

ALTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Zoom meeting, 6.00 pm, April 24, 2020

Participants: Robert Carpenter Turner (Chair), Polly Carson, Alex Oliver, Mike Golden, Carol Whittle, Hayley Kington, Robin Aspinall (Treasurer), Charles Reiss (Clerk). Apologies for absence: none.

The minutes of the previous meeting were held over until the next regular Parish Council meeting.

041/20 Parish Clerk - appointment: At the request of the Chair, Charles Reiss reviewed the candidates and the selection process which, with the approval of the PC, had been overseen by the Chair, the Responsible Financial Officer and the Clerk. In their unanimous view Ms Elizabeth Martin had emerged the clear front runner. That recommendation together with her CV had been circulated to members. A draft employment contract had also been circulated. CR went through the terms of the contract, leaving aside the issue of the Job Title, and then invited questions. No question was asked.

Concerning the Job Title, CR reminded members that his recommendation had been to recruit, for the first time in the history of the PC, a professional Clerk. The intention was that Robin Aspinall, who had already put in a formidable amount of work, should continue as volunteer unpaid Responsible Financial Officer until his heavy immediate workload was cleared. Ms Martin however had pointed out that the current law required all officers of the council to be paid employees. She proposed she should take the titles of Clerk and RFO purely to abide by that rule. She was ready to be paid only the Clerk's hourly rate and leave RA free to continue and complete his tasks, with authorization from her. RA voiced strong concerns. He said he was very ready to give up the post as soon as his current workload was completed, but changing the arrangement now would create a host of legal and practical difficulties. CR said that Ms Martin had indicated that if members believed it necessary she would agree to take only the Clerk's role provided the legal issue was dealt with as soon as possible. Members strongly agreed that the legal issue must be resolved at the earliest practical opportunity but also felt that instant change was not a realistic option.

After discussion it was proposed Robert Carpenter Turner, seconded Polly Carson: That the Job Title "Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer" at 5.1 in the draft employment contract circulated be amended to "Clerk" on the understanding that the position of the Responsible Financial Officer will be rectified as soon as circumstances allow. Agreed unanimously.

A further resolution was proposed Robert Carpenter Turner, seconded Polly Carson: That Alton Parish Council appoints Ms Elizabeth Anne Martin as Clerk to the Council, subject to the terms of the contract agreed. Agreed unanimously.

042/20 SID invoice, Manningford: The payment due to Manningford Parish Council was authorized by Robert Carpenter Turner and Carol Whittle.

043/20 Clerk – resignation: Members thanked Charles Reiss for his ten years' service.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 6.37pm.