

EMPLOYMENT, FINANCE & STRATEGY GROUP MEETING

Thursday 25th July 2024 - Minutes

1. **Present:** Cllrs Hotson, Arger, Sharp and Perry (part)
2. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Riordan and Martin
3. **Dispensations** - NA
4. **Minutes of previous meeting** – 3rd July 2024 meeting minutes agreed by those present.
5. **Hi Kent Grant application**

The Hi Kent application: They are seeking £440 towards the costs associated with the use of the McCabe Centre. They are an excellent group that serve local residents.

Cllr Hotson proposed and Cllr Arger seconded to recommend to Council a grant of £440 to Hi Kent – agreed unanimously

6. Finance report

The RFO brought forward several items for consideration

1. From the 1st August the monthly subscription to SAGE, the Parish Council's payroll package, will increase from £8.00 to £10.00 per month +VAT.
2. A large sum of money is sitting in the Lloyds Bank deposit account and interest rates on this account will reduce from 1.31% to 1% from 27th July 2024. Lloyds are offering an interest rate of 4% on a 95-day notice account.
3. A quote of £7,799.00 +VAT has been received for the annual repaint of the skatepark from Evolution Skateparks, whom we have used for many years and who have always carried out the work to a professional standard.

Following a debate, Cllr Hotson proposed and Cllr Arger seconded to recommend to Council the above – agreed unanimously.

(Cllr Perry joined the meeting)

7. Co-option policy - attached

The Clerk, raised several points that need clarifying;

a) Eligibility

We have three options to consider

a.1 Current policy eligibility

The Parish Council can consider any person to fill a vacancy provided that:

- For twelve months they have;

- a) lived in the parish or within 3 miles of the parish;
OR
 - b) their principal or only place of work is in the parish
OR
 - c) occupied (as owner or tenant) any land or other premises in the parish.
- OR
- You are registered on the electoral role of the parish

a.2 Application form eligibility

Legal qualifications for being a parish councillor.

(To qualify you must be able to answer 'Yes' to both of the questions below)

Are you a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of a European Union country?	Yes/No.
Are you 18 or over?	Yes/No.

(To qualify you must be able to answer 'Yes' to at least one of the questions below)

Are you on the electoral register for the parish of Staplehurst?	Yes/No
Have you lived either in the parish of Staplehurst, or within three miles of its boundary, for at least a year?	Yes/No
Have you been the owner or tenant of land in the parish of Staplehurst for at least a year?	Yes/No
Have you had your only or main place of work in the parish of Staplehurst for at least a year?	Yes/No.

3.c LGA Act 1972 eligibility

(a) I am registered as a local government elector for the area of the parish named above

(b) I have, during the whole of the preceding 12 months occupied as owner or tenant land or other premises in the parish named above

(c) my principal or only place of work during the preceding 12 months has been in the parish named above

(d) I have during the whole of the preceding 12 months resided in the parish named above or within 4.8 kilometres of it. (MBC advice is that it is 4.8km (3 miles) from the Parish boundary to their address, as the crow flies. The length by road is immaterial.)

Following a debate the Local Government Act 1972 criteria was agreed, provide examples of evidence.

b) Applications

Following a debate it was felt the application form was a good idea and should be retained

Cllr Hotson proposed and Cllr Perry seconded to recommend to Council

i. the Local Government Act 1972 criteria

a) I am registered as a local government elector for the area of the parish named above

(b) I have, during the whole of the preceding 12 months occupied as owner or tenant land or other premises in the parish named above

(c) my principal or only place of work during the preceding 12 months has been in the parish named above

(d) I have during the whole of the preceding 12 months resided in the parish named above or within 4.8 kilometres of it.

ii. Retain the application form, with the Local Government Act 1972 criteria

8. Updated Grant application form

Clerk explained recent comments have led to proposed minor amendments to grant application form so that it is easier to complete.

Cllr Hotson proposed and Cllr Perry seconded to recommend to Council the amended Grant application form.

9. Jubilee Field Groundsman – shortlisting – see separate emails

We advertised the Groundsman job at the Jubilee Field on Indeed. It was felt that one candidate stood out and the role should be offered to them, subject to satisfactory Public Liability Insurance plus a reference.

In addition we should offer to cover petrol costs.

Cllr Hotson proposed and Cllr Sharo seconded to recommend to Council to appoint the outstanding candidate and add cover petrol costs .

The clerk raised a number of general points;

In relation to the Allotments

- Cllr Pett is meeting the allotment holder about trees and will report back
- It was felt a refund of £7.50 should be offered as the only started in the last week of July and had been charged for the whole of July.
- That as a one off due to circumstances the next plot should be allocated as requested.

Clerk to discuss with Cllr Arger the use of the residents survey responses to assist the council in a structured – strategic way forward and report back.

10. Next Meeting 15th August 2024 – 1;30pm