Councillors.** Making such criticisms would be damaging to the public image of the Parish Council. It would also undermine the mutual trust and courtesy which underpins effective working relationships. If a Parish Councillor wishes to raise an issue about an employee, they should use any established channels in place or, direct their concerns through the Chair/Vice-Chair.”

(2) That the policy be published on the Parish Council Website.

Document 21. Training Policy (Appendix G)

RESOLVED – (1) That the amended policy be approved.

(2) That the policy be published on the Parish Council Website.

(3) That the Parish Clerk be requested to explore the cost and benefits of the Parish Council becoming a member of the National Association of Local Councils.

(4) That the Parish Clerk be requested to explore training opportunities for Parish Councillors.

Document 24. Sickness Absence Policy Procedure (Appendix H)

RESOLVED - (1) That the amended policy be approved subject to under ‘Pay During a Sickness Absence’ the deletion of the word” Company”.

(2) That the policy be published on the Parish Council Website.

6. Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer – Proposed Increase in Contracted Hours

The Chair of the Personnel Committee submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) inviting the Committee to consider the proposed increase in the contracted hours for the Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer.

RESOLVED – (1) That the contracted hours for the Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer be increased to 30 hours per month and that this be backdated to 1 August 2020.

(2) That the Parish Clerk be requested to continue to keep a record of the hours worked on Parish Council business and the issue be reviewed by the Personnel Committee in six months (June 2021).

7. Village Caretaker

The Parish Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) in relation to the following issues relating to the Village Caretaker:

- Annual Appraisal.
- Increase in the Living Wage.
- The impact of Covid-19.

RESOLVED (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the increase in the living wage be paid to the Village Caretaker from 1 April 2021 and that future increases be automatically applied without referral to this Committee.

The meeting concluded at 8.23 pm.
Chair