



HAILSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of Hailsham Town Council held in the Fleur de Lys Meeting Room on Wednesday 12th December 2024 at 7.00pm.

HTC/24/
3 X185 **Present:** Councillors: B. Carpenter, K-M Blundell-Smith, B. Holbrook, P. Holbrook, M. Laxton, C. Mitchell, K. Nicholls, A. M. Ricketts, D Rusu and G. White.

186 **Officers in Attendance**

Mr J. Harrison (Town Clerk), Mr T. Lee, Mrs E. Hastings and Mr D. Saxby.

187 **Public Question Time**

A member of the public addressed the Council about the high level of staffing in the Council and the consequent increase in the precept. He said there had to be cuts to staffing levels.

He questioned the legality of using CIL money to purchase the church and the manse.

He was also concerned that the Post Office was continuing to run at a loss. It was wrong to use the precept to keep an insolvent business going.

188 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence had been received and accepted from Councillors A. Blake-Coggins, G. Blake-Coggins, C. Bryant, D. Chapman, A. Clarke, F. Clarke, J. Crittenden and N. Hayes.

189 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

190 **Confidential Business**

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded during the discussion on agenda items 12 and 13 as they concern; the beginning of legal proceedings and the terms of tenders for contracts of negotiations and engagement and terms of service (in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders No.1E).

Staffing Review

191.1 The following emergency motion was tabled. It was proposed by Councillor Blundell-Smith and seconded by Councillor Laxton.

Council recognises:

- *HTC faces unprecedented upheaval with the loss of two key members of staff.*
- *HTC previously implemented a staffing review recruiting additional posts.*
- *HTC is now facing additional costs to cover changes in staffing.*

Council therefore proposes:

- *To revoke further implementation of the staffing review until May 2025.*
- *To withdraw currently advertised job posts unless such posts are funded externally until May 2025, excluding the posts advertised with the Youth Service*
- *To bring the 'Staffing Review' to full council in May 2025 for discussion.*

Councillor Blundell-Smith said that the Council had recently received the resignations of the Responsible Finance Officer and the Finance Assistant. It made sense, therefore, to look again at the Staffing Review and halt it until May 2025 and pause the increase of additional staff. It would be foolish to recruit an additional part time Receptionist as there were no data on the number of phone calls or visitors.

Detailed discussion took place, and it was agreed that the Town Clerk would supply Council with a list of members of staff who did not have contracts by 18th December 2024.

It was agreed that as there was to be a formal review of the Staff Review in April 2025, the Town Clerk should ask Council HR and Governance Support to undertake it. It was noted that it had been previously agreed that external Human Resources expertise should be bought in.

It was agreed to amend the motion to read:

191.2 **RESOLVED** that Council recognises:

- HTC faces unprecedented upheaval with the loss of two key members of staff.
- HTC previously implemented a staffing review recruiting additional posts.
- HTC is now facing additional costs to cover changes in staffing.

Council therefore proposes:

- To revoke further implementation of the staffing review until March 2025.
- To bring the 'Staffing Review' to full council in March 2025 for discussion.

191.3 This was agreed unanimously.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.22pm.

CHAIRMAN