

EMPLOYMENT, FINANCE & STRATEGY GROUP MEETING
Meeting 16.1.25 – Minutes

1. Present: Cllrs Hotson, Martin, Sharp and Arger plus Clerk

2. Apologies for Absence; Cllr Riordan and Wakeford
 Absent – Cllr Perry

3. Dispensations - NA

4. Minutes of previous meeting – 19th December 2024

Note Cllr Sharp was unsure if another HR Group / sub Group was needed?
 Minutes agreed with amendment above.

1. Decoration

SCCT will not make a donation to the communal kitchen and bathroom areas
 SPC to place order for their work offices

2. Staff grades

Responsibilities – Cllrs frustrated that this is dragging on with Worknest
 The Clerk asked had the Cllrs responded to the Worknest request for a response on
 “responsibilities”, Group not sure as Cllr Riordan was not present.
 The staff have drafted a response and noted that the Clerk as the Proper Officer of
 the Council has overall responsibility for delivery of all the functions of the Parish
 Council, however responsibility is shared out, for instance: the RFO has responsibility
 for budget and audit, the Admin Support has responsibility for CCTV and the
 Caretaker has responsibility for inspecting facilities and open space and then
 reporting issues.

The Group welcomed staff comment on responsibilities – Clerk to forward

**3. Budget – some minor amends (Quotes in for printing etc) but precept
 £300,000 same as proposed and circulated to all Cllrs**

**4. Bower Walk letter – general agreement by the EFS Group that historically
 some letters have gone straight out and some through the Council. Cllrs
 noted their frustration that the Police / School representatives did not turn
 up to the meeting on Monday. – Clerk trying to rearrange.**

To avoid any doubt, the Clerk suggested moving forward that all letters to
 “a Group of residents” should go through the Council.

**5. Clerk informed the Group that the Defib should have a spare set of pads in
 them – estimated cost at Library £50 – £60 plus VAT, at Church Green
 estimated £65 - £75 plus VAT – Agreed to action and report to Council on
 27th Jan 2025.
 Need to clarify where the spare pads should be stored?**

5. Action plan

1. SCEnic need to review to do risk assessments for Youth Club, Bell Lane and Surrenden Field.
2. Other actions completed or on agenda

6. Council Strategic Action Plan – draft 2 attached

Vision statement – agreed Working together for Staplehurst

Front page – logo / colours – add in Council Logo on front, colours of segments? – to Council to decide

How can we support local businesses – realistically not a Parish Council role if no local Business Association to work with.

Neighbourhood Watch / my community voice – need to make further enquires – no active local group but links with County Wide Group (Cllr Martin and Sharp to clarify)

Communications Group also discussed and AS will forward.

Finalise and report to EFS Group and then onto Council.

7. Organise Merit Awards – mid May 2025

Group finalised initial discussion

- Weekday Evening / Saturday – felt an evening would be better – subject to North Hall availability (AS)
Time? 7:30 – 9:30pm
- Use North Hall due stalls for community Groups and need to clarify potential number of stalls (AS / RG)
- Invite community Groups for a stall / display to support Groups and opportunity for them to promote their activities– yes liaise with JT - Groups will need to reserve a stall
- Rolling presentation of Council key points in the year – yes - need to develop presentation
- Invite School display on what the grant has been used for. (Check Terms and Conditions of S137 grants)
- Refreshments? – Note as an evening it will be “open” how much do we cater for? Response from local Groups will help to indicate
- Important as a Social evening – finalise refreshments (AS / MA)
- Sponsorship – will need to seek sponsors to support costs
- Repromoted Merit Award nominations for 2025

Timescales

- Council agree 27th January 2025
- Contact Groups – save the date / invite to have a stall – February 2025
- Firm up by end March 2025

- Promotion - via social media? Posters? Email Groups, School etc
- Agreed report to next Council meeting.

8. Finalise HR Group Terms of Reference

Following a discussion the Group felt that a "Sub Group of EFS Group" with a focus on HR / Employment matters should be formed.

Proposed by Cllr Hotson, seconded by Cllr Arger and agreed majority 3 for, 1 against 0 abstained.

Therefore finalise HR Sub Group Terms of Reference and adjust Terms of Reference for EFS Group – Clerk – report to next Council meeting.

Discussed that HR Sub Group should consist of Cllr Riordan, Cllr Arger and Cllr Martin – with Cllr Sharp and Hotson subs. (Cllr Sharp to act as sub for Cllr Riordan for the time being)

Proposed by Cllr Hotson, seconded by Cllr Arger and agreed unanimously.

Aim for Sub Group to develop Council Appraisal Policy, based on best practise from recent HR training, use the short form illustrated in the HR Training.

9. 3G Multi-Sport pitch funding – verbal update

In effect still working through costs / funding in simple terms

1. To obtain planning permission – will require the car park extension
2. Once planning permission obtained final cost can be confirmed
3. Funding – Football Foundation cannot add funding – but supportive in trying to deliver project by making savings if possible
4. Council can apply for further funding after planning permission – but challenging
5. Council likely to be required to provide more than the approved £30,000

Next steps: 3G Multi-Sport Working Group meeting on Monday 20th January 2025 to discuss and report to Council on 27th January 2025. Clerk liaison with consultants and keep Cllrs up to date.

10. Review of Policies schedule

General up to date – need to review

- Donations Policy
- plus S137 Grants Terms and Conditions at next EFS Group

Confidential HR issues were discussed

11. Next Meeting 20th February 2025