

# **Minutes of Emergency Special Meeting of the Beckermet with Thornhill Parish Council held on Tuesday 13 July 2021 at 18:30, at Beckermet Reading Rooms**

## **Present**

S Meter (Chair), T Barlow, S Caddy, K Cook (from item ES4), E Jewitt, J Nugent, M Slater

## **In Attendance**

L Barlow (Acting minute secretary)

The Emergency Special Meeting had been called due to the resignation of the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to the Council. The Chair moved that, under Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting. This was agreed by all.

## **ES1. Apologies**

None

The Chair requested the addition of two items to the agenda:

ES6: the establishment of a sub-committee to undertake the application process for the post of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to the Council with delegated authority to appoint to the post.

ES7: the allocation of delegated authority to the sub-committee to amend or add to the contract of employment for the vacant post and to agree the starting salary and probationary period of the successful candidate.

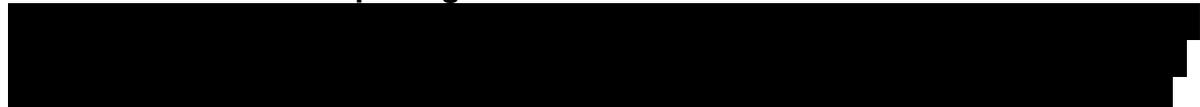
It was agreed that the two items should be conflated with just one additional item being added to the agenda:

ES6: the establishment of a sub-committee to undertake the application process for the post of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to the Council with delegated authority to appoint to the post with an agreed starting salary and probationary period and to amend or add to the contract of employment if necessary.

## **ES2. To declare any interest in items on the agenda**

None

## **ES3. To consider the opening of a new bank account for the Parish Council.**



The Chair had been assured by the bank that there had been no untoward activity with respect to the account.

The Chair reported that he had applied to NatWest Bank to open an account but had been refused with no reason given and no appeal process against this decision. He had therefore returned to HSBC.

HSBC had indicated the need for evidence (in the form of meeting minutes) of specific agreement and authorisation from the Parish Council that a new bank account with HSBC should be opened.

The Chair made a formal proposal to the Council that a new bank account for the Parish Council with HSBC be opened by the Chair. JN seconded the proposal and all members agreed.

#### **ES4. Nominations for signatories to countersign cheques on behalf of the Parish Council**

The Chair confirmed that all signatories must have a mobile phone and be prepared to accept telephone calls from the bank, and receive and reply to emails from the bank.

It was noted that it was normal practice for the Council to have a minimum of three signatories (previously SM, SC and KC) as two signatures were required for a cheque.

It was agreed that the following members met the criteria and were willing to act as signatories:

S Meter  
T Barlow  
S Caddy  
K Cook  
E Jewitt  
J Nugent

The Chair noted that all signatories would be required to provide personal details to the bank in order to be approved as a signatory. This request would be circulated for completion once supplied by the bank.

It was also noted that a copy of these minutes would be supplied to the bank as part of the documentation required to open an account. They would, however, be redacted to remove any records not related to the opening of the bank account.

The Chair had been advised by his contact at HSBC that the opening of the account was likely to take in excess of 10 working days. The arrangements for managing the account on a day to day basis would be finalised once the account was open but it was noted that such arrangements would ideally include:

- the use of a central email address for banking purposes to which Council members had access to monitor bank correspondence
- on-line access for relevant Council members to view the bank account

#### **ES5. Update on vacancy for Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer**

Mrs Threader had resigned from her role as Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer on 30 June with the last date of employment set at 31 July. She had agreed to return all Council documentation to JN during the week commencing 12 July. JN reported that she intended to contact Mrs Threader on 14 July to make arrangements to collect the full set of documentation. It was recognised that it was likely that the returned documentation would need to be reviewed and re-organised.

The Chair reported that he had submitted an advert for a replacement to CALC on 30 June and had received an acknowledgement on 1 July. The closing date for applications had been set as end of day on 14 July.

On 13 July CALC had contacted the Chair and apologised for an administrative oversight on its part that meant the advert had not been circulated until 13 July.

Prior to the circulation earlier today by CALC, a total of 2 applications had been received (neither of which offered previous Clerk experience), following the late circulation of the advert by CALC today, a further 3 applications had been received prior to the meeting – all of which had been submitted by current Parish Council Clerks - and a fourth had arrived during the course of the meeting.

It was agreed that the original closing date would apply but that, should any applications arrive after 14 July, the Council would reserve the right to consider these, given CALC's failure to circulate the advert as initially agreed.

**ES6. To consider the establishment of a subcommittee with delegated authority to:**

- undertake the application process for the post of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to the Council**
- to appoint to the post with an agreed starting salary and probationary period**
- to amend or add to the contract of employment if necessary.**

The Chair proposed the establishment of a subcommittee with the delegated powers as outlined above. KC seconded the proposal and all members agreed.

It was agreed that, before the membership of the subcommittee could be agreed, the names of the current applicants should be shared in order to avoid potential conflict of interest by potential member(s) of the subcommittee. All members confirmed that they had no relationship with any of the applicants.

The Chair proposed that he should chair the subcommittee, and the following members volunteered to participate: TB, JN, MS. The composition of the interview panel would be at the discretion of the subcommittee and would be drawn from or comprise in its entirety members of the subcommittee.

The Chair undertook to circulate the applications to the subcommittee and TB agreed to draft:

- a person specification detailing the required attributes against which all applicants could be considered

- terms of reference for the subcommittee.

It was also agreed that the subcommittee would review the current contract of employment, taking account of any updated standard contract available via CALC, before final issue.

It was noted that the advert for the vacancy had not specified a starting salary but had indicated that this would be in line with national guidelines. As part of its delegated authority as agreed above, the subcommittee would determine the appropriate salary taking account of national guidelines and the successful candidate's previous experience in the role of Clerk.

### **ES7. Any Other Business**

It was agreed that the minutes of this meeting and the previous meeting would be ratified by email prior to formal approval by the Chair. As previously noted, the Chair would send a copy of these minutes (appropriately redacted) to HSBC.

### **ES8. Date and location for next meeting**

TB proposed that the meeting scheduled for 21 July be cancelled and a replacement date agreed in due course. JN seconded the proposal and all members agreed.

SM undertook to amend the website to indicate that the next meeting of the Council was 'to be advised'.