

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

18th March 2025

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 **Tuesday 25th March 2025** 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
TUESDAY 25th MARCH 2025 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*):**
(i) To approve the minutes of the especial **Personnel Committee Meeting** held on **21st January 2025** (Attached hereto*).

(ii) To approve the minutes of the especial **Personnel Committee Meeting** held on **12th February 2025** (Attached hereto*).
5. **CLERK'S REPORT (Encs*):**
To receive and note the Clerk's Report* on Personnel Matters, if available (To follow).
6. **FINANCIAL MATTERS:**
Personnel Budget Comparison Report 2024-25
To receive and note the updated Personnel Budget Comparison Report for 2024-25, if available.
7. **SALARIES REVIEW:**
To receive and note the output report of the recently commissioned independent Review of New Romney Town Council Salary Scales undertaken by the LCC (Local Council Consultancy) in accordance with NJC process and the accompanying Clerk's report and consider recommendations therein.
8. **STAFF VACANCY:**
(i) To approve Job Description and Person Specification for new post of Maude Community Centre Caretaker / Cleaner.

(ii) To approve details of recruitment advertisement in respect of the afore-mentioned staff vacancy.

(iii) To confirm contract basis of afore-mentioned post

(iv) To authorise the Clerk to undertake all such actions as are required to facilitate and implement the recruitment process with a view to appointing successful candidate(s) at the earliest opportunity.

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 (Encs*):

(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) Annual Review of Staff Absences

To receive and note the schedule of staff absences for 2024-25 (To follow) and take any such action thereon as may be deemed appropriate.

11. CONCLUSION OF PRIVATE SESSION:

To consider concluding private session, if applicable.

Mrs. Catherine Newcombe - Town Clerk

Copied to Personnel Committee Members: Councillors: P Thomas, J Rivers, P Coe, J Davies and Rev Cn S McLachlan

MINUTES
Of
An Especial Meeting of New Romney Town Council's Personnel Committee
Held in the Assembly Rooms, New Romney
on Tuesday 21st January 2025
Commencing at 10.03am

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

In the Chair: Councillor P Thomas

In Attendance: Town Clerk - Mrs C Newcombe

479/2024-25 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

480/2024-25 **DISPENSATION TO PARTICIPATE**

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

481/2024-25 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

482/2024-25 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

@10.04AM, having considered the nature of matters to be discussed under Agenda Item 7 and, in view of the fact that 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 Coe

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.

483/2024-25 **STAFF MATTERS**

(i) Councillor / Staff Protocols – Councillor Complaint

The Clerk's confidential report regarding a formal complaint received following the Full Council meeting held on Monday 13th January 2025 was duly received and noted.

Having considered the nature of the complaint and the provisions of the NRTC Complaints Procedure, which require that efforts should be made to resolve any complaint informally in the first instance, it was:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Coe
SECONDED BY: Councillor Davies

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY – that the Chairman of the Council shall write to the Councillor identified [as subject of the complaint] regarding behaviour at Council meetings.

(ii) Personal Staff Matter

Having duly considered the Clerk's confidential report regarding a personal staff matter, it was:

(a)

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Rivers
SECONDED BY: Councillor Coe

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY – that a 12-month unpaid sabbatical be hereby approved in respect of the Planning Clerk post, subject to identified conditions pertaining to a required notice period.

(b)

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Davies
SECONDED BY: Councillor Thomas

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY – that (i) a previously interviewed candidate [as identified to those present] be invited to apply for the temporary post of Planning Clerk, if interested; (ii) the Clerk be authorised to undertake all such actions as may be required to advertise a fixed-term (13 month) temporary vacancy for the post of Planning Clerk and (iii) in consultation with the Chairman of the Council and the Chairman of the Personnel Committee, to make all necessary arrangements to undertake an interview procedure.

484/2024-25 **CONCLUSION OF PRIVATE SESSION**
@10.37AM, it was:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Rivers
SECONDED BY: Councillor Coe

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY – that the private and confidential session be hereby concluded.

The Chairman thanked those present for their attendance and participation and the meeting then concluded @**10.37AM**.

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 Town Clerk

MINUTES
Of
An Especial Meeting of New Romney Town Council's Personnel Committee
Held in the Assembly Rooms, New Romney
on Wednesday 12th February 2025
Commencing at 11.00am

PRESENT: Councillors J Rivers, P Thomas, P Coe, Rev Cn McLachlan and J Davies

In the Chair: Councillor P Thomas

In Attendance: Town Clerk - Mrs C Newcombe

548/2024-25 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

549/2024-25 **DISPENSATION TO PARTICIPATE**

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

550/2024-25 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

@11.00AM Councillor Thomas declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 7: Appointment of a temporary Planning Clerk as the recommended candidate is known to him.

551/2024-25 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

@11.01AM, having considered the nature of matters to be discussed under Agenda Item 7 and, in view of the fact that 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 Coe

SECONDED BY: Councillor Rev Cn McLachlan

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.

552/2024-25 **STAFF MATTERS****Temporary Planning Clerk Vacancy**

The Personnel Committee duly considered the reported outcome of interview in respect of the appointment of Temporary Planning Clerk. Having duly noted the recommendation of the interview panel, which was to appoint the interviewed candidate as identified to those present - in respect of whom two satisfactory references had already been acquired - it was:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Thomas

SECONDED BY: Councillor Davies

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY – that (i) the identified candidate be hereby appointed as Temporary Planning Clerk under a 13-month fixed-term contract and (ii) the Clerk be authorised to undertake all necessary actions to finalise the appointment at the earliest opportunity.

553/2024-25 **CONCLUSION OF PRIVATE SESSION**

@11.04AM, it was:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Rivers

SECONDED BY: Councillor Davies

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY – that the private and confidential session be hereby concluded.

The Chairman thanked those present for their attendance and participation and the meeting then concluded **@11.04AM**.

