

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee Meeting held in the Town Council Office, Northwood House, Cowes on Tuesday 25 June 2024 at 6.15pm.

Present: Councillors Carter (Chair), Barney, Brown, Ellis, Hollis, Nicholson, Rafferty & Walters.

In attendance: Debbie Faulkner, Locum Town Clerk; Kate Scragg, Deputy Town Clerk.

864 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

865 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

**866 MINUTES
RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 21 May 2024 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

867 REVIEW OF COWES TOWN COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL REGULATIONS IN LINE WITH NALC'S MODEL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS TEMPLATE

Councillors discussed the NALC template in relation to the Town Council's existing Financial Regulations also the Town Council's Asset Register. It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. Town Councillors will send any suggested amendments to the Financial Regulations to the Town Clerk within one week.
2. The Town Clerk will produce a draft Financial Regulations document in advance of the next Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting for consideration by Councillors.
3. The Town Clerk will provide information in relation to the procedure for managing the Town Council's Asset Register.

868 LLOYDS BANK'S FINANCIAL SERVICES COMPENSATION SCHEME (FSCS)

The Town Clerk advised Councillors that Lloyds Bank had written to remind the Town Council that their FSCS only covers funds up to £85,000 should their company fail. As there is significantly more than this in the Town Council's Lloyds bank accounts it was agreed:

ACTION

The Town Clerk will undertake a financial risk assessment and investigate other banking options to spread funds held, thereby reducing the risk under the FSCS.

869 UPDATE ON EXISTING HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND OF £5,000 AND TO CONSIDER WHETHER TO APPLY FOR FURTHER FUNDING

The Town Clerk gave Councillors an update on the Household Support Fund. Cowes Town Council have received a total of £5,000; £2,000 has been spent, leaving £3,000, which has been earmarked for the purchase of further vouchers. The Clerks have handed out 25 vouchers so far; 15 remain available for issue.

Another round of funding has opened but as there are still unspent funds and vouchers, the Town Council are not eligible to apply on this occasion.

870 LOCUM TOWN CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

The Locum Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer reminded Councillors that the Locum arrangement was due to expire on 31 July 2024. Councillors discussed whether to extend the arrangement. Town Councillors expressed their gratitude for the support of the Locum. It was:

RECOMMENDED

That Cowes Town Council extends the arrangement with the Locum Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer until 31 October 2024.

871 OTHER STAFFING MATTERS

There were no other staffing matters to discuss.

872 HEALTH AND SAFETY REVIEW PROPOSAL FROM CRONER

Councillors discussed the recently received proposal from Croner to provide HR and Health and Safety advice to the Town Council. It was agreed not to accept the proposal but to approach local consultants who will have more understanding of local issues. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Town Clerk will source local consultants with regard to providing a HR & Health and Safety service to the Town Council.

873 OTHER HEALTH AND SAFETY MATTERS

Councillors discussed recent training opportunities for staff as some suggestions for attending had been raised. It was agreed to put these on hold until after the staffing structure review when new staff may wish to take up the training.

In advance of the Chairs and Clerks meeting on 27 June 2024, it was agreed:

ACTION

The Town Clerk will ask Northwood House Charitable Trust Co. Ltd for sight of their Risk Assessments in relation to public areas and their Lone Worker Policy, if they have one.

874 CLERKS' CONCERNS

No concerns were raised by the Clerks.

875 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

- Discretionary Services – to provide a list of those services which the Town Council already pay for instead of the IW Council.

The proceedings terminated at 7.20pm.

CHAIRMAN