Minutes of a meeting of the staffing committee of Cockermouth Town Council held in the council chamber at the Town Hall, Cockermouth, on Monday 15th January 2024 at 11.00am

Present:

Councillor Stephen Barnes

Councillor Marion Bowman

Councillor Isabel Burns

Councillor Gillian Telford

Councillor Richard Watson (chair)

**211 Apologies**

None.

**212 Minutes of last (inaugural) meeting on 27/11/23**

These were adopted as a true record.

**213 Minute-taker**

In the absence of a town clerk Richard agreed to take the minutes

**214 Declarations of interest**

None

The chair moved that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meeting) Act 1960 the public be excluded for the remaining items of business due to contractual and personal information relating to staff being discussed. This was agreed.

**215 Finalising Jane’s contract of employment**

It was agreed that we stick with the 2011 SLCC model contract rather than migrate onto the new December 2023 version which appears to contain a number of anomalies which may need to be resolved before the document is fit for purpose.

A number of amendments to Jane’s contract were discussed: namely, inserting a clause on confidentiality; amending the wording in relation to pension entitlement; and adding a clause relating to future changes to the contract.

It was agreed that the amended version would be put to the full council on Wednesday 17th January with a recommendation that it be approved.

**216 Induction programme for Jane**

Marion had re-worked her original draft in the light of suggestions offered at the previous meeting. The new version was agreed with some minor alterations. Stephen said he would be keen to take Jane on a tour of the allotments which was agreed. It was noted that we could not timetable individual councillors to come in to welcome Jane at specific times, so it was left open for this to happen over a period of some days.

**217 Terms of reference of this committee**

Marion had revised this document in the light of recommendations made at the full council meeting on 15th November when the committee was established. Some further revisions were suggested by the committee and Marion agreed to make further amendments. The revised document will then be put to the full council at a suitable meeting in the near future with a recommendation that it be approved.

**218 Request by Jane Ollerenshaw to continue some work with a parish council for a limited period**

Jane had contacted the chair and asked to be allowed to continue working for four hours a week for Ennerdale Parish Council for a period of a few months. This was to complete a piece of work which she felt it would not be fair to leave to the chair or an incoming clerk. The committee felt that this request was indicative of Jane’s conscientiousness and that it would be churlish to refuse. The model contract of employment states that the employee cannot undertake other work without the permission of the Council, but that such permission should not be unreasonably withheld. It was decided by the committee that we would agree to Jane continuing to work for Ennerdale PC for a period of four months (ie until 1st June 2024). This involves four hours per week of working time including attendance at two bi-monthly meetings of the parish council (February and April). This work will be undertaken in Jane’s own time extra to the 37 hours per week for which she will be contracted to work for Cockermouth Town Council.

It was agreed that this request would be put to the full council on Wednesday 17th January with a recommendation from the committee that it be approved subject to the agreed conditions.

**219 Honorarium for Kirstie**

The idea of offering Kirstie an honorarium payment in recognition of work above her pay-grade which she will be required to undertake in the period from 1st February to 1st April 2024 was first mooted by our previous clerk Sheila Brown. The committee felt that this was something which had in effect been promised and that we should honour. It was noted that an honorarium is allowed for under the NJC Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service. It was felt that Kirstie’s situation fitted the criteria in that for a two month period she will be instrumental in bringing the new clerk ‘up to speed’ on a whole range of issues specific to this Council, including budgets, contractors, auditors and much besides, and that Kirstie would be responsible for this alongside doing her own job. It was agreed that Marion would look into the level of such a payment, and it was noted that it would probably be in the range of between [redacted] per month for two months, ie a one-off payment of between [redacted] payable at the end of March. It was further noted that an honorarium is an entirely separate issue from any other action being taken in respect of an employee’s salary point and/or pay scale.

It was agreed to recommend to the full council on Wednesday 17th January that this honorarium payment be approved.

**220 Date of next meeting**

It was agreed that the staffing committee would next meet on Monday 15th April at 11.00am in the town hall.

The meeting closed at 12.45pm.