

**Northam Town Council – Minutes of the Full Council meeting held 25<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Windmill Lane, Northam.**

Present: Cllrs Tait (Mayor), Bach, Brading, Edwards, Hames, Himan, Hodson, Leather, Lo-Vel, Newman-McKie and Whittaker.

In attendance: Guy Langton – Acting Town Clerk  
Rev. Jules Harris

Rev. Harris lead the Council in prayers before the start of the meeting.

**2406/112 Apologies**

No members tendered apologies in advance of the meeting.

**2406/113 Mayor’s Announcements**

The Mayor invited Cllr Bach to address the Council regarding a visit from a delegation from one of the Council’s Twin Towns. The Council heard that representatives of Helmstedt, the successor council to Northam Town’s twin town, Buddenstedt, were hoping to make a brief visit to the Town on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024 but that firm plans had not been put in place in Northam. They hoped to meet members of the Council, though the Mayor was not available. Cllr Bach, as Deputy Mayor, agreed to attend, as did Cllr Lo-Vel.

Cllr Himan agreed to make contact with the Twinning Committee to establish what may be planned and what could be achieved within the Council’s allocated £750 budget for Twinning events.

The Acting Town Clerk announced that, as had been agreed at the Annual Meeting of the Council on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024, member allowances would increase in line with those at Torridge District Council, rounded to the nearest pound. Torridge had agreed the increase would be 3.8%. Northam Town Council member allowance would therefore increase from £1,000 per annum to £1,039 per annum for the year 2024-25.

**2406/114 To receive any dispensations and disclosable pecuniary or other interests.**

Members were reminded that all interests must be declared prior to the item being discussed.

**2406/115 To agree the agenda as published.**

It was **resolved** to agree the agenda as published.  
Proposed Cllr Whittaker, Seconded Cllr Brading (all in favour)

**2406/116 To confirm as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Annual Meeting of Northam Town Council, held on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

It was **resolved** to approve the minutes as a true and correct record of the Annual Meeting of Northam Town Council, held on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024. They were signed by the Chair.

Proposed: Cllr Brading, Seconded: Cllr Bach (all in favour)

**2406/117 To receive and adopt the minutes and resolutions of Committees and Sub-Committees**

- Human Resources: 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024

The minutes were received and adopted.

**2406/118 To note the draft minutes of the Committees and Sub-Committees**

- Human Resources: 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024

The minutes were received noted.

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**2406/119 Public Participation**

No members of the public were present.

**2406/120 To consider a request from a member of the public requesting to use the Appledore carpark leased to The Seagate Hotel as an outdoor cinema in August**

Cllr Tait declared an interest – she was closely involved with the RNLI, one of the benefitting charities, and so would not take part in any vote.

It was **resolved** to agree that the Council’s carpark, which it leased to the Seagate Hotel, could be used for outdoor cinema screenings in the summer to raise money for the identified charities, which included the Appledore Pirates and the RNLI station in Appledore, on the understanding that the organisers provide detail of how and on what the attendees would be sitting, the plans for the outdoor eating area during the performance, a risk assessment, evidence of insurance and details of who had been consulted locally.

Proposed: Cllr Leather, Seconded Cllr Hames (majority in favour – Cllr Tait abstained having declared an interest).

**Action point: Council staff to contact the organisers to seek clarity on the above mentioned points, namely: how and on what the attendees would be sitting, the plans for the outdoor eating area during the performance, a risk assessment, evidence of insurance and details of who had been consulted locally.**

**2406/121 To consider a partnership proposal from the Atlantic Raquet Centre**

It was **resolved** to form a working group to review the possibilities, with membership to include representatives from FOTWHOP and the volunteer gardeners, with delegated responsibility for arranging the activities for the next 6 months, to report back to a suitable meeting of the Council or one of its committees.

Proposed: Cllr Brading, Seconded Cllr Newman-McKie (all in favour)

Cllrs Brading, Newman-McKie and Tait volunteered to be part of this group.

