

Cinque Port Town of New Romney



Mrs C. Newcombe
Town Clerk

Town Clerk's Office
Town Hall
New Romney
Kent TN28 8BT

Tel: New Romney 01797 362348

Ref: CN/3005

20th March 2024

Dear Councillor,

Meeting of the Personnel Committee

A Meeting of the Personnel Committee will be held in the Assembly Rooms, Church Approach, New Romney on **Wednesday 27th March 2024** commencing at **10.00am**. The favour of your attendance is requested.

Yours sincerely,

C. Newcombe

Mrs. Catherine Newcombe - Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Email: town.clerk@newromney-tc.gov.uk

The afore-mentioned meeting will commence at 10.00am.

Members of Public are welcome to join this meeting. However, a number of matters discussed by the Personnel Committee are likely to be discussed in private and confidential session due to their sensitive nature and relevance to individual members of staff. Members of Public and Press and Council Members who are not Members of the Personnel Committee will be required to leave the meeting at that time.

PLEASE NOTE: New Romney Assembly Rooms and New Romney Town Hall have restricted access for people with limited mobility; please enquire for details.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS

1. Who can participate in this New Romney Town Council meeting?

All Members of the Public may attend this meeting, except at such times as certain sensitive personal, legal or contractual matters may be considered in private and confidential session, when Members of the Public will be required to leave the meeting.

Agendas and reports for meetings will be available at least 3 working days and usually 7 weekdays before the date of the meeting on the Town Council website. Any supplementary sheets will be available the day before the meeting and can be viewed at www.newromney-tc.gov.uk

THE LAWS OF LIBEL AND SLANDER

- These laws are very strict.
- If, in public, you say something about a person that is not true, even if you believe it to be true, you may be sued and have to pay compensation. Therefore, you need to be very careful about any criticism you wish to make of people in any written submission to the Council.
- Councillors are able to speak more freely and bluntly while in Council or Committee meetings than members of the public.
- You, as a member of the public, do not have the same protection.

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY 27th MARCH 2024 AT 10.00AM**

AGENDA

- 1. APOLOGIES:**
To receive the apologies of councillors unable to attend and approve reasons for absence.
- 2. DISPENSATION TO PARTICIPATE:**
To receive and note any applications granted by the Town Clerk, on behalf of the Town Council, for dispensation to participate in Meetings of New Romney Town Council.
- 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**
Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Significant or Personal Interests they may have in items on the agenda for this meeting.
- 4. MINUTES (Encs*):**
To approve the minutes of the **Personnel Committee Meeting** held on **20th December 2023** (Attached hereto*).
- 5. CLERK'S REPORT (Encs*):**
To receive and note the Clerk's Report* on Personnel Matters, if available.
- 6. FINANCIAL MATTERS:**
Personnel Budget Comparison Report 2023-24
To receive and note the updated Personnel Budget Comparison Report for 2023-24, if available.
- 7. NALC MODEL CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT FOR LOCAL COUNCILS:**
To consider adoption of the latest NALC Model Employment Contract (see model contract and accompanying report – to follow).
- 8. MAYOR'S SECRETARY ROLE:**
To review current role-sharing trial in respect of Mayor's Secretary duties and take any such action as may be deemed appropriate thereon (see Clerk's report – to follow*).

9. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS:

To consider exclusion of public and press in accordance with Standing Order No.34 (a), which states that *‘in view of the special and confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded [from the meeting] and they are instructed to withdraw’* due to the fact that the following agenda items may relate to matters of a sensitive nature regarding individual Town Council Staff and / or Members.

10. STAFF MATTERS:

(i) Councillor/Staff Protocols

To receive and note the Clerk’s confidential report, if relevant and / or available, and take any such action as may be deemed necessary thereon.

(ii) Schedule of Staff Absences 2023-24

To receive and note the schedule of staff absences for 2023-24 (To follow*).

11. CONCLUSION OF PRIVATE SESSION:

To consider concluding private session, if applicable.

Mrs. Catherine Newcombe - Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

Copied to Personnel Committee Members: Councillors: P Thomas, J Rivers, J Hiscock, P Coe and J Davies

**MINUTES
Of
A Meeting of New Romney Town Council's Personnel Committee
Held in the Assembly Rooms, New Romney
on Wednesday 20th December 2023
Commencing at 10.00am**

PRESENT: Councillors J Hiscock, J Rivers, P Coe, P Thomas and J Davies

In the Chair: Councillor P Thomas

In Attendance: Deputy Town Clerk - Mrs C T Morris

The Business of the meeting commenced at 10.01am.

427/2023-24 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

428/2023-24 **DISPENSATION TO PARTICIPATE**

No new requests for Dispensation to Participate had been processed by the Town Clerk.

429/2023-24 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

@10.01AM Councillor Thomas declared an Other Significant Interest (OSI) in respect of Agenda Item 8(ii); Councillor Davies declared a Personal Interest (PI) in respect of Agenda Item 8(ii)

430/2023-24 **MINUTES**

(i) Having duly considered the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 22nd November 2023, copies of which had been previously circulated to Members of the Personnel Committee, it was:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Coe

SECONDED BY: Councillor Hiscock

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 22nd November 2023 be signed as a true and correct record.

