

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF KNARESBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL OFFICE SERVICES
COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 12 OCTOBER 2009 AT KNARESBOROUGH HOUSE,
KNARESBOROUGH.**

PRESENT Councillors: J Burdett, M Clemmitt, J Hawkins, K Hawkins, A Willoughby.

Late Arrivals: none

Early departures: none

OS 09/68 **ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor B Archibald

OS 09/69 **ITEM 2 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor K Hawkins Member of HBCó will consider any same item at Harrogate Borough Council in the light of any new information

Councillor M Clemmitt Item 8a - being The Mayor

Councillor J Burdett Member of HBCó will consider any same item at Harrogate Borough Council in the light of any new information

OS 09/70 **ITEM 3 - MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Office Services Committee meeting held 2nd September 2009 be approved as a correct record. **Unanimous**

OS 09/71 **ITEM 4 – PUBLIC SPEAKING SESSION**

None

OS 09/72 **ITEM 5 – BUSINESS REMAINING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

- a) Employment Matters ó **Legal Topic Note** (LTN 22 April 2009) email from YLCA dated 12 May 2009, giving changes in the Employment Law relating to the Employment Act 2008.
- Chair to report.

The Chair (Councillor K Hawkins) informed Committee members that Simon Jones the ‘HR expert’ had reviewed a copy of KTC’s disciplinary and grievance procedures and whilst not giving a definitive response, had given some best practice advice as what to do in the event of a KTC employee being suspended. In such an event, it would be necessary to appoint a KTC Councillor who would be dedicated to keeping the employee updated. KTC are advised to add the following paragraph:-

-In the event of a staff member being suspended under this Disciplinary Procedure the Office Services Committee shall at the earliest opportunity appoint a Councillor (not necessarily a member of OSC) to act as a neutral contact between the staff member (and his/her trade union) and the Council. The Councillor’s role will be to keep the staff member fully informed at all stages of the disciplinary process and to pass on any legitimate concerns of the process. This role is concerned purely with the disciplinary process and not with details of the allegations that have led to the suspension. Nevertheless, the Councillor who has taken on this role will be deemed to have a prejudicial interest in the investigation and will not take part in the determination of the case, or any subsequent appeal.

RECOMMENDED: That the new paragraph be added to the procedure.

Unanimous

OS 09/73 ITEM 6 –URGENT DECISIONS PROCEDURE

None

OS 09/74 ITEM 7 – STAFFING AND EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

- a) Staff Appraisals ó Clerk to report.

The Clerk reported that due to the office being extremely busy, the staff appraisals remained outstanding.

RESOLVED: To receive and note.

- b) Recruitment ó Town Crier

The Clerk informed members that three applications had been received for the post of Town Crier, and that all three applicants had been invited to Knaresborough House for interview on Thursday 15th October 2009. The interview panel would consist of Maurice Bardon (the Chamber of Trade representative) and Councillor Jo Walton (the Council representative) along with herself as Clerk.

Councillor K Hawkins stated that the decision of who was on the panel came under the delegation of Office Services.

RESOLVED: That Councillor J Walton and the Clerk represent the Council on the interview panel.

Unanimous

OS 09/75 ITEM 8 –STANDING ORDRES, POLICY AND PROCEDURAL ISSUES

- a) To consider changes to Standing Order 7 and 8 (Mayoral) ó *Report from Chair.*

Councillor K Hawkins submitted a report with two new paragraphs in section 8(d) and (f):-
 8.1(d) *Notwithstanding the previous paragraphs (b) and (c) the Clerk shall have the delegated authority to correct any minor typographical, spelling, or grammatical errors in these Standing Orders. The right hand margin notes do not form part of Standing Orders and may be amended by the Clerk as appropriate.*

8.1(f) *The Council's Office Services Committee has the duty to monitor and review the operation of Standing Orders to ensure the aims and principles of the Standing Orders are given full effect.*

RECOMMENDED: That the new paragraphs be adopted and added to Standing Orders.

- b) To consider advice from YLCA re wording of Standing Order 6.4b (Working Groups).

The Chair pointed out that in his mind there were two options:-

- i) The Chair and Vice Chair have to be a Councillor.*
ii) That a non councillor could be the vice chair, but if a motion fell to a tied vote, the motion would fail, or go back to Council.

RECOMMENDED: That a non councillor can be the Vice Chair, but if any motion falls to a tied vote, it goes back to Council.

- c) To consider the terms of reference of the Footpaths Working Group and the Emergency Response Working Group on the new format.

