

Haverhill Town Council

Minutes of Haverhill Town Council's

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Held on Friday 11th September 2020 at 5:00pm by Zoom video conference



HAVERHILL
TOWN COUNCIL

Present: Councillor P Fox (Chairman)
Mayor J Burns
Councillor E McManus
Councillor L Smith
Councillor A Stinchcombe

Apologies: Councillor L Miller-Jones

In Attendance: Colin Poole (Town Clerk)
Nick Keeble (Arts & Leisure Manager)

Welcome:

Mayor J Burns welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Action

P20 /001 Apologies for Absence

The above apologies were noted.

P20 /002 Declaration of Interests and requests for Dispensations

Councillor P Fox declared a non-pecuniary interest in P20/005(a)(h) and P20/009 as her daughter is an employee and in P20/005(g) as Secretary of the Local History Group.

P20 /003 Minutes of the last meeting

As the minutes of the meeting held 10th December 2019 had not been circulated, it was agreed to consider these at the next meeting.

P20 /004 Matters Arising

None.

P20 /005 Covid-19

a) The meeting noted that In March the Clerk wrote to committee members setting out proposals for the council in terms of a lockdown, which followed soon afterward. Other personnel matters were handled by Full Council after lockdown. It was further noted that in May the Personnel Committee agreed the Clerk's actions to require staff to take annual leave between July-September.

b) The Clerk advised that as at September 11th 2020, 24 job roles were furloughed, of which 14 were flexibly furloughed, having completed either training or some event shifts in August. Some casual staff would leave the books as they go to university.

CONFIDENTIAL

- c) Nick Keeble and Martin Page have remained working in the Arts Centre throughout the lockdown. Sara Marsh and Gary Wilson occasionally also work there if their activity demands it. Ben Prickett and Dylan Mills have been working in various buildings doing maintenance and upgrades. Sandra Linnane regularly visits the Zone for security inspections and meeting contractors for works. Karen Chapple and Dan Cooke have been working from home but are returning to work at the Zone as they consider it a business imperative to see their client group face-to-face. Colin Poole, Alisha Jenkins and Vicky Phillips can work from home and do not wish to return to the Arts Centre at this time. There is no business reason that requires these arrangements to change.
- d) The Clerk was asked to develop a home-working policy to include considerations about health and safety for staff working from home, such as DSE assessments.
- e) Sara Marsh sends out regular (weekly) emails to all staff, with content from the Clerk. There has been one attempt at a zoom get-together but it didn't get much traction. The Council is not encouraging staff to go out and socialise – Staff are reminded that we are paying them for their time and want them to avoid unnecessary risk, so that they remain available to work for us should it be required.
- f) Nick, Gary and the Clerk have extensively discussed how the Haverhill Arts Centre (HAC) can be opened safely. The building does not lend itself easily to becoming a safe space. Nick Keeble reported that not many arts venues and theatres have been able to reopen, although Lowestoft is just doing so. The public are asking when HAC can reopen, particularly at recent outdoor events we have organised. Two private hire groups have asked when they can return to the HAC. Government guidance is changing all the time without notice, which adds to the complexity.

CLERK

Nick is proposing a limited programme through to April 2021, based on reconfiguring the Arts Centre to operate just on the first floor. This would entail constructing temporary toilets off the rear walkway, which would be covered. A one-way system using the rear lobby and bar fire exit would help distancing. Ticketing would be all online, so we had less face-to-face transactions and we gathered test and trace data at the same time. Less events would mean less staff hours – moving from a 6-day a week operation to 4 days. In addition, with less outdoor events over the summer and reductions planned for the autumn and winter, less hours will be available for staff overall. Nick is calculating staff requirements as he does the programming.

Live-streaming was discussed as an alternative way of providing services to residents. This may be possible for some acts, but would further reduce staffing.

