



Bradwell Parish Council

27 January 2022

A meeting of the Staffing & Standards Committee Meeting at 6.30pm
This meeting was held at the Leo Coles Pavilion

PRESENT: Cllrs Hale (Chairman), Goodchild, Hamilton, Howe.

IN ATTENDANCE: Acting Parish Clerk, C Bacon

In Cllr Candon's absence, Cllr Hale will chair this meeting. Cllr Hamilton was welcomed to the committee.

1. 2201-S246) APOLOGIES: Cllr Candon

2. 2201-S247) EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC

It was resolved that, under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public should be excluded from this meeting.

3. 2201-S248) TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: None

4. 2201-S249) MINUTES OF LAST MEETING:

The minutes of 29th November 2021 were approved and signed.

5. 2201-S250) ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AND RESOLUTION

a) Parish Clerk role

Stuart Philpot (SP) resigned from his position as Parish Clerk on 20th January 2022, giving no notice period. His contract states one month's notice, so he will be paid up to 19th February 2022. There are numerous outstanding action points from SP's time as Clerk, some of which have financial implications on this Council. The Committee expressed their disappointment at the situation. A discussion took place regarding the cost of SP's training courses. It was **resolved to write formally to SP outlining details of the final payment with the cost of any training courses deducted from his final payment.** Proposed and seconded by Cllrs Goodchild & Hamilton.

Catherine Bacon (CB) has agreed to return as Parish Clerk, on a temporary three-month contract on reduced hours of 25/week. This offer is dependent on her continued good health. It was **resolved to offer CB the role of Parish Clerk on a three-month contract with a start date of 1st February 2022 at 25 hours a week on her pre-existing 'Parish Clerk' rate of pay. There will be a one-month notice period during this three-month trial. After this three-month period, the Clerk's hours will be reviewed as determined by the workload at that time.** A schedule detailing employer's cost implications for CB to join the Local Government Pension Scheme was circulated to the committee. It was **resolved that CB can join the Local Government Pension Scheme from 1st February 2022 as long as it is still open to new applicants.** Proposed and seconded by Cllrs Howe and Hale.

b) Concerns raised from a member of the public about Cllr Goodchild's comments regarding general members of the public; comment made during Parish Council meeting of 20th Dec2021

Cllr Goodchild made the following statement concerning his comment made during the Parish Council meeting of 20th December 2021.

"I wish to make a statement before the discussion opens concerning my comment made at a Parish Council meeting on the 20th of December 2021.

I was pleased to hear of the agenda item regarding the blue plaque being awarded to the community. However, in my cycling around the parish and borough, I am saddened by the acts of mindless vandalism, rubbish dumping and failure to clear up after your dog. These are major issues and have been discussed frequently at many meetings. I used the term 'donkeys' to describe the section of society who cause these problems. They are small in number but often have a leader who is known to the Police. It is often the case that other members within the group follow the leader like a 'Donkey'. The Donkey Sanctuary instruction manual defines that 'donkeys are inclined to follow a social hierarchy, especially in environments with more limited resources'.

From my military service and coming from a military family going back over 200 years, this term was and has been used to describe members of our society and community who are causing problems. I was recently called 'a donkey' by a close friend of over 25 years in respect to a comment regarding a haircut. It was taken in the context it was said. It is not an analogy that I used to disrespect the public in general and I am sure my fellow Councillors entirely understood my description of this minority group. My question was made during an open discussion towards a resolution and, therefore, would not be minuted in the literal sense. I would hate to see the plaque become a victim of this minority.

It was pointed out by the Chairman during the meeting that this description should not be repeated, and I acknowledged his comment at the time.

Although this was a possible misjudgement on my part, it was not intended to offend and I do not believe any of my fellow Councillors were offended, just understood my concerns regarding the plaque and this particular group in our society.

X was one of two members of the public present at the meeting who did not contribute and were evidently there as observers.

However, I am now aware that X has made a complaint against me for using this term. Perhaps X would kindly inform me how the analogy used to describe this section of society has such a detrimental affect upon him that he needs to pursue this matter further rather than accept it as being dealt with within the meeting. It was in no way meant to offend, harm or cause distress and I therefore questions X's motives in order that I can understand his discomfort and rectify the matter.

I am fully aware of the Seven Codes of Conduct which a Parish Councillor should follow, selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership. I have upheld all of these rigorously in my service to the Community and so feel entitled to learn how I have caused such offense to X personally that he wants to disrupt that service and take up time of the Councillors away from council business to pursue this matter further on his behalf."

This committee agreed that all Parish Councillors need to be careful of the language that they use and that words could be taken out of context. This committee believe that Cllr Goodchild's comment was not made with any malice, but that it was correct for Cllr Candon to correct Cllr Goodchild at the time. The Committee felt that Cllr Goodchild made the comment about a very specific, discrete group of people; certainly not about all residents of Bradwell. Cllrs need to be aware that there are members of the public who could take their words out of context.

It was agreed by this committee that there is no need to discuss this matter any further. Cllr Goodchild was made aware at the time that his language was inappropriate and he apologised. Cllrs must learn lessons from this situation.

Cllr Wainwright expressed his concerns about Cllr Goodchild's comment during the Parish Council meeting of 17th January 2022 despite not being present at the meeting where the remark was made. After hearing the context of Cllr Goodchild's remark, Cllr Goodchild was disappointed that Cllr Wainwright did not acknowledge he accepted Cllr Goodchild's clarification.

c) National Minimum Wage rising to £9.50 from April 2022

The caretaker's current rate of pay is £9.00 per hour. National Minimum Wage rises to £9.50 per hour from April 2022. The caretaker role is budgeted at £9.60/hour for 2022/23. The football ending at Green Lane Playing Field will have a detrimental impact on the Caretaker's wages, although it was noted that the additional football payments are not mentioned in the Caretaker's Contract of Employment. It was **resolved to pay the Caretaker £9.60 per hour from April 2022. The Council will write to the Caretaker advising that his hourly rate, working hours and duties will be reviewed again in October 2022. The letter must also make the Caretaker aware of the financial impact of the decision to cease football.** Proposed and seconded by Cllrs Howe and Hale.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.38pm

Signed: Date: