

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE HELD ON  
MONDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2005 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS AT 7PM**

<b><u>PRESENT</u></b>	Councillors	J. Barnett	
		H. Cadd	
		P. Collins	(Mayor)
		Mrs P. Desorgher	
		D. Isham	
		R Lehmann	(Chairman)
		H Lewis	
		H. Mordue	
		Ms R. Newell	
		Mrs P. Stevens	
		Mrs C. Strain-Clark	
		R. Stuchbury	
	Town Clerk	Ms P J Heath	

**APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr D Isham and Cllr Stevens; Members sent their congratulations on the birth of her grandson earlier that day.

**133/2005 DECLARATION OF INTEREST FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were no declarations of interest for items on the agenda

**134/2005 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

Members received and noted the minutes of the last meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2005 which were ratified on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2005.

**135/2005 ACTION REPORTS AND UPDATES**

135.1 (128/2005) update on office procedures  
This item was deferred to the next meeting

135.2 (130/2005) update on the evaluation of the Clerks Terms and Conditions and Staff Assessments  
The Chairman, Vice Chairman and the Clerk will meet on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2005 to undertake the Clerks job evaluation.

**136/2005 QUALITY PARISH COUNCIL HEALTH-CHECK**

136.1 Update on the next edition of the Newsletter – Cllr Mordue/Cllr Stuchbury  
Cllr Mordue and Cllr Stuchbury reported to Members on the next edition of the newsletter which will be printed at the beginning of November. The distribution of the newsletters was discussed and it was **AGREED** that some copies would be placed in the local Public Houses.

**ACTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

## **137/2005 BUDGET REVIEWS**

### 137.1 Finance and Administration Committee budgets

Members discussed the budget status as per the sheets sent with the agenda. Members asked that the £40,000 agreed under minute no 110/2005 should be shown on the sheets, the Clerk explained the problems of combining the Budget and Actual figures on the computer. The Clerk informed Members that the Accounts Software was soon to be upgraded and hopefully this would remove some of the current difficulties.

### 137.2 Overview of all budgets

Members looked in detail at the budget and outturns for the other Committees. The Members noted that the Street Market income looked as if it will not make the budget total for this year. The Events Committee were asked to look into the reason behind the drop in income and to look at the future income of the markets and the rents charged.

**ACTION EVENTS COMMITTEE**

Cllr Barnett offered to provide a new format for considering budgets prior to the precept meeting; he would provide details at the next Committee meeting.

**ACTION CLLR BARNETT**

## **138/2005 RESPOND TO DEFRA CONSULTATION ON NEW RURAL SOCIAL & COMMUNITY PROGRAMME**

Members had been sent the web link to this document to read prior to the meeting. Members discussed the document and expressed concerns that the Parish and Town Councils are seemingly being bypassed; there is little or no acknowledgment in the document of the elected first tier of Government. Members discussed the regionalisation of the country into 9 main areas by organisations or quango's such as the PCT, Police Authorities, Education boards and Fire services; in a sense mirroring the elected regional governments as originally indicated by Central Government. As the lowest denominator it was felt that Parish and Town Councils should form the basis of Neighbourhood Community Control.

## **139/2005 REVIEW OF THE OFFICE OPENING HOURS**

It was explained that the office hours had not been reviewed since the increase of hours for the Town Clerk to full time and the Clerical Assistant to 20 hours. The Clerk explained the current working practices and the need of the office to keep the option of closing at lunch time for 1 hour. Members agreed the current working conditions of the office were not ideal and accepted that 9 – 5 opening of the office was not possible at this time. After discussion it was proposed by Cllr Collins seconded by Cllr Cadd that the office opening hours should stay as they are but that the Council publicise that appointments out side of these times were possible.

An amendment was proposed by Cllr Newell seconded by Cllr Lehmann and **RECOMMENDED** that the office should be open 10 am – 3 pm, with staggered lunch hours; this was agreed by 6 votes to 3.

## **140/2005 LACK OF STORAGE AND THE USE OF THE COUNCIL CHAMBER FOR STORAGE**

Members agreed that the use of the Chamber for storage was not ideal, other locations and options were discussed but the need of the office staff to have access meant these were very limited. Once refurbish the Cemetery Lodge could be used but until that time more boxes would be stored by Cllr Mordue.

## **141/2005 NEW CONTRACTS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR ALL COUNCIL STAFF**

A copy of the base contract had been circulated to all Members with the agenda. Cllr Newell, Cllr Lehmann and Cllr Collins had all been sent copies of the individual contracts for each member of staff.

### 8. Date of pay

It was suggested that as the staff are now paid by BACS that the payment date should be moved from the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month to the last date of the month. The Town Clerk asked that should Members be minded to change that all the staff are given the statutory 3 months notice of change of contract as direct debits and standing orders are set relating to this date. It was **AGREED** to keep the 25<sup>th</sup> as the payment date.

### 19.1 Notice Period

Proposed by Cllr Lehmann seconded by Cllr Barnett that the period of notice in the probation period was reduced to 1 week was defeated by 5 votes to 3; it was pointed out that the notice period was standard government time period.

### 14.1 Notice to employer of absence

It was agreed to amend the contract to read “should inform the Council of the reason for your absence no later than 10am”

### 21 Training and Development

Proposed by Cllr Collins seconded by Cllr Barnett and **AGREED** by 7 votes to 2 to remove the last sentence “in addition reasonable agreed time for study in paid working hours will be given”.

### 18.3 Death in Service

Members discussed the legality of paying salary and gratuities to the next of kin and not the estate.

It was **AGREED** to check the wording of this clause with Cllr Newell, NALC and SLCC legal advisors as this was the model contract supported by both organisations.

**ACTION THE CLERK**

## **142/2005 TO RECEIVE A DRAFT STRESS POLICY (123/2005) – CLLR NEWELL**

Cllr Newell passed round a draft stress policy Members were asked to comment on its contents at the next meeting.

**143/2005 TO AGREE MEETING DATES FOR 2006 - ATTACHED**

The proposed dates for 2006, which had previously been sent to the Chairmen of Committees, had been circulated with the agenda. Proposed by Cllr Collins seconded by Cllr Cadd and **RECOMMENDED** to accept the proposed dates for the Council's meetings in 2006.

Members were reminded that January 2006 dates had already been agreed by Council.

**144/2005 CHAIRMAN'S ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

144.1 Main Office Computer

The Clerk informed Members that there had been problems with the main office computer while she had been away and that it could prove terminal; the Chairman and Mayor would be kept informed.

CHAIRMAN ..... DATE .....