

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CLOSED MEETING TO DISCUSS THE JOB OFFER OF PARISH CLERK: HELD ON THURSDAY 17 MARCH 2022 HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Apologies received from Mike Tyers and Karl Lumsden.

Attending Councillors Keith Cornwall (Chair), Katy Harper, Chloe Rusby, Paul Newman, and Michael Wallace. No members of the public were present for the open session, Ward Councillor Barry Durkin attended the open session.

A non-pecuniary interest was recorded by Keith Cornwall in connection to item 3 on the agenda, employment matters, recognising his association with Alison Feist.

A resolution was passed to exclude the public from confidential item 3, employment matters.

Before discussion of item 3, the Council voted to suspend standing orders referring to the six-month rule to allow the Council to discuss the Clerk's employment matters again.

The Chairman was thanked for his consultation with HALC and for the prior circulation of a detailed email from Linda Wilcox, Chief Executive of HALC, covering thoroughly the background of the 2021 recruitment for a parish clerk for Upton Bishop PC and the subsequent role of Alison Feist. It was agreed that if documentation such as this had been available at the first closed meeting, a second closed meeting would not have been needed. It was noted that HALC'S email confirmed that while no formal contract existed for Alison Feist as Parish Clerk, there was sufficient logical argument for the Council to rely on the clear recommendation of HALC in the email to make a formal job offer to Alison Feist for the role of Parish Clerk. A resolution was proposed to make such an offer and supported unanimously.

Details of the role and salary were discussed, and it was agreed the best approach would be to follow the recommendation made by HALC. The role of clerk should include the role of RFO (Responsible Financial Officer) and for 7 hours per week. At a later stage if the clerk was struggling on these hours, she would be given an opportunity to discuss this with the Council, with the possibility of increased hours or reducing the scale of the job.

A resolution was passed stating that the clerk is only responsible for posting formal parish council business, and the website volunteer would be responsible for all other matters.

The salary was discussed and it was stated that HALC had recommended SCP22 for an unqualified clerk, such as Alison Feist, to be reviewed on qualification. It was agreed that the Chair should email HALC asking them to confirm in writing the exact salary for 2022 for grade SCP22. On receipt of HALC advice a job offer should be made. Concern was expressed that there may be a delay in HALC responding so it was agreed that HALC should be requested to respond within 3 working days. It was agreed that once the recommended SCP22 grade salary is received from HALC we should make

a verbal job offer to Alison Feist. If accepted, the written draft contract should be circulated to councillors before being formally signed.

The status of HALC was discussed and it was agreed that the item should be placed on the agenda for the 5 April meeting to relook at the matter of contracting support from HALC and probably agreeing a continuance. It was noted that HALC support formally ends at the end of March but there was confidence that if HALC understands that the matter will be on the next 5 April agenda they would not stop their support before that review.

It was mentioned that "confidential file notes" concerning the last closed meeting on 1 March existed at HALC. Certain Draft Minutes relating to the closed 1 March meeting had been circulated to councillors before the 17 March closed meeting and a vote was taken to adopt those as a true and correct record. The vote was unanimous except for one objection. The Chairman signed and dated those minutes at the meeting. The Chair was asked to circulate the "confidential file notes" at HALC to all councillors.

For the Parish Council meeting held on 1 March, the wording for the formal public minutes for the closed session should be:

"Councillors discussed the clerk's role and considered aspects of employment". It was observed that no minutes existed for the open session of the meeting of 1 March and it was agreed that it was not necessary to draft these before the outcome of the job offer to the clerk is known. A volunteer offered to produce a set of draft minutes if required (bearing in mind, routinely a good record of what has happened has been published on the Upton Bishop website).

It was agreed that the forthcoming Annual Parish Meeting (APM) would be better held in May than in April.

Meeting concluded at 1950 hrs

THE CHAIR OF THIS MEETING DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THESE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE UPTON BISHOP PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 17TH MARCH IN RESPECT OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING ARE A CORRECT RECORD BUT HIS VIEW WAS NOT UPHOLD BY THE MEETING AND THE MINUTES ARE CONFIRMED AS AN ACCURATE RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS

R. K. Coull

2
5TH APRIL 2022.