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 Town Clerk

AGENDA ITEM 5

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT – PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING

25th March 2025

- 1) In accordance with the resolution of the Personnel Committee (minute ref: 483/2024-25), the Chairman of the Council has communicated in writing with a Member of the Council about **behaviour at Council meetings.**
- 2) The **temporary Planning Clerk** vacancy has now been filled and the appointed candidate has commenced in post.

AGENDA ITEM 6

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE - BUDGET VS. ACTUAL 19.3.25								2024/25 Budget	2024/25 Actual to 19.3.25
								£	£
Admin Salaries - Budget								109,500.00	110,699.16
Eye Tests - Budget								200.00	0.00
Emergency Staffing & Services - Budget (Deputising for Town Clerk + other)								1,000.00	0.00
Civic Attendance Budget (Mayors Sergeant only)								1,800.00	1,893.05
Parish Caretaker / Assistant Caretaker Salaries - Budget								65,000.00	62,466.37
Capital Project Staffing								7,500.00	0.00
Contribution to Staff Gratuity / Pension Fund Cessation Reserve Fund								3,000.00	3,000.00
Contribution to Staff Recruitment & Training Reserve Fund								2,000.00	2,000.00
Contribution to Staffing Provision Reserve Fund								1,000.00	1,000.00
Total Expenditure								191,000.00	181,058.58
Total Income (Capital Deposit Interest)								7,500.00	0.00
Net Expenditure								183,500.00	181,058.58
NB:									
March overtime not included.									
Adjustments for Capital Project Staffing and Emergency Cover will be made at year end.									
Prepared by: Mrs C T Morris BSc (Hons) 19th March 2025									

ACCOMPANYING NOTES FROM THE RFO:

March salaries are included but not March overtime. Year-end adjustments for emergency staffing and capital project staffing are not included; these adjustments will reduce the clerical salaries figure, therefore, it will come in slightly under budget.

AGENDA ITEM 7



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1. INTRODUCTION

This report documents the findings and recommendations of the review commissioned by New Romney Town Council in December 2024. It was carried out by Stephen Butt, an independent associate of Local Council Consultancy.

2. BACKGROUND & BRIEF

The services and amenities provided by New Romney Town Council have increased significantly in recent years. Although additional staff have been recruited over the years, it is felt that a review of staffing capacity and structure is needed to ensure the Council can meet its obligations and fulfil its aspirations, now and in the future.

Stage	Description
1.	Our Associate will carry out a research and fact-finding exercise using the current job descriptions and information available from the Council's website and/or provided electronically. Quantitative and qualitative data will be collected and collated for the pay evaluation using the joint NALC/SLCC guidance.
2.	Interviews will be held by the Associate with the postholders (7 staff members), and 1 or 2 Council Members as required to validate the data collated from section 1.
3.	Our Associate will review the data from stages 1 and 2 and complete a report to include recommendations on pay.

3. METHODOLOGY

Local Council Consultancy uses the assessment model created by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC). This was published in 2005 as the National Agreement on Salaries and Conditions of Service for Local Council Clerks in England and Wales.

Structured partly on existing Local Government Green Book principles, its purpose is to provide a framework for setting parish and town clerk salaries. It also provides a foundation for encouraging professionalism and career development within the sector. The process involves two assessments:

- Determining the size of a council in terms of the scale of activities, amenities, and services.
- Identifying the skills and responsibilities required to manage those activities, maintain strong governance, and fulfil the council's aims and commitments.

Although no single framework can offer a comprehensive set of relevant benchmarks for such a diverse sector, many councils have adopted the NJC Agreement. It is generally regarded as the best available framework for building a grading structure, setting pay scales, and providing a basis for fair and objective assessments.

The data obtained from these assessments will be used to inform the recommendations in this review for staffing levels, roles and salary grades.

4. COUNCIL ACTIVITY & STAFFING CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

4.1 NJC ASSESSMENT

The following criteria are used by the NJC model to determine the approximate size of the Council (from 'small parish' to 'large town') in terms of the scale of activities, amenities, and services:

- The number of full council meetings held annually.
- The number of committees and the frequency with which they meet.
- How many staff, and whether full or part-time.
- Any functions and services devolved from higher-tier authorities.
- The number of statutory functions and services.
- The Council's budget and precept.

To refine the analysis, this review has considered the following additional information:

- The Council's property portfolio, assets, and number and scale of amenities.
- Community events managed by the Council.
- Major projects planned and in progress.
- Working parties, trusts, advisory and liaison groups attended by councillors or staff.
- The population of the parish.
- The number of councillors and whether warded.

The Local Council Award Scheme provides a further insight into the quality of the work of parish and town councils. These cover areas of operation including governance and accountability, training (of councillors and staff), openness and transparency, relevant policies and action plans including biodiversity and environmental issues, and publicity including the clarity of information offered to the public.

4.2 GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The Full Council meets at least monthly (fifteen meetings in 2024) in addition to the statutory Annual Town Meeting and Annual Council Meetings. The Council is made up of sixteen members. The Parish has two wards, the Coast Ward and the Town Ward, each represented by six members.

Four committees meet regularly, scheduled as follows:

- Finance & General Purposes Committee: six routine meetings annually and an Annual Budget Meeting.
- Planning & Environment Committee: Every three weeks currently, moving to every four weeks from May 2025. Seventeen meetings annually reducing to twelve from May 2025.
- Personnel Committee: Minimum of quarterly. Four meetings annually and additional meetings as required.
- Health & Wellbeing Committee: Four quarterly meetings each year.

The Council holds the General Power of Competence, but the parish does not yet have a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

There are seven staff in post who all work part-time. In addition, the post of Clerical Assistant/Mayor's Secretary is being reinstated, and a new post of Community Centre Caretaker/Cleaner is to be filled later this year.

The Council has set a precept of £429,562 for the 2025/2026 financial year.

Indicative of the Council's expanding plans and initiatives, a Community Centre project costing £3.5million is nearing completion. Strategies to market the centre and encourage diverse usage are being drawn up. The Council also has a Strategic Plan and a Parish Highway Improvement Plan.

