

TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING HELD IN
THE TOWN HALL ON 18th FEBRUARY 2016 AT 1900

PRESENT

Councillors Badham (Chairman), Brennan, Aldridge, Burns, Carter, Clatworthy, Danter Mitton, Powell, Poxon, Raywood, A. Smith, V. Smith and Workman

10289(01) APOLOGIES

Councillors Mills and Sztymiak

10290(02) DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None

10291(03) DISPENSATIONS REQUESTS

None

10292(04) RESIGNATION OF THE TOWN CLERK

The Mayor opened the meeting by reminding Councillors that Mr Tony Beirne, the Clerk to the Council, had tendered his resignation to take up employment elsewhere. Mr Beirne's final day of employment with Tewkesbury Town Council would be 9th March 2016.

Whilst the Mayor very much regretted the circumstances leading to Mr Beirne's resignation, the Council had now to consider the interim arrangements to be put into place until a new Clerk was appointed, and the recruitment process leading to the appointment of a new Clerk.

The Council's Staffing Committee had met and its recommendations had been circulated to councillors.

The meeting considered the Staffing Committee's recommendations, after discussion it was

RESOLVED that:-

- i. Major M G Wilson be employed as Acting Town Clerk on an hourly basis at 2.5 days per week to take on the senior management role and lead on policy.
- ii. Mrs Helen Price be appointed Acting Responsible Financial Officer, with a commensurate increase to her salary, her hours of work be increased to 5 days per week and she be employed on an appropriate temporary contract until the appointment of the new Clerk.
- iii. Mr Steve Knight be offered the appointment of Project Manager at 1 day per week and, if he declined, the matter be referred back to the Staffing Committee.
- iv. A Locum Clerk be employed on an as and when basis to clerk specific meetings.
- v. Mrs Lisa Netherton's contract be renewed for a further six months.
- vi. Ellis Whittam, a company which provided Human Resource services to UK employers, be appointed to lead the recruiting process, the cost of which would depend on the salary offered to the new Clerk.

In the ensuing discussion Councillors were urged to be polite and respectful in their dealings with the Council staff.

In response to a suggestion by Councillor Mrs Burns, it was agreed the Staffing Committee would ensure advertisements for the post of Clerk would also be placed in the local press.

10293(05) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Alan Purkiss had submitted a request to make a representation to the Council and the Mayor now called upon Mr Purkiss to read out his representation.

Mr Purkiss said:

"It is recognised by all those regularly dealing with the Council that there have been massive improvements in Council administration during Tony Beirne's tenure.

All credit to him and those councillors who were active in recruiting and supporting him and his staff.

So it must be particularly shocking to the Council that he is going after only two years and before all the improvements he planned are implemented? It is certainly shocking to most of the rest of us who now see delays and questions over council performance improvements!

Thus in the light of his resignation and his reported comments:

'As a 35-year veteran of local government, this has been the most difficult job I've had – and I've been at senior management level for over 20 years. I've never had to take a complaint out against a councillor before on behalf of my staff' what conclusions does the Council draw?

Signed, Chairman...../...../.....

Particularly, does it feel that there are lessons to be learned about how to:

1. Ensure a more benign/co-operative working environment for staff?
2. Prevent or discourage any councillors giving cause, by their unacceptable behaviour, for future complaints?
3. Better support staff should councillors behave again in an unacceptable way and a complaint be made?

Or is the Council intent on learning nothing and risking a repeat of the whole scenario of a fractious working environment, subversive behaviour by councillors, staff complaints and lack of council support to those staff, concluding in a few years' time with a similar resignation and yet another recruitment bill to the tax payer?"

The Locum Clerk drew councillors' attention to Council Standing Orders which stipulated that a representation did not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate but that the Mayor could direct that an oral or written response be given. The Mayor undertook to provide a written response."

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING
Monday 7th March 2016

Final date for agenda items for next meeting: 29th February 2016
Final date for dispensation requests: 3rd March 2016

The meeting ended at 7.40pm

Signed, Chairman...../...../.....