RECOMMENDED:

- i) That Membership of all Working Groups includes a minimum of 3 Councillors.
- ii) Quorum for all working groups is a minimum of 3 voting members ó 1 must be a Councillor (if approved the relevant Standing Order will be updated).
- iii) That wording of the agenda for Working Groups includes the words ‘guidance only’ next to the word agenda.
- iv) That following advice from the Clerk ‘Any Other Business’ is included as the last item on the agenda.
- v) That Footpaths agenda includes the item - ‘To discuss any other footpath problems brought to the meeting’

Unanimous

- d) To consider Questionnaires and how KTC should complete them in the future.

- RECOMMENDED:**
- i) that the Clerk sends out a copy of questionnaires with agenda papers, asking all Councillors to complete them, bring them to the meeting, so the Clerk can send all the copies together.
 - ii) the Chair of the Office Services Committee takes any unsuitable questionnaires to HBC pointing out why they need revision.

OS 09/76 ITEM 9 –ASSETS REGISTER AND RISK ASSESSMENT

- a) Verbal update from Chair.

The Chair explained that he would be looking at these once the budget report had been produced.

Councillor A Willoughby raised the following queries:-

- ‘would the Assets Register include any of the newly acquired paintings and pictures?*
- And ‘what should KTC do with these assets e.g. the Blind Jack Painting?*
- And ‘ where should these be stored?’*

Councillors gave these consideration and the following suggestions were raised.

- *Could the articles be displayed in the Council Chamber?*
- *Could the items be loaned to Knaresborough Museum?*
- *Is it possible to display some of the items in the hallway of Knaresborough House?*

It was agreed that once a list was in place, it would be given to Councillors who would then decide where to display the items.

RESOLVED: To consider this item at a future meeting.

OS 09/77 ITEM 10 - CORRESPONDENCE

None

OS 09/78 ITEM 11 - REPORTS FROM THE CLERK

- a) Finance Report - *The Clerk advised that a spreadsheet with figures for the first 6 months of the financial year had been produced for the Internal Auditor and was available at the meeting. These figures were duplicated on the budget report that was tabled later on. The Clerk also advised that she was happy to provide detailed information quarterly and at the meetings between she would provide a financial summary.*

RESOLVED: That the Finance Report be received and noted.

b) Staff lieu hours - The Clerk reported the lieu hours as Clerk 13 hours, Deputy Clerk 6.25 hours and Office Assistant nil.

The Clerk reported that the office was very busy and that the lieu hours increasing. The amount of work coming through the office has not shown any sign of levelling off and that the new committee system is making the situation worse as it is undoubtedly creating more work. Added to that the Clerk had spent hours producing the budget report for Councillors to see tonight.

RESOLVED: That the lieu hours be received and noted

c) KTC Newsletter - *The Clerk informed the committee that the KTC Newsletter had been completed but that due to printing problems there had been a delay in distributing it. Due to cost implications and system issues, only a small number of newsletters were printed in colour with the majority of newsletters being printed in black and white.*

RESOLVED: To receive and note.

d) Update on Quality Parish Status progress

The Chair advised that KTC had successfully achieved the items outstanding on the list of criteria for obtaining Quality Parish Status with one exception – The qualification of the Clerk. In order to achieve this qualification, the Chair reported the cost of doing so was high and that if the Clerk decided to leave KTC then Knaresborough would probably lose the status unless another already qualified staff member could be found (unlikely). With this in mind it was re-iterated that whilst a great deal had been achieved by KTC in progressing towards this status, it was not practical at present to pursue Quality Parish Status and that this matter should be reviewed again in approximately 12 months time.

RESOLVED: To receive and note.

e) Budget Report ó Clerk to report on the first stage of the Budget for 2010 ó 11.

The Clerk explained that she had produced figures for the budget showing columns for the first 6 months of this year, the estimated spend year end, the same figures for the previous year and a budget column.

Various queries were raised by Councillors regarding the Budget Report including questions on the proposed budget for the Christmas Lights and income from The Farmers Market. The question was also raised by the Clerk regarding the Maundy Celebrations budget and where this should be placed, as the event would occur within the next financial year. It was agreed that this should be placed in this year's budget and if the budget was not spent then this would be rolled over into the following year's budget.

The Chair advised that in order to go through the draft of the Budget Report properly, The Chair, Vice Chair and Clerk would need to meet. A second version would then go to CSC (2 November) before coming back to OSC (23 November) and finally to Council (7 December).

OS 09/79

ITEM 12 - MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS

None

Meeting ended at 8.50 pm