Additionally, Town Council land in Church Road, known as Coney Banks, has been put forward by the Town Council for a purpose built multi-disciplinary/multi-services health hub for Romney Marsh. The Council is lobbying hard for this facility.

The Council's website is welcoming in design and relatively easy to navigate. It has substantial helpful and informative content. The 'latest news' section is updated weekly. There is a strong sense of community engagement and involvement. The Council's offices are open to the public on four mornings each week.

4.3 ASSESSMENT FOR BENCHMARKING SALARY GRADES

In terms of the NJC assessment model, and as a guide to setting the recommended salary grading for the Town Clerk, this data places Romney Town Council in the Large Parish/Small Town category.

Assessment Criteria	LC1 Small Parish SCP 6-17	LC2 Medium Parish SCP 18-32	LC3 Large Parish/Small Town SCP 33-45	LC4 Large Town SCP 46-62
Meetings annually	1-6	6-12	12	12+
Committees	0	Few	1-4	5+
Budget & precept	<25K	25K-250K	250K-750K	750K+
Staff	0	Few	1-20	20+
Devolved functions	None	Few	Some	Many
Statutory functions	None	Several	Most	Most

4.4 TOWN CLERK ROLE ASSESSMENT

The second stage of the NJC assessment process considers the skills, responsibilities and knowledge required of the Parish Clerk to meet the business needs of the Council.

Scale	SCP Range		
	Below substantive	Substantive	Above substantive
LC1	6	7-12	13-17
LC2	18-23	24-28	29-32
LC3	33-36	37-41	42-45
LC4	46-49	50-54	55-62

Each of the four salary bands is divided into three groups (Below Substantive, Substantive, and Above Substantive) which are further divided into SCP (Spinal Column Points) ranges. To set the Clerk's role within the LC3 scale this second assessment considers the areas of knowledge, skills and responsibilities required of the postholder to fulfil the demands of the Council's administration, governance and service delivery:

- Knowledge.
- Mental reasoning) skills.
- Interpersonal and communication skills.

- Initiative and independence.
- Responsibility for people.
- Responsibility for the direction of employees.
- Responsibility for financial resources.
- Responsibility for physical resources.

Knowledge

The specific knowledge needed for the different elements of the post and how it was acquired, including literacy and numeracy, procedures, equipment, administrative systems, organisational, specialist, technical, languages, and cultures.

The Town Clerk needs to be familiar with legislation relating to the governance of a local council including the 1972 Local Government Act, the 2011 Localism Act and planning legislation including the National Planning Policy Framework. A working knowledge of health and safety and employment legislation, the General Data Protection Regulations, property management, neighbourhood planning, emergency planning, and the protocol for working with contractors and agencies is also necessary.

Some knowledge of the use of social media, website management, and office-based IT software and systems is also necessary.

In addition, the Clerk needs to have a sound knowledge of New Romney and the surrounding area, the people, organisations, businesses and commerce.

Mental (thinking) Skills

Skills including research and fact-finding, analytical, problem-solving, and judgment, as well as creative and developmental skills, planning, and prioritisation.

The role of the Town Clerk is both reactive and strategic. This is defined as the ability to plan ahead and also to make immediate decisions on urgent matters. Being able to think clearly is vital. At times, the Town Clerk will be talking with individuals who have specific expertise such as in planning, property management and finance, and be able explain complex ideas to members of the public and others who do not have those specific areas of expertise.

Interpersonal and communication skills

The skills relating to working relationships with staff, councillors, the public and contractors. These include advocacy, training, teamwork, motivation, advising and guiding, persuading, influencing, counselling, negotiating, oral and written communication, and presentation skills.

In any organisation there are occasions when diplomacy, advocacy and tactful discussion is necessary. The Town Clerk needs to speak with authority in dealings with contractors, staff, councillors, officers from higher-tier councils and the public, but must also be able to act with patience, sympathy and understanding.

Initiative and independence

How the postholder can exercise initiative, take independent action, and plan their work. It includes the nature and level of guidance and direction available, policies, procedures, precedents, and whether the postholder works alone or with others.

Although working in an office environment in which strategies and concerns can be discussed with other staff, it is often the case that the Town Clerk needs to make decisions and frame plans alone. The Town Clerk must therefore be self-motivating and able to act and make decisions in line with Council policy and to be able to react and respond to urgent matters and public concerns but must also know when to seek advice.

Responsibility for people

The physical, mental, social, economic, and environmental well-being of people other than employees. Health and safety responsibilities feature in this element.

The Town Clerk is line manager to seven other staff and has a duty of care for councillors and all members of the public who contact the Council. These include individuals and organisations that use the amenities or hire rooms, and all who are involved in events managed by the Council.

Responsibility for supervision/direction of employees

The number of employees, their work, where they work and the type of management they require.

As noted above, the Town Clerk is responsible for seven other members of staff and at times may also be required to monitor and supervise contractors and contracted staff. Each staff member has a unique skill set which the Town Clerk must recognise.

Responsibility for financial resources

Budgets, sourcing goods and services, project planning, and long-term development of financial resources.

The Town Clerk is effectively the Chief Executive Officer of an organisation with an annual turnover including CIL funds of more than three million pounds, an organisation that must provide a high level of transparency and financial risk controls. Although supported by a Responsible Financial Officer, the Town Clerk needs the skills and knowledge to be able to sign off financial reports, payments and payroll, and undersign the Annual Governance & Accountability Return to the external auditors. This requires an understanding of the JPAG Practitioners Guide, (Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England), and the Transparency Code for Local Authorities. Larger projects using CIL funding need careful project management and budgetary control

Responsibility for physical resources

Premises, systems, tools, equipment, vehicles, plant, and machinery, covering upkeep, repair, security, significant assets, and planning related to these resources.

The Town Council owns or manages a range of buildings, open spaces, allotments, play areas and associated footpaths and street furniture which are being continually added to and improved. Ultimately, although the day-to-day monitoring of these assets is delegated to other staff, the Town Clerk has overall responsibility for managing all facilities, services and amenities.

