

KINGSTON SEYMOUR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a special / planning meeting of Kingston Seymour Parish Council on Tuesday 23rd February 2016 at 7.30pm in the foyer, Village Hall

Present:

Councillors Mike Sewell (MS, chairman), Paul Cox (PC), Caroline Harris (CH), Pete Harris (PH), Fred Malton (FM), Mike Wallis (MW) and Ian Wariner (IW). Leonie Allday, Clerk.

In attendance:

Mrs Jane Harris (JH), applicant

Declarations of Interest under the Code of Local Government Conduct: CH (item 2, relative of applicant).

1. Apologies for absence

Anthony Harris, applicant

2. Planning Application No. 16/P/0306/RM: Submission of reserved matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for the erection of a rural worker's dwelling with treatment plant drainage pursuant to Outline Planning Permission 14/P/1607/O. At Land at Tutshill Farm, Yeo Bank Lane (Mr & Mrs Anthony Harris)

It was noted that at the site meeting held the previous weekend, the matter of the finished floor level of the proposed dwelling had been raised, and the Environment Agency had objected to the application on flood risk grounds. JH reported that the agent had since been in touch with the planning officer to determine a level which would be acceptable to both the Environment Agency and the planning authority. The floor would have to be raised quite considerably (530mm plus an allowance for climate change), which would necessitate a higher ridge to the dwelling. Councillors did not see an increase in ridge height as a problem as the dwelling would be in a secluded location.

It was agreed that in other respects (design, layout etc) the application was acceptable and it was decided that it could be supported subject to (i) a revised finished floor level at a minimum of 6.84 m AOD plus an allowance for climate change as recommended by the EA and (ii) the planning authority's agreement to the resulting increase in the overall height of the dwelling. The Clerk would write to the case officer accordingly.

Action: Clerk

3. New Clerk Recruitment

Timetable

The Clerk had circulated the documents drawn up by the sub-committee. It was proposed (FM, seconded MW) and unanimously agreed that the timetable be approved.

Particulars of employment, advertisements

It was noted that the job description and person specification were based on templates issued by NALC and SLCC. Some councillors felt that certain of the requirements listed were too demanding and might deter

potential applicants. An example of a softer approach, used by a county association in another part of the country, was tabled and it was agreed that the sub-committee should redraft the PS to resemble this more closely. This will be circulated for further review and email agreement from councillors before use.

Action Clerk

It was further agreed that consequential amendments should be made to the proposed advertisement as incorporated in the PS. In addition some councillors objected to the offer to applicants of an informal chat only with the Clerk. It was decided to alter the wording to include the alternative possibility of an informal chat with the Chairman and / or clerk depending on the applicant's request. Subject to these three changes and deletion paragraph 2 with the reference to the webmaster it was proposed (IW, seconded PC) that the advertisement in principle be approved. Nevertheless the Chairman would ensure that a revised version is circulated to all councillors with the PS for final approval before the documents were put in the public domain.

Action: Chairman, Clerk

Selection of candidates

It was agreed that applicants would be asked to submit a CV and a short statement regarding their suitability for the job. The Chairman explained how applicants would be assessed, using a scoring matrix which he was in the process of devising. Councillors would have the opportunity to see this before it was finalized ahead of the next PC meeting. The initial scoring and assessment would be done by the sub-committee, although it was agreed that all councillors would have the opportunity to see all the applications and to express a view on the proposed short-list.

It was hoped that there would be sufficient applicants to draw up a shortlist of three or four for interview. The Chairman recommended that the interview panel consist of no more than three councillors, as a larger number would be inefficient and could be intimidating. He asked for councillors who would be interested in being on the panel to make this known; FM and CH volunteered. After discussion it was proposed (MS, seconded PC) and unanimously agreed that the interview panel should consist of PH, FM and CH, although it was acknowledged that substitutes might have to be arranged in the case of conflicts of interest arising from a member of the panel being related to, or a friend of, one of the candidates.

It was hoped that the preferred candidate would be invited to meet the Council in May. If recommended for appointment, standard pre-employment checks would be carried out before a formal offer was made for which key information will be requested with the job application.

Contract and pension

The Chairman indicated that a draft contract, based closely on the NALC / SLCC Model, had been drawn up, although some details would only be finalized following the appointment of a new clerk. One of these was the pension arrangements. Although a contributory pension was not a legal requirement, and would still not be post-2017 unless by then the clerk's salary had risen above the auto-enrolment threshold of £5824 pa, the Council would be required to offer a non-contributory pension if the new Clerk so requested. However, the sub-committee wished to recommend that as a matter of good practice a pension should be put in place, including a modest contribution from the Council. It was currently reviewing the options and would seek advice as to what would be appropriate for a Council of this size. It was proposed (PH, seconded IW) and unanimously agreed that the *principle* of a contributory pension should be approved. The Chairman indicated that a further discussion and resolution would be necessary to approve the amount of the Council's contribution. This would probably take place at the May meeting of the Council.

Action: Sub-committee, all

4. Transparency Fund - Application for Grant

The Clerk tabled a draft application. With minor amendments it was approved for submission to ALCA.

Action: Clerk

The meeting closed at 8.50pm