

# **CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021 at 14:15pm via Zoom**

**Present:** Councillors E Scott (Chair), V Ashfield, G Holland and G Nair.

**Also present:** Parish Clerk A Shanley

## **1. ELECTION OF CHAIR OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

Councillor E Scott was elected Chair of the Personnel Committee.  
Proposed by Cllr G Holland and seconded by Cllr V Ashfield.

## **2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

Councillor A Doig was elected Vice-Chair of the Personnel Committee.  
Proposed by Cllr G Holland and seconded by Cllr E Scott.

## **3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr A Doig.

## **4. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS**

None received.

## **5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 11<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2021**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

## **6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None received.

## **7. UPDATE ON NATIONAL PAY NEGOTIATIONS FOR 2021/22 FROM 1 APRIL 2021**

The Committee noted that negotiations were still ongoing regarding the increase in pay for all local government pay scales from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 between the Government and Union representatives, with the latest pay increase offer having been rejected by the Unions.

## **8. CONSIDERATION OF ASSISTANT PARISH CLERK ROLE AND RECRUITMENT**

The Committee **agreed** to propose the following job description to Full Council for the assistant parish clerk role, with the agreement that, once agreed by Full Council, the Clerk should seek independent HR advice on an appropriate salary scale for this role:

## **Job title: Community projects officer**

The City of Durham Parish Council is advertising an exciting, rewarding and outward facing part-time role to manage a diverse range of community projects, primarily those relating to the work of its Environment Committee. The successful candidate will work for the Parish Clerk and will work in collaboration with him on a range of other tasks including some administrative tasks as required.

**Location:** Working from home on a temporary basis (owing to the Covid-19 pandemic) and in Durham City thereafter.

**Day/Times:** This role is for (**TBC**) hours per week. Candidates must be flexible as additional hours are needed at busy times and also when deputising for the Parish Clerk. There are some meetings in the evening.

**Salary:** In accordance with NJC pay scales – exact salary **TBC** with HR.

**Role:** The City of Durham Parish Council is an ambitious, pro-active Council which works to deliver a wide range of projects and events, focusing on the living environment and community wellbeing. The successful candidate will work largely with the Parish Council's Environment Committee and a range of other key stakeholders.

The role will primarily involve the management of community projects within the City of Durham parish, in collaboration with the Parish Clerk as well as other administrative tasks as required.

**Reporting To:** City of Durham Parish Clerk as line manager who will report to the Chair and the Parish Council.

### **Duties required as part of this role:**

- To manage community projects within the City of Durham parish area, as directed by the Council.
- To work closely with the Parish Clerk and Councillors on the delivery of projects, such as Durham in Bloom, community planting projects, supporting work with local schools and other key stakeholders.
- Work with the Council to develop a model for a Young Persons/Youth Forum.
- Identify, develop and write grant applications for Council projects/initiatives.
- To work with the Parish Clerk and Councillors to review community initiatives, to maximise community engagement and involvement.
- To assist with the organisation and management of events and attend these as required.
- To be involved in updating and developing the Parish Council website and to be involved in the production of the Parish Council newsletter.

- To assist the Parish Clerk with the smooth running of the Parish Council's administration.
- To assist in accurate record keeping and administration.
- To ensure the Council's policies, health and safety and risk assessments are observed. This includes adhering to GDPR legislation.
- To undertake such other duties as may be required from time to time commensurate to level of the post.
- To attend meetings, including some in the evening, and make reports as required.

### **Role Specification**

The person must be able to attend meetings as required by the Parish Clerk and some meetings will be in the evening.

The post is subject to the receipt of at least two satisfactory references.

The person must be reliable, capable of working on their own initiative with minimal supervision.

### **Also required:**

Good general education

Pleasant face to face communication and telephone manner

Computer literate with a good working knowledge of Microsoft Word, Excel, Powerpoint, the internet.

Well-organised

Flexible and able to multi-task

Willing to learn and take responsibility for own personal development

Collaborative working style with a pro-active and innovative approach to work

## **9. PROPOSAL TO REINSTATE THE TOWN CRIER IN DURHAM CITY**

The Clerk reminded Members that, earlier this year, the Parish Council was asked to consider supporting the reinstatement of the Town Crier to Durham City.

The Clerk advised that, traditionally, a Parish or Town Council 'employs' the town crier for a particular area. Durham City has also previously had a town crier.

When considered by Full Council in March 2021, it was felt that reinstating the town crier could add some attention and interest to selected events in the City, as well as reinstating an important role for an historic city such as Durham. Members will also be aware that other areas in County Durham, such as Chester-le-Street, have their own town crier.

Members agreed that the Town Crier would only attend events in the City in an official capacity with the prior consent of the Parish Clerk and/or Chair of the Parish Council.

The Town Crier may be asked to: -

- Call people to attention
- Make a Town or Event Announcement or Declaration
- Thank people for their attendance or support
- Pose for photographs

The position is unpaid.

The Town Crier will also be expected to sign an agreement to meet Council expectations in terms of conduct and behaviour and to comply with relevant Council Policies. This will include a requirement to refrain from making any political or contentious comments whilst on duty and to never speak on behalf of the Parish Council or to give the impression that this is the case.

The Town Crier will be expected to make arrangements for cleaning of the costume, the pre-agreed cost being claimed back by way of expenses. The Town Crier may also claim reasonable expenses (e.g. parking/travel) for attending event, but this must be agreed by the Parish Council. It is also recommended that the Parish Council agrees a maximum expenses limit that will be refunded in any one financial year for this role if approved.

When discussing the role, it was agreed that the Parish Council's Personnel Committee should be charged with the recruitment of a suitable person to carry out this role.

The Clerk advised that the purpose of this report is to seek an agreement from Members on the most appropriate way forward for the recruitment of the Town Crier.

Advice from the Ancient & Honourable Guild of Town Criers specifies that, in order to recruit a town crier for the first time, the Council will need a Job Description, an Application Form and a "Trial Cry".

It was **agreed** that the Clerk should seek advice from the Ancient & Honourable Guild of Town Criers on the recruitment of the Town Crier, with a report back to the next available meeting.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked all present for their attendance and contributions and closed the meeting.

Signed,



**Chair of the Parish Council's Personnel Committee  
(9<sup>th</sup> December 2021)**