

STOWE BY CHARTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

18.9.24 AT 2.00 pm IN THE VILLAGE HALL

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Mrs Finney (Chair), Cllr Byrne and Cllr Coote

- 157/24 To receive apologies for absence and to approve reasons for absence:**
No-one was absent
- 158/24 To receive Declarations of Interest on any item on the agenda:** there were no Declarations
- 159/24 To receive applications for Dispensations under the Localism Act 2011:** there were no applications
- 160/24 To decide whether to exclude members of the public and press considering the sensitive nature of the items below: there were no members of the public and press present. Nevertheless, it was decided to go into “Confidential”.**

THE CONFIDENTIAL SECTION OF THE MEETING

- 161/24 To exclude members of the public and press if applicable:** (see above)
- 162/24 To consider agreeing the minutes from the last Employment Meeting on 8.1.24:** It was RESOLVED to agree the minutes. PROPOSED by Cllr Mrs Finney. SECONDED by Cllr Coote.
- 163/24 To review the situation of bullying and threatening behaviour relating to the Clerk in emails dated the 3rd September 2024 from a Councillor:** the emails were discussed and it was agreed that they were threatening. A course of action was then agreed.
- 164/24 To review the arrangements relating to preparing the village hall for meetings:** the arrangements were reviewed.
- 165/24 To agree a date and time of the next performance review of the Clerk:** This will take place on Friday 1st November at 2.00 p.m. in the village hall
- 166/24 To agree a report which is to be presented at the next parish council meeting (later that day):** the essence of the report was to recommend a course of action that Councillors should take if they have any concerns about the Clerk’s performance (Please see Note below_)

Note

At the Employment Committee meeting it was decided to ask **all councillors** to review any email or other correspondence sent to the clerk prior to sending it, and if it made any attempt to question the clerk's performance or constitute any threatening motives or bullying actions then this correspondence should be sent in the first instance to the PC Chair and the Employment Committee Chair, who will review it and then send it on to the clerk.

Councillor Coote's suggested "Modus Operandi" as suggested at the parish council meeting on 18.9.24. N.B. Councillor Coote has now been elected as Chair of the Parish Council and his paper "Modus Operandi" will be discussed at the Nov. mtg.

Stowe-by-Chartley Parish Council

Modus Operandi

The Parish Council, as the lowest tier of local government, has a legal responsibility to:

- Set the annual precept
- Administer the precept according to legal directions and agreed procedures
- Arrange and hold Parish Council meetings which will be open to members of the public
- Before each meeting publish an agenda according to the prescribed rules
- Place on each Agenda an item "Public Participation". [The format for this is clearly defined in procedural rules, and sets out the time limits for each participant.]

Outside the remit of the Parish Council:

- Disputes between neighbours
- Matters over highways, although it can and should put forward questions and views on the subject to the County Council.

The Parish Council should ensure that:

- Debates/discussions are based on fact, and that emotion is controlled [There is no place for invective, innuendo and hearsay.]
- Its decisions are based on what is best for the Parish as a whole [The loudest speakers do not necessarily promote the right decisions.]
- Councillors are treated politely and with the respect they deserve as volunteers.

Councillors should:

- Be aware of, and abide by the Nolan principles
- Accept that our rights to express an opinion should be accompanied by the acceptance that there is also a duty to support and justify that opinion with evidence which can be tested. If one accepts rights, one must also accept responsibilities. [Parish Council meetings should deal with facts; it is not acceptable for emotions to take over.]
- Respect fellow councillors, the Clerk and parishioners.
- Evaluate each argument presented and make a decision on voting only after listening carefully to fellow councillors. [Quite rightly councillors are parishioners and have their own opinions, but during Parish Council meetings they should make decisions which are "right" for the Parish as a whole.]
- Refrain from commenting on issues brought up in Public Participation, but should consider moving a topic on to the next Agenda. This will ensure that Agenda Papers can be produced and that Councillors can prepare themselves appropriately.