**Action point: Council staff to contact ARC, representatives of FOTWHOP and the volunteer gardeners and Cllrs to arrange the first meeting of the working group.**

*Rev. Harris left at this point (7.15pm).*

**2406/122 To receive and approve the Council’s Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023-24**

The Council heard that the internal auditor had completed his annual review of the Council’s Annual Governance and Return (AGAR) 2023-24, agreeing all the objectives other than (k) and (l), which were deemed out of scope. A full report would be received in due course through the Finance Committee.

It was noted that the period for the exercising of public rights would be the 30 working days comprised in the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> July to the 9<sup>th</sup> August 2024. Notices to this effect would be displayed from the 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

It was **resolved** to agree with the all statements in the Annual Governance Statement in Section 1 and the Annual Accounting Statements in Section 2 of the AGAR 2023-24, the Mayor signing the relevant pages.

Proposed: Cllr Leather, Seconded Cllr Hames (all in favour)

**Action point: Submit the completed AGAR.**

**Action point: display the posters outlining the period for the exercising of public rights.**

**Action point: Upload all document to the Council’s website.**

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**2409/123 To consider the recommendations of the Human Resources Committee**

It was **resolved** to adopt all recommendations of the committee, contained within the confidential report, as follows:

Given the confidential nature of the discussion, it was **resolved** to exclude members of the press and public in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, subsection (2).

Proposed: Cllr Tait, Seconded: Cllr Whittaker (all in favour).

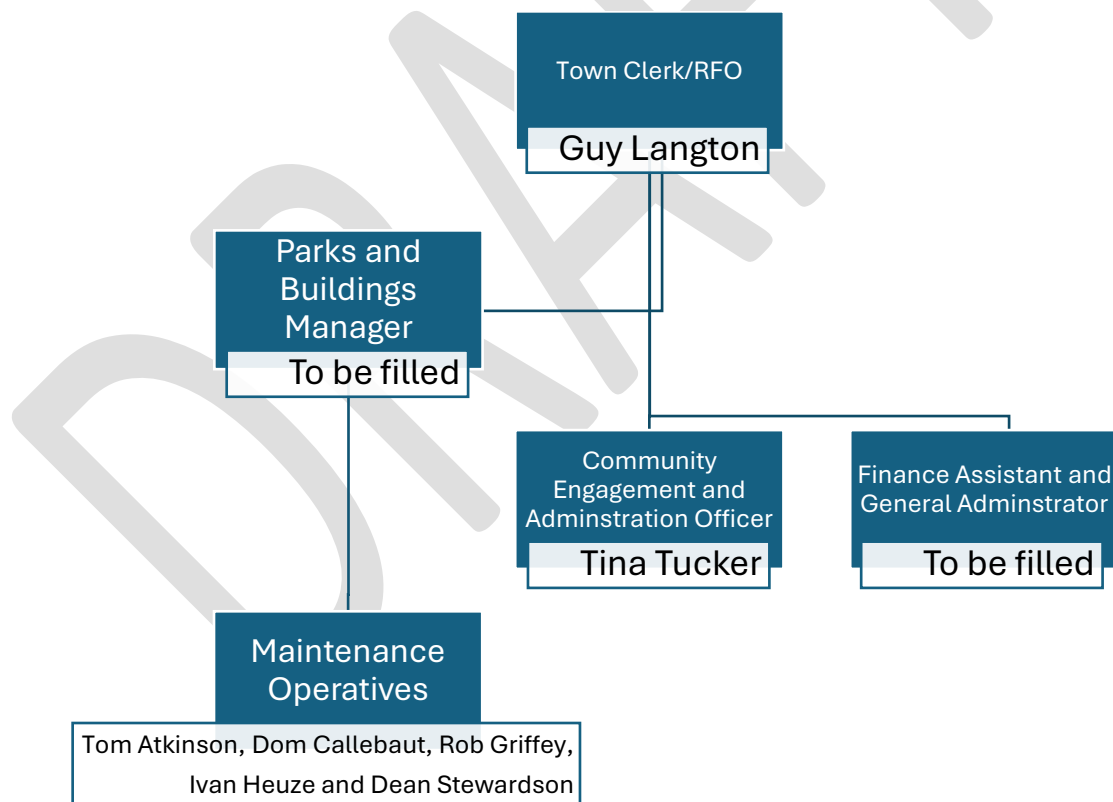
**RECOMMENDATION 1:**

The Human Resources committee recommended that the staffing structure proposed by the Staffing Review be adopted for the Council. This structure is presented on page 2 of this report. This structure includes a Town Clerk/RFO as the senior member of the team. This role encompasses that of the Proper Officer defined in the Local Government Act 1972 (section 270(1)).