Councillor Thomas abstained from voting as he had not been present at the afore-mentioned meeting.

The afore-mentioned minutes were subsequently signed by the Chairman.

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(ii) Having duly considered the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 5th October 2023, copies of which had been previously circulated to Members of the Personnel Committee, it was:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Rivers

SECONDED BY: Councillor Davies

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 6th December 2023 be signed as a true and correct record.

Councillor Coe abstained from voting as he had not been present at the afore-mentioned meeting.

The afore-mentioned minutes were subsequently signed by the Chairman.

431/2023-24 **CLERK'S REPORT**

The Clerk's report was duly received and noted.

432/2023-24 **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

The Personnel Budget Comparison Report 2023-24 was duly received and noted.

433/2023-24 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

@10.05AM Having considered the nature of matters to be discussed under Agenda Item 8 and, in view of the fact that sensitive personal information that may identify one or more individuals was to be discussed, it was, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Hiscock

SECONDED BY: Councillor Davies

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY – that 'in view of the special and confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the Public and Press be temporarily excluded and they are now instructed to withdraw.'

NB: There were no members of press or public present at that time.

434/2023-24 **STAFF MATTERS**

(i) Councillor / Staff Protocols

There was nothing of report on this occasion.

@10.05AM it was:

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PROPOSED BY: Councillor Thomas

SECONDED BY: Councillor Rivers

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY – that agenda item 8(iii) Finance Clerk Contract be brought forward.

(ii) Finance Clerk Contract

Having duly considered the Clerk's confidential report regarding the current contract status in respect of the post of Finance Clerk, it was:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Coe

SECONDED BY: Councillor Rivers

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY – that, subject to formal approval of the 2024-26 budget at the meeting of Full Council in January 2024, the relevant staff member, as identified to those present, be offered a permanent employment contract with effect from the final day of the current contract term.

@10.09AM, Having declared an Other Significant Interest (OSI) in regard to the ensuing business, Councillor Thomas left the meeting.

In light of the fact that Councillor Thomas was the Personnel Committee Chairman, it was, therefore, necessary to elect a Chairman for the remainder of the meeting.

@10.10AM It was:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Coe

SECONDED BY: Councillor Hiscock

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY – that Councillor Rivers be hereby elected as Chairman for the remainder of the meeting.

(iii) Grievance

Having duly considered the confidential output report of the appointed Grievance Panel sub-committee, which had been based on the findings of an independent investigation undertaken by South East Employers (SEE), it was:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Coe
SECONDED BY: Councillor Hiscock

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RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY – that (i)(a) it be formally noted that, having reviewed the outcome of an independent investigation, the appointed Grievance Panel upholds the Grievance raised on 28th September 2023, (b) the Personnel Committee hereby ratifies the confidential Grievance Panel report and recommendations therein and (c) agrees to put the identified recommendations to Full Council at its meeting in January 2024; (ii) Recommendations to be considered by Full Council, therefore, be as follows:

- 1) (i) That New Romney Town Council hereby confirms that a Grievance Complaint has been upheld, finding that Councillor Wimble has been rude and aggressive towards an NRTC Officer, and caused additional work pressure on the relevant Officer over vexatious requests. This has been deemed to be an act of bullying.
(ii) That New Romney Town Council confirms that Councillor Wimble is in contravention of the Vexatious Communications Policy and, as a result, should be barred from direct communication with the relevant NRTC Officer for a period of 5 months (to the end of the current civic year).**
- 2) That New Romney Town Council confirms it has been concluded that, in addition to the finding of bullying of a Council Officer, which is in contravention of the adopted Code of Conduct, Councillor Wimble also knowingly published, in the public domain, inaccurate information. Consequently, Councillor Wimble shall be reported to Folkestone & Hythe District Council’s Monitoring Officer for breaching the Councillor Code of Conduct and Standards.**

@10.36AM, the above item of business having been concluded, Councillor Thomas returned and re-joined the meeting.

435/2023-24 **CONCLUSION OF PRIVATE SESSION**

@10.37AM it was:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Hiscock
SECONDED BY: Councillor Davies

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY – that private session be hereby concluded.

The Chairman thanked those present for their attendance and participation and the meeting then concluded **@10.38AM.**

NB: All documents referred to herein are available for perusal on request, except for those documents of a sensitive / legal nature discussed in private session, including documents relating to staff matters which remain Private and Confidential in accordance with Data Protection legislation.

Minutes prepared by the Deputy Town Clerk

AGENDA ITEM 5

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT – PERSONNEL PANEL MEETING

27TH MARCH 2024

- 1) The Finance Clerk has been formally advised in writing of her permanent appointment.
- 2) Output actions pertaining to the recent grievance procedure have been duly ratified by Full Council and progressed accordingly.
- 3) A role-sharing trial has been on-going in respect of Mayor's Secretary duties and outcomes will now be reviewed at this meeting.
- 4) The recently appointed Assistant Caretaker commenced work on 4th March and the partnership with the Parish Caretaker seems to be working well in these early stages.
- 5) At the time of this meeting the Finance Clerk will have independently clerked a meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee for the first time, demonstrating confident development and progression within the role.

Town Clerk

END