Unique Parish Characteristics

A comprehensive profile of a council should include other elements not covered by the above stages. To some extent, these are less quantifiable but affect a council's decision-making and staffing structure. They may relate to major future projects, growth due to changes in the surrounding region, or challenges unique to a parish such as flood defences, major industries, the nighttime economy or heritage tourism.

Staff qualifications beneficial to a council's operation.

Although this is an assessment of the post of Town Clerk and not of the postholder, this further consideration relates to the qualifications, skills, experience and knowledge required of a successor to the present postholder to maintain and develop the same level of the council's services and activities.

These include, but are not limited to, CiLCA (Certificate in Local Council Administration), relevant qualifications in accountancy and law, and higher-level degrees in Community Governance and other subjects.

Scale	SCP Range		
	Below substantive	Substantive	Above substantive
LC3	33-36	37-41	42-45

On the basis of the above assessments, the recommended salary grading for the post of Town Clerk falls in the Above Substantive range of the LC3 scale (SCP42-45). This grading recognises the increase in responsibilities and required skills since the appointment of the present post holder, and the considerable expansion of the Council's amenities and services likely to take place in the foreseeable future. The Town Clerk also holds the CiLCA qualification.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

These recommendations are based on an assessment of the number of staff and the roles that New Romney Town Council requires to fulfil its commitments and aspirations. It is not an assessment of how the present staff undertake their duties.

From interviews conducted, it is clear that the staff, both those who have worked for the Council for several years and others who have been appointed more recently, work together and respect each other. Such a stable working relationship is important, and therefore the following recommendations are intended to respect and reinforce this stability

The Council should consult relevant legislation and, if necessary, obtain qualified legal advice before making any change to the terms and conditions of employment of members of staff.

5.2 THE ROLE OF A TOWN CLERK

The title of Parish Clerk has its roots in the former 'vestry meetings' before the creation of civic parish councils following the 1894 Local Government Act. The earliest clerks were 'clerical', and the role was often filled by clergy or churchwardens because they were literate and numerate. Clerical work such as writing agendas, taking minutes and keeping financial records now represents a comparatively small part of a clerk's duties.

The clerk in a modern council manages staff, undertakes strategic planning, facilitates projects and liaises with a wide range of organisations and professions.

In defining the roles of all office-based staff, the evolution of the Town Clerk's role should be considered, including the transfer of some clerical, routine, and reactive responsibilities to other staff to give the Town Clerk adequate time in the working day to plan strategically and to manage the operation of the Council.

5.3 STAFF STRUCTURE & ROLES

Local council staff cover three main tasks, these being governance, financial management and service delivery. The roles of the officer or officers responsible for governance and finance are clearly defined in law. In smaller councils, the two functions are often combined, the Clerk (the 'Proper Officer') also being the Responsible Financial Officer.

All other staff roles are council-specific, as are terms such as assistant, deputy, officer, supervisor, and manager. These job titles are often interchangeable, but it is generally assumed that the role of an officer includes an element of management or leadership, and an assistant takes direction from a senior role.

The parameters of many roles in parish and town council offices change over time, as the size and focus of the council's commitments change, and as employees grow into their roles. However, unless

job specifications are revisited on a routine basis, perhaps as part of an annual appraisal system, this evolution can reach a critical point if roles and responsibilities become blurred, or if workloads become excessive and difficult to manage.

Exceptionally, Romney Town Council has an established strategy for recognising and assigning additional duties that are not specific to the post but have been taken on by the employee that currently holds that post. It is recognised by the Council that these additional duties should be remunerated separately with an additional salary point (over and above the salary scale for the post that the employee holds) since, if that staff member leaves the Council, the additional duty/duties would be offered to another employee who may be on a different salary grade.

Present staff roles

In addition to the Town Clerk and the Deputy Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer, the business of the Council is managed by a Finance Clerk, Facilities & Communications Clerk, and a Planning Clerk. A further post of Clerical Assistant/Mayor's Secretary has recently (February 2024) been reinstated. There are also two caretaking staff.

A new post of Community Centre Caretaker/Cleaner is likely to be created in the near future. One further post, of Mayor's Sergeant, is paid on a zero-hours contract. The postholder is paid a Civic Attendance Rate set annually by the Council.

Deputy Clerk

A distinction should be made between the role of a deputy clerk, an assistant clerk and an assistant to the clerk. This may seem pedantic, but misunderstandings and resentment can arise if roles and responsibilities are poorly defined. In the case of New Romney Town Council, in addition to being the Responsible Financial Officer, the post include deputising for the Town Clerk as required.

5.4 ADDITIONAL NOTES ON GRADING

National Joint Council pay scales (for reference)

Scale	SCP Range		
	Below substantive	Substantive	Above substantive
LC1	6	7-12	13-17
LC2	18-23	24-28	29-32
LC3	33-36	37-41	42-45
LC4	46-49	50-54	55-62

Percentage-linked grading

Recent annual NJC pay agreements have included flat rate increases. A flat rate increase intentionally narrows differentials between pay grades by giving higher percentage increases to lower-paid staff. Consequently, it is important to note that any employee whose salary is linked to that of the Town Clerk on a percentage basis or is calculated as a percentage of a spinal column point will receive less than the flat rate increase intended by the pay agreement.

Local parity

For some roles, such as in grounds maintenance, facilities management, chauffeuring and security, a comparison with salaries offered for similar posts in the locality can be a useful guide.

The National Living Wage

The National Living Wage increased on 1 April 2024, the current hourly rate being £11.44. For comparison, the minimum National Joint Council grade (SCP 2) is £11.62 per hour. As the Clerk is the

senior member of the council's staff and line manager for all employees. the salary grades for all other staff will fall between the Clerk's salary and the National Living Wage.

Zero hours contracts

In the King's Speech on 17 July 2024 the Government indicated its intention to introduce legislation to prevent the abuse of zero hours contracts. This does not amount to an outright ban but to provide protection for workers who could be exploited. Until the Government provides clarity in the form of new legislation it is recommended that staff with a regular pattern of working each week are given the security of part-time contracts. Zero hours contracts should be limited to casual workers who are employed on an 'as required' basis such as keyholding.