Reporting directly to the Town Clerk/RFO are three new roles:

- Community Engagement and Administration Officer**
- Finance Assistant and General Administrator**
- Parks and Buildings Manager**

**Staffing structure from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024**



**RECOMMENDATION 2:**

Paragraph 3.7 of the Staffing Review report advised:

A private discussion also took place on 17th May 2024 to consider the post of Town Clerk, currently being covered on an acting basis by the Deputy Town Clerk. There was universal agreement that when the Deputy was recruited, it was done so on the basis of ensuring a succession plan was in place to cover the anticipated retirement of the Town Clerk. Given the strong business case for confirming the Deputy into the position of Town Clerk, it was agreed as an action point that the Chairs of the Finance

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and HR committees would include this on the agendas with a view of putting forward a resolution to the full Council that the Deputy Town Clerk be appointed to the Town Clerk position with immediate effect. **It was recommended that the Council confirm the appointment of the new Town Clerk/RFO with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024 on the scale LC3 (substantive) – points 37 to 41.**

**RECOMMENDATION 3:**

One outcome of the staffing review was that the newest members of the Maintenance Team had been appointed on less favourable terms than their three longer-serving colleagues. The Consultant advised that, as the work done is of equal worth, all members of that team should be paid the same. This does not mean that all must be advanced to the same scale point on the nationally-agreed scale (a copy of which is circulated alongside this report) but be placed in the same band – in this case LC1 (scale 6-12). The effect of this recommendation would be to advance one member of the team from scale point 4 to scale point 8 (an increase of £1,588 or 83p per hour), in recognition of his two years' successful service with the Council; and a second member from scale point 2 to scale point 6 (an increase of £1,527 or 80p per hour), as he has served fewer years.

**It was recommended that the Council confirm the new pay grade for these two employees.**

**RECOMMENDATION 4:**

That the Council confirm the job description and person specification of the part-time Finance Assistant and General Administrator and that the role is advertised with immediate effect and a recruitment panel appointed from the members of the Human Resources Committee, supported by the Town Clerk.

**RECOMMENDATION 5:**

That the Council confirm the job description and person specification of the full-time Community Engagement and Administration Officer and that the role is advertised with immediate effect given the similarity of the role with the Administration Officer, the incumbent be confirmed in the new role with effect from 1st July 2024.

**RECOMMENDATION 6:**

That the Council confirm the job description and person specification of the full-time Parks and Buildings Manager and that the role is advertised with immediate effect and a recruitment panel appointed from the members of the Human Resources Committee, supported by the Town Clerk.

**RECOMMENDATION 7:**

That all new staff and those newly appointed to roles, be issued with the revised contract and that the other members of the maintenance team be consulted on them adopting the new contract.

Proposed: Cllr Hodson, Seconded: Cllr Brading (all in favour)

**Action point: The Town Clerk/RFO and Chair of the Human Resources Committee to review and redraft as appropriate the Job Description and Person Specification for the Town Clerk/RFO to present to a future meeting of Full Council for approval.**

**Action Point: The Town Clerk/RFO and Chair of the Human Resources Committee to review and redraft as appropriate the Person Specification for the role of Community Engagement and Administration Officer.**

**Action point: Town Clerk/RFO to advise all current staff of the changes to the staffing structure.**

**Action point: Town Clerk/RFO and Chair of Human Resources to prepare advertisements and application packs for the roles to be advertised (Parks and Buildings Manager and Finance Assistant and Administration Officer).**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7:40pm.

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Signed.....Dated.....

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