- g) The Local History Group would like to return to work in their room within HAC. Nick Keeble advised that this was able to be done, a risk assessment form from them was awaited. It was noted that the law requires the organisers of activities to carry out their own risk assessments, including ensuring that their plans are able to be followed. Nick is happy

CONFIDENTIAL

to assist any user group think through their risk assessment, but the groups had to own it. In addition, user groups needed to be able to comply with any legislation in respect of Covid-19 and any rules established by the Community Trust in relation to the use of their premises.

It was noted that if the Local History Group wished to seek a reduction in rent due to the covid-19 lockdown restrictions, they need to write to the Clerk.

- h) The Clerk has a meeting with the Volunteer Centre staff on Monday to catch up with Jill and Emily. They are covering co-ordinating the Covid-19 Good Neighbour Scheme online from home. The Volunteer website is nearly ready to go live, but we are not in a position to move forward on 36 High Street as West Suffolk have had commercial interest in the unit.
- i) Sandra Linnane is working out a regime for reopening the Zone, but this is very challenging due to the guidance issued by the government for soft play centres. It will not be possible to make a provision for under-threes. There will need to be extra staff and reduced numbers of customers. The main difficulty is the time it will take to properly sanitise the soft play equipment and allow it to thoroughly dry so it is safe to use. The current plan is to open with two daily sessions with a two-hour gap for cleaning. There will be a limited menu and birthday parties are impractical under the new social distancing legislation (rule of six). It will not be economically sustainable to run the soft play centre under these conditions, but it will be worth trying.
- j) No recent changes have been made to the staffing structure. We have Nick in charge of the Arts Centre and Leiston Centre, with Sandra in charge of the Zone. Gary provides a service to them as Operations Manager and compliance officer. Sandra and Nick are responsible for the services we provide and that the buildings are safe. Gary gets the work done to the required legal/good practice standards, advises on compliance, risk assessments etc.

P20 **Salary Scales**

/006

It was proposed by Councillor E McManus, seconded by Councillor J Burns, that the 2.75% general uplift to the NJC salary scales be applied to town council staff pay rates.

CLERK

RESOLVED

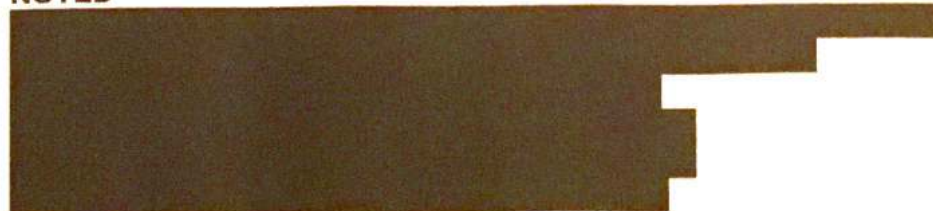
It was noted that the annual budget had been calculated at 2.5%. The additional cost of the larger increase was estimated to be £1,800, which would be able to be absorbed.

P20 **Staffing**

/007

Jill Moss took the role of Volunteer Centre Co-ordinator 11th May 2020.
Emily Fox took the role of GNS co-ordinator as of 22nd June 2020.

NOTED



NOTED

CONFIDENTIAL

P20 **Leiston Community Kitchen Co-ordinator**

/008 Nick Keeble updated the committee on this role. It was identified as necessary when the Community Kitchen was built and funding was obtained at the time. The role is to develop a programme of sessions to tackle a range of food-related issues for all of Haverhill, not just South Ward.

The activities will be risk-assessed for Covid-19. Gary Wilson will work with the Co-ordinator to do this.

It was noted that there have been four applicants, including one internal applicant.

P20 **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme ending**

/009 The meeting noted that the government scheme that has funded 80% of the cost of staff being furloughed ends in October 2020 and from 1st November all Town Council staff wages will be locally funded.

[REDACTED]

The Clerk advised that Councillors need to consider the impact on staff hours when making decisions about future council activity.

[REDACTED]

CLERK

P20 **Closure**

/010 The Chair closed the meeting at 18:54pm.

Signed
Chairman

Date.....