Salary grading

As stated above, caveats are necessary in proposing approximate salary grades for staff other than the Town Clerk and the Deputy Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer. Accordingly, the following table gives only broad salary ranges represented by a span of SCPs (Spinal Column Points).

Job descriptions have been taken into account as well as the post holders' own descriptions of their present duties and responsibilities. It is accepted that there may be considerable differences due to personal factors such as recognition of long service and relevant qualifications.

Town Clerk	SCP42-45	LC3 Above Substantive
Deputy Clerk/RFO	SCP 29-32	LC2 Above substantive
Finance Clerk	SCP 18-28	LC2 Below substantive to Substantive
Facilities & Communications Clerk	SCP 18-28	LC2 Below substantive to Substantive
Planning Clerk.	SCP 18-28	LC2 Below substantive to Substantive
Clerical Assistant/Mayor's Secretary	SCP 13-17	LC1 Above substantive
Parish Caretaker	SCP 13-17	LC1 Above substantive
Assistant Caretaker	SCP 7-12	LC1 Substantive
Community Centre Caretaker/Cleaner	SCP 7-17	LC1 Substantive to LC1 Above substantive

5.5 DEVOLUTION

Following the English Devolution White Paper which was published on 16 December 2024, Kent County Council and Medway Council formally asked the government to be included in its Devolution Priority Programme.

This restructuring will create a unitary authority to replace the present Kent County Council and the twelve borough and district councils in Kent, and will form, with Medway Council, which is already a unitary authority, a combined authority with an elected mayor. It is projected that the creation of the new authority will take place in 2027/2028.

In due course, the combined authority will open a dialogue with town and parish councils to discuss 'double devolution', namely the transfer of some local services from the present higher-tier authorities to parish level.

The services devolved by existing unitary authorities vary considerably. Some authorities have used pilot schemes and invited parish and town councils to nominate services they could undertake. These have included public toilet, town markets, allotments, road verge cutting and car parks.

Generally, the devolution process involves the parish or town council submitting a business plan, and any transfer normally needs to be cost-neutral to the combined authority. There is no indication that it is mandatory for any council to agree to undertake any devolved service although not doing so could result in the loss of that service.

It is suggested that a Neighbourhood Plan, even if it does not reach the referendum stage before devolution, would provide a sound factual basis for assessing community facilities and the amenities needed by the town in the future. A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group could offer valuable input into discussions about services that could be devolved to the Town Council.

5.6 WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Working with the community is a vital part of the business of all local councils. In recent years, many of the elements that for generations gave identity to a community have changed, and some are no longer present. For some communities, a significant number of the services they depend on such as banking, medical advice and utilities, are now delivered from a distance, the providers being accessible mainly online or through call centres.

For some, the psychological effects of these changes are profound. They include a loss of personal identity and a belief that these remote organisations no longer attend to their concerns. There is now the potential for parish councils to play a far more important role in providing the community with cohesion and support.

Community engagement at Town Council level can be different, with the emphasis on creating a meaningful dialogue and listening to the concerns and views of parishioners. Councillors and staff can be in touch with members of the community in a way that is not possible for many other organisations or larger local government bodies. New Romney Town Council's provision of regular Councillor Surgeries at the Assembly Rooms is therefore of the utmost importance, even if they may not always well attended.

This form of engagement at very local level should be a means by which barriers, both real and imaginary can be removed, thus helping to prevent the misunderstandings, prejudice and inaccurate statements inherent on social media platforms. Face-to-face community engagement is all the more important in today's IT-dominated world where opinions and attitudes are often shaped by social media.

The Annual Parish (Town) Meeting can also be a useful forum for outreach because of its relative informality. In some parishes, local organisations are invited to showcase their work with static displays and staged presentations. The event can include an open forum when members of the public can talk about their concerns and aspirations.

5.7 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

New Romney Town Council, in common with many other local councils, will be undertaking projects of significant scale in future years, as a result of Community Infrastructure funds arising from new developments in the parish, and double devolution.

Their size and complexity will vary, but even the smallest and apparently simple project can run over-budget or out of time. Problems identified at an early stage can be addressed and corrected more easily. It is therefore important that a project manager, whether an existing or seconded member of staff, is delegated the task of monitoring a project regularly.

Before the Council decides to undertake a project, adopting the SMART(ER) business model as a tool for assessing its viability can be helpful.

The SMART(ER) business model

The SMART business model was first published in the November 1981 issue of *Management Review* by George T. Doran, a consultant and former Director of Corporate Planning for the American Washington Waterpower Company.

It is a mnemonic that prompts five checks on the viability of a project undertaking. It is useful when writing a feasibility report, in guiding decision-making at council and committee meetings, including aims and plans, and can help manage personal and team workloads.

S	Specific	What are we deciding to do?
M	Measurable	How will we know when it has been completed?
A	Attainable	Do we have the resources to achieve it?
R	Relevant	Should we be doing it?
T	Temporal	How long will it take?

Although other strategies have since been devised, it remains a viable framework for decision-making and for removing ambiguity from the decision-making process. It is part of the Government's Green Book guidance on appraising, evaluating and managing projects.

Two further letters can be added for when the project has been completed:

E	Evaluated	Lessons to be learned for the future.
R	Reviewed	Resources implications (Ongoing maintenance and management).

Snagging

The process of 'snagging' is also helpful in identifying potential problems before they become time-consuming liabilities. In effect, and in addition to the above, the question is asked 'What could go wrong and how can we make sure it doesn't?'

Officers at higher-tier councils routinely assess the financial risk of encountering snags and will budget accordingly. At the planning stage, the level of risk to the project of each potential problem is assessed. It can then be decided whether to accept the risk or insure against it by adjusting the budget. If, for example, work is delayed on a building project because archaeology is discovered under the site, the cost of the delay and of commissioning an archaeological survey will already have been considered.

6. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

There is every indication that New Romney Town Council is fully committed to serving its community and in upholding high standards of governance. In its decision-making it is focused, and it is supported by staff who work together and are competent in their present roles.

As the parish continues to grow, there will be a time when additional staff will be needed, but there is no indication at present that workloads are unmanageable. Creating a new staff role would precipitate changes to the dynamics of the team which could be disruptive if not carefully planned and prepared for.

Possibly, some staff could increase their hours if required, but the flexibility of part-time staffing (and job-sharing) provides for stronger business resilience.

Depending on the public take-up of facilities and functions, it may become necessary to increase staff support at the new Community Centre.

In the light of the revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024), it is strongly recommended that work commences soon on a preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

7. REFERENCES

National Agreement on Salaries and Conditions of Service for Local Council Clerks in England and Wales, NJC, 2005.

Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration (13th edition), Roger Taylor (Ed), LexisNexis, 2022.

The Good Councillor's Guide, NALC, 2024.

The Clerks' Manual, SLCC, 2023.

The Practitioners Guide, (Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England,) JPAG, March 2024.

Transparency Code for Local Authorities, MHCLG, December 2014.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), UK Government, December 2024.

Office for National Statistics. (Census data).

Documents and information provided by New Romney Council and/or downloaded from the Council's website.

NEW ROMNEY TOWN COUNCIL

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING – TUESDAY 25TH FEBRUARY 2025 @10.00AM

SALARY SCALES REVIEW

A formal review of New Romney Town Council Salary Scales was commissioned due to significant development of roles and responsibilities as the business of the Council has evolved.

The professional services of the LCC (Local Council Consultancy) were utilised to undertake a thorough review of the staff salary scales in line with the NJC assessment model.

A very detailed output report has now been received, which indicates the salary scales at which the Town Clerk and RFO/Deputy Clerk scales should be set, together with broader scales within which all other staff salaries should be set.

The report provides detailed explanations and reasoning to support these outcomes.

It is made clear that all salaries other than those of the Town Clerk and the RFO can be set within the broader scales indicated, based on what is deemed appropriate for NRTC.

Whilst those broader scales are actually the same for the Finance Clerk, Facilities/Communications Clerk and Planning Clerk roles – it is actually evident that the Planning Clerk role involves more rote duties and is less skills-specific than the Finance Clerk and Facilities/Communications Clerk roles. I would, therefore, recommend setting the Planning Clerk salary scale just below the salary scale for Finance Clerk or Facilities / Communications Clerk within that broader scale range that has been advised, as per the current hierarchy of salaries.

It should also be noted that a very broad salary scale range has been indicated for the new role of Maude Community Centre Caretaker/Cleaner, based on a draft job description which is to be approved at this meeting – which could be set anywhere alongside the Assistant Parish Caretaker Role or the Parish Caretaker Role. Whilst this role will not require the skillset of the Parish Caretaker (and, therefore, a scale level with Assistant Caretaker could be considered), it will involve regular unsociable hours and on-call duties which will not be required of the Parish Caretaker and which must be taken account of, thus this scale should be set above that of the Assistant Parish Caretaker and, potentially, level with the Parish Caretaker.

As a result of the professional salary scales review, revised scales for the Town Clerk and RFO/Deputy Clerk have been determined within the output report to be as below:

Town Clerk: SCP 42-45

RFO/Deputy Clerk: SCP 29-32

All other scales should fall within the broader identified scales – but should be limited to a four point scale to retain parity with the Chief Officer Scales. Having considered the points raised above, I would, therefore, suggest that the Personnel Committee considers the setting of all other staff salary scales as below:

Job Role	Broad Salary Scale Range	Suggested Salary Scale
Finance Clerk	SCP 18 - 28	SCP 22 - 25
Facilities/Comms Clerk	SCP 18 - 28	SCP 22 - 25
Planning Clerk	SCP 18 - 28	SCP 18 - 21
Mayor's Secretary	SCP 13 - 17	SCP 13 - 16
Parish Caretaker	SCP 13 - 17	SCP 13 - 16
Assistant Parish Caretaker	SCP 7 - 12	SCP 9 - 12
Maude CC Caretaker/Cleaner	SCP 7 - 17	SCP 11 - 14

Based on the assumption that there will be a small reduction in overtime hours once the Maude Community Centre Project is concluded and on the assumption that any national pay agreement is now more likely to be in the region of 3% as opposed to the previous higher increases of approximately 5% in the past two years due to the financial policies of the new government which do not allow it to borrow to cover day to day government spending and will, necessarily, therefore, require a much tighter rein on public sector pay rises, the RFO has calculated that the adoption of the recommended staff salary scales, as detailed above, and transfer of all staff to the first point of the relevant new four-point scale will be affordable within the budget that has been set for 2025-26.

2025-26 Approved Personnel Budget: £227,100.00

Based on afore-mentioned assumptions and suggested salary scales Required Personnel Budget 2025-26: £226,825.00 (excluding new caretaker/cleaner – to be funded in 2025-26 from Staffing Provision Reserve Fund, as planned)

In order to present a balanced case to the Committee in respect of adoption of the suggested revised salary scales, I must point out that it is also possible to adopt a single salary point approach with flexibility to award additional salary points to individual members of staff, however, this is a very subjective approach to reward and remuneration which relies heavily on personal opinion, thus it is a less commonly adopted approach. Hence, the Town Council has, to date, adopted the more common salary scale approach whereby every staff member is rewarded with an annual incremental award subject to satisfactory performance – which is, in fact, a much more objective and fair approach, allowing all staff equitable opportunity to move through the relevant salary scale over a four-year period until the top of the scale is reached. This also provides the Council with a definitive end point to

increasing salaries (notwithstanding national cost of living increases) in respect of each staff member. The salary scale approach also provides a very useful tool in the recruitment and retention toolbox, since it is immediately evident to new recruits that there is scope for salary progression.

