

MINUTES OF STOKENCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL EXTRAORDINARY MEETING
WEDNESDAY 16TH October 2024
Longburrow Hall, Stokenchurch at 7.00pm

Present;- Cllr Nuthall (Chairman), Cllrs Baker, Burnham, Jenkinson, McNeill, Pearse, Ramsden, Thomas, & Young.

Cllr Adoh – Buckinghamshire Council.

Nil members of the public in attendance

Acceptance of apologies for absence

Cllr Preece.

Agenda Items.

1) To Discuss the Engagement of a Locum Clerk.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending this Extraordinary Meeting which had been requested by Cllrs Baker and Thomas as it was felt that we must address the issue of sourcing a Locum Clerk as the Assistant Clerk was finding the workload difficult to manage and that we, as a Council had received criticism from the Monitoring Officer of Buckinghamshire Council in what they – Buckinghamshire Council – felt was the excessive use of Councillors to maintain the operation of Stokenchurch Parish Council.

Cllr Thomas advised the meeting that since the Clerk & RFO reported sick on 31st May 2024, a certain percentage of the work had, by necessity, been conducted by the Councillors as the Assistant Clerk did not have the band width (16hrs per week), to undertake many of the duties that would be performed by the Clerk and that it was felt that the Council ought to seek to engage on a Temporary and I must stress on a Temporary basis a Locum Clerk.

It was noted and appreciated that the Assistant Clerk has played a significant part in keeping the office running during the absence of the Parish Clerk.

Cllr Baker stressed that it was imperative that any Locum Clerk must have the Skills and Ability to Run the office.

Cllr Young advised that she had found a potential Locum Clerk – Steven Marshall who brings with him some 20years experience as a Parish Clerk and RFO and his details have been sent to Cllr Thomas for discussion by the HR Committee.

Cllr Nuthall advised that Louise Steele – Locum RFO had been in contact with the LGRC and it was believed that Louise had some potential Locum Clerk applications and Cllr Nuthall will endeavour to get details from her so that all potentials can be considered by the HR Committee in the first instance.

A general discussion then followed and questions were raised about the Council Laptop that is currently in the possession – as per contract – of the Clerk and whether or not the Council should request its return for use by the Locum Clerk. It was argued that if the laptop was requested from the Clerk, this could be detrimental to the welfare of the Clerk and that it might be prudent to source a new laptop for use by the Locum Clerk. It was agreed that PrimedHR would be contacted for advice.

Cllr Thomas therefore proposed that we approach Steven Marshall to see if he was still minded to accepting on a part time basis the role of a Temporary/Locum Clerk, which was seconded by Cllr Baker. This proposal was accepted without division.

2) To Provide an Update on the continued engagement of the Locum RFO.

Cllr Nuthall advised the council that Louise Steele our Locum RFO was currently Preparing the Monthly Accounts, Reconciliation of those Accounts and ensuring that the Bills payable – Wages etc were processed.

Cllr Nuthall advised that she had stepped back from undertaking those functions, as well as looking at other general invoicing and instead asked the Assistant Clerk to do what he could. This however has led to repeated calls from the Assistant Clerk for advice and it was evident that the need to enlarge the remit of the Locum RFO was vital to the continued running of the Council. There was evidence that bookings for hall hirers had not been invoiced and that this needed to be addressed.

Cllr Pearse asked whether or not the lack of invoicing hall hirers was having a detrimental effect on the finances of the Council and Cllr Nuthall replied that it was.

A general discussion then took place and it was proposed by Cllr Thomas and seconded by Cllr McNeil that Cllr Nuthall approach Louise Steele to see if she was willing to undertake additional roles/work and also if she would be willing to extend her contract until 31st December 2024. This was agreed without division.

The council then went into a closed discussion at 19.35hrs

3) To provide an update on the status of the Parish Clerk and RFO.

Meeting Closed 20.30hrs.


6/11/24