Conclusion:

Having resolved to commission an independent, formal salary scales review and to abide by the output recommendations of that review, it is important that the Council – via the Personnel Committee - now adopts revised salary scales with effect from 1st April 2025 – subject to the flexibility to consider recommended salary scales for all staff roles except for those of the two key officers provided that adopted scales fall within the identified broad ranges as per the output report of the Salaries Review.

AGENDA ITEM 8

NEW ROMNEY TOWN COUNCIL

**TOWN HALL
NEW ROMNEY
KENT TN28 8BT**

DRAFT JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: MAUDE COMMUNITY CENTRE
CARETAKER / CLEANER

RESPONSIBLE TO: THE TOWN CLERK

PRIMARY FUNCTION

The Maude Community Centre Caretaker shall be responsible for the locking and unlocking of the First Floor Maude Community Hall (including checking of building in accordance with insurance requirements) and or the Imbert Room or any other room as shall be identified for hire in the Maude Community Centre Annex according to any bookings made and for any visits necessary by Tradesmen, Contractors or other persons, except for any special arrangements already agreed upon by the Town Clerk.

The Caretaker shall also be responsible for the cleanliness of the First Floor Maude Community Hall and / or the Imbert Room or other room identified for hire in the Maude Community Centre Annex (including kitchen space, toilet area(s) and entrance areas and for reporting any maintenance or health and safety issues to the Town Clerk.

The Caretaker shall be responsible occasionally for the locking and unlocking of the Ground Floor Maude Sports Pavilion (including checking of building in accordance with insurance requirements) according to any bookings made by the Town Council for use when not in use by the Tenant and for any visits necessary by Tradesmen, Contractors or other persons, except for any special arrangements already agreed upon by the Town Clerk.

The Caretaker shall also be responsible occasionally for the cleanliness of the Ground Floor Maude Sports Pavilion (including changing spaces, toilet and shower

area(s), clubroom space and entrance areas and for reporting any maintenance or health and safety issues to the Town Clerk.

The Caretaker shall be available via telephone to assist hirers for the duration of the hire period.

KEY TASKS

1. Unlocking and locking up of Maude Community Centre Community Hall, Sports Pavilion or Annex according to bookings made and when access for contractors, tradesmen or other persons is required.
2. Checking that all persons have vacated the premises, that the heating and all lights are turned off, all windows and shutters are closed and locked, all taps are turned off and no running water is evident, all plugs removed from sockets (as appropriate – ie small appliances and portable equipment) and all internal doors are closed prior to locking up of the Main or Annex building, in accordance with insurance requirements.
3. Liaising with Town Hall Staff re bookings, breakages, repair or redecoration works, replacement items of equipment and cleaning materials.
4. Liaising with the Town Clerk re health and safety matters.
5. Liaising with the Parish Caretaking Team via a contact book provided to ensure the smooth transition between caretaking duty cover (annual leave cover) at the Maude Community Centre when required.
6. Liaising with hirers re use of equipment during hire period.
7. Reading electricity and / or water meters and reporting data to Town Hall staff as and when required.
8. Turning on / off and setting of heating temperature at thermostats as and when required (seasonal).
9. Handing in of items of lost property at the Town Hall.
10. Setting out and clearing away of tables and chairs, stage blocks and / or other items of furniture for bookings as and when required.
11. Checking and requesting replenishment of first aid box contents, toilet rolls, paper towels and cleaning products as and when required.
12. Regularly checking itinerary of crockery, kettles, teapots and other kitchen utensils to ensure that none have been damaged or removed without permission.
13. Cleaning of facilities following hire and routinely, as per the schedule below

Cleaning:

Community Hall

Daily:

Sweep / vacuum hall floor as appropriate; clean toilets / basins and ensure that toilet rolls, hand cleaner and hand towels are available; sweep / vacuum front entrance, stairway and landing area.

Clean worktops, sinks and draining boards in kitchen.

Wash / sweep / vacuum kitchen floor as required, at a suitable time to allow drying prior to use if necessary.

Ensure that oven / hob, fridge, microwaves are clean and in working order at the start of the day; clean as required and report any issues to Town Hall staff.

Check that kettles / urns or other small appliances are in working order at the start of the day and report any issues to Town Hall staff.

Ensure that heating is turned on prior to bookings (as required) and turned off after bookings (or when cold left on low setting, as appropriate) and that all lights are turned off (with the exception of the emergency light) at the end of a booking.

Ensure that all crockery and kitchen utensils are clean at the start of the day and clean any as necessary.

Weekly:

De-cobweb, clean down tables, dust all general surfaces,

Complete work/time sheet, making any necessary observations.

Monthly:

Wash down main hall floor, or as required, at a suitable time to allow drying prior to use. Clean / dust down all general surfaces, clean interior window surfaces

Clean inside of kitchen cupboards.

Annex Room(s), Kitchen and Toilets / Sports Pavilion

Before and After Ad Hoc Hire Only:

Sweep / vacuum floor of main hire space prior to / following use, as appropriate

Clean toilets / basins and ensure that toilet rolls, hand cleaner and hand towels are available before and after use;

Ensure worktops, sinks and draining boards in kitchen are clean prior to and after hire.

Wash / sweep / vacuum kitchen floor as required, at a suitable time to allow drying prior to and/or after use, if necessary.

Ensure that small appliances are clean and in working order prior to and after hire period; clean as required and report any issues to Town Hall staff.

Ensure that heating is turned on prior to hire (as appropriate) and turned off after hire (or when cold left on low setting, as appropriate) and that all lights are turned off (with the exception of the emergency light) and there is no evidence of running water at the end of a booking.

NB: Where cleaning duties require that a step-ladder / mobile platform must be used, arrangements must be made for a second person to attend and assist.

All duties to be carried out in accordance with the Town Council's adopted Health & Safety Policy Statement.

14. To cover for other members of Caretaking staff during holiday periods or possible sick leave, as required.

15. To carry out any other relevant work or investigations as may be decided by the Town Clerk as his/her Line Manager in accordance with Council policy.

16. The Caretaker will be expected to carry out these duties with consideration and diligence and will at no time divulge to persons not eligible any Council business or matters which are confidential and execute these duties in accordance with Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation.

ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

17. The Caretaker shall assist at Civic Events as and when required and having been given due notice, bearing in mind the nature of his/her duties.

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NEW ROMNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Maude CC Caretaker Cleaner – Draft Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable
Education / Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good working level of English and Maths • Basic Level of Computer Literacy for communication purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GCSE English & Maths minimum Grade C or equivalent • Good keyboard skills and good working knowledge of email / internet / Microsoft Office for communication purposes
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No essential previous experience required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous Caretaking / Cleaning Experience • Previous experience dealing with members of public
Skills, Knowledge and Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good verbal communication skills • Good telephone manner • Tact, diplomacy , sensitivity and confidentiality • Ability to use own initiative • Ability to work under pressure and to deadlines • Strong team player • Good timekeeper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car Owner / Driver with full, clean driving licence
Physical Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good eyesight with glasses worn if necessary • Good hearing with audio-aid if necessary • Physically fit 	

Draft Recruitment Advertisement:



NEW ROMNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Requires a



TEMPORARY CARETAKER CLEANER(S) For a 12 Month Contract (with potential for permanent position thereafter)

Duties include: Acting as keyholder / caretaker / cleaner for the new Maude Community Centre, Station Road, New Romney - including general cleaning duties; setting up, clearing away and providing access for hirers and Town Council events; checking and re-stocking consumables; reporting any damages or losses; on-call liaison with hirers.

Hours: [TBC] per week, [**involving regular weekend and / or evening work - TBC**]

Would suit someone with a background in general cleaning / caretaking and / or working with the general public

It would be desirable for applicants to be a car-owner/driver – but not necessarily essential

For further information and an application form, contact the Town Clerk at:

Town Hall, High St, New Romney, TN28 8BT

Tel: 01797 362348

Email: town.clerk@newromney-tc.gov.uk

Deadline for receipt of applications: [TBC]

When considering required staff cover for the role of Maude CC Caretaker -Cleaner, it is important to recognise that the Maude Community Centre may eventually have bookings spanning 9.00am to 11.00pm each and every day of a seven day week (albeit that it would hopefully be possible to accommodate an hour during the day for unpaid lunch break and an hour late afternoon / early evening for unpaid dinner break or multiple half hour unpaid breaks to add up to 2 hours)).

Allowing for a maximum 2 hours unpaid breaks, this could still equate to up to 12 hour days, 7 days per week (ie approximately an 84 hour week).

The Staffing Provision Reserve Fund can accommodate a single full time employee in the 2025-26 financial year, which could extend to a longer 40 hour week, particularly being as the employment would not need to commence prior to July 2025 (so would cover three-quarters of the financial year). The new appointment(s) will then need to be included in the Personnel Budget for 2026-27, so the budget will need to be increased to cover at least one additional full time staff member. However, if employment is on the basis of a standard contract based on a fixed number of hours per week, the Council will need to increase the budget to cover 2x full-time members of staff (based on 80 hours of paid cover per week).

It is reasonable to assume that the Maude Community Centre will not be fully booked out during the 2025-26 financial year, since it will be within its first year of opening. Therefore, the Council could realistically offer 2x 20 hour part-time 12-month fixed-term contracts (with a view to offering permanent positions going forward, which would enable the Council to cover the entire 7 day week).

Part-time cover could be split as follows:

1x Sunday, Monday, Tuesday plus Weds morning
1x Weds afternoon plus Thursday, Friday, Saturday

OR

1x Sunday, Monday
1x Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
1x Friday Saturday

The Staffing Provision Reserve Fund current balance stands at £47,275 plus 25/26 contribution £1,000. Based on a 40 hour week at SP11 (2024 rate + 2%), by the time you add on Employers pension & NI the annual figure comes out at approx. £41,207, so the reserve fund is only able to cover 1 x 40hrs employee (or multiple part-time employees up to a 40hour equivalent cover)

Looking to the future, it is also realistic to assume that increase in bookings for the Maude Community Centre will be reasonably gradual, so in 2026-27, it would be necessary to provide for, potentially, 60 hours caretaking cover (as opposed to 80 hours) and then a further increase to 80 hours in 2027-28. This will still, however, represent, an increase on the Personnel Budget in the region of £60,000 before taking into account other incremental increases, so this is a point to recognise when budgeting for 2026-27.

An alternative option, which might assist in limiting increases in the Personnel Budget over the next two to three years would be to consider use of zero hours contracts – only paying for hours actually worked, based on submission of weekly time sheets; however, use of zero hours contracts is generally frowned upon whereby it can be avoided. Less so, if minimum guaranteed hours are included in such a contract. This could also be achieved with standard contracts identifying minimum contracted hours plus contractual overtime up to a maximum 7 additional hours per day, as and when required.

So, in 2025-26, if 3x part-time employees were appointed, temporary zero hours contracts or standard contracts with identified contractual overtime could provide for 1) Sun, Mon – Min 10 hours guaranteed 2) Tues, Weds, Thurs – Min 15 hours guaranteed 3) Fri, Sat – Min 10 hours guaranteed. If bookings were low initially, this would save 5 hours paid time per week. In such instances where bookings were more frequent, additional hours would be payable at basic rate over and above the minimum guaranteed hours (with the exception of bank holidays which would be payable at a higher rate) – based on the weekly time sheet that is provided to the employee to include allowance for required cleaning duties and caretaking duties.

Fixed-term 12 month contracts, in the first instance, would allow the Council the opportunity to review how this is working practically and financially. If zero hours contracts with guaranteed minimum hours or standard contracts with minimum

contracted hours and identified contractual overtime are working well, then this could be taken forward into permanent contracts.

Actions:

- To approve draft Job Description and Person Specification for post(s) of Maude Community Centre Caretaker – Cleaner
- To approve details of Recruitment Advertisement
- To confirm contract basis of employment in respect of the afore-mentioned post(s)
- To authorise the Clerk to undertake all such actions as are required to facilitate and implement the recruitment process with a view to appointing successful candidate(s) at the earliest opportunity.