

MARKET LAVINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk & RFO: Tanya West Tel: 07770 679697 or Email: clerk@marketlavingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk
VAT Registration Number: 296 9715 35 / Website: www.marketlavingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Minutes of a Staffing Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 6th January 2026 at 6.00pm in the Old School, Market Lavington

Present:

Councillors: Fred Davis; Di Fraser; Duncan Poole; Chloe Stevens; Laura Turner-Scott (Chair).

Officers: Tanya West – Parish Clerk & RFO

Public: Cllr Suzanne Morrison was present as a member of the public [not being an appointed Committee member].

Cllr Turner-Scott opened the meeting and advised that the meeting would be recorded by the Parish Clerk, to aid with the writing of the minutes. The recording would be deleted after the approval of the written minutes.

25/26-180	Attendance and Apologies for Absence With all members of the Committee in attendance, there were no apologies for absence.
25/26-181	Declarations of Interest and Dispensations to Participate a) No further interests to those already disclosed to the Monitoring Officer were declared. b) No dispensation requests had been received.
25/26-182	Adjournment for Public Participation (maximum of 5 minutes) The meeting was adjourned and resumed at 6.01pm. There was no public participation.
25/26-183	Minutes of Council Meetings The minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on the 2 nd September 2025 had been circulated in advance of the meeting; it was resolved that they be accepted as a true and correct record of that meeting and were signed by the Chair accordingly. The minutes of the Staffing Sub-Committee held on the 27 th November 2025 had been circulated in advance of the meeting; it was resolved that they be accepted as a true and correct record of that meeting and were signed by the Chair accordingly.
25/26-184	Changes to Employment Related Legislation and Policies Councillors received an update on the forthcoming changes to employment legislation. The Clerk had circulated a summary on The Employment Rights Bill which in December 2025 became the Employment Rights Act 2025. The Act will introduce additions and amendments to existing legislation and the changes included in the Act will take place over a period of 2 years. It was noted that most of changes are not currently applicable to the existing Parish Council staff, but it is important that councillors are aware of them. There will be an amendment to the Disciplinary Policy, which will be brought back to a future meeting for sign-off.
25/26-185	Resolution Relating to Confidential Nature In accordance with Standing Order 3d and in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it was resolved that the press and public be temporarily excluded from the meeting and were instructed to withdraw. Cllr Morrison left the meeting.
25/26-186	Review of Finances 2025/26 Members received and reviewed the expenditure report for staffing-related budgets for the 2025/26 financial year. The Clerk reported that pension submissions to the Wiltshire Pension Fund had now been completed up to the end of December, following earlier administrative delays over the Christmas period. A back

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payment will be made to cover the outstanding months. Members noted that processes are now in place to ensure future submissions are completed on a timely monthly basis. It was noted that the current projected staffing-related overspend is £5,753. This is lower than previously estimated and reflects known budget pressures, including costs covering more than a 12-month period. Members acknowledged that this had been anticipated and factored into forward budget planning discussions.

The Committee reviewed individual budget headings, including:

- Professional subscriptions (noting increases, including SLCC membership);
- IT software and hardware;
- Pension contributions.

Under IT software and hardware, Members discussed the potential implementation of Microsoft Teams to improve document sharing, collaboration, data management and governance compliance. Concerns were raised regarding the current email system, document handling, and data protection risks arising from councillors forwarding documents to personal email accounts for ease of working. Members agreed that the current system is not fit for purpose and that improved digital infrastructure would enhance transparency, efficiency and collaborative working. It was confirmed that provision for this had been included in draft budget planning for 2026/27.

Agreed Actions:

1. That the staffing expenditure report for 2025/26 be noted.
2. That the projected overspend be noted and incorporated within ongoing financial planning.
3. That progression of a Microsoft Teams-based system be treated as a priority project, subject to confirmation within the approved budget framework.

25/26-187 Payroll, Salaries, and Pensions

The Clerk reported that pension administration matters with the Wiltshire Pension Fund have now been resolved and that monthly processes are in place going forward.

Members considered the Pension Discretions Policy required under Wiltshire Pension Fund regulations. It was noted that the Council is required to formally adopt this policy within three months of becoming a scheme employer. The draft policy provided reflects the Fund's standard recommended wording.

It was **resolved** that the Pension Discretions Policy, as provided by the Wiltshire Pension Fund and presented to the Committee, be adopted.

The Wiltshire Pension Fund Memorandum of Understanding and associated compliance documentation [circulated to councillors] was noted.

Members further noted the forthcoming increase in the National Minimum Wage effective from April 2026. It was confirmed that the Council will comply with statutory requirements and that the cleaner's salary will be adjusted accordingly. The contractor arrangements for other service providers were noted.

It was **resolved** that statutory salary adjustments in line with National Minimum Wage legislation be implemented from April 2026.

25/26-188 Workload, Training, Hours, Priorities

- a) **To consider workload and hours allocated, along with priorities; to undertake time and motion review and look at efficiencies; to determine if any additional hours are required (temporary or permanent)**

Members received and discussed an update from the Clerk, who has now been in post for nine months. It was noted that the Clerk generally works Monday to Friday 9.00am–1.00pm, with additional time regularly required to deal with emails, meeting actions, statutory duties, and project-related work. A time and motion review had been undertaken to provide a clearer picture of workload distribution and to help identify efficiencies.

Members noted the Clerk's current working structure, including:

- Wednesdays reserved for post-meeting minute preparation;
- Regular time allocated for financial administration;
- Dedicated time for preparation of reports, agendas, and meeting actions;

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- Ongoing statutory and operational checks (including health and safety, defibrillator and play area checks);
- Attendance at professional training and network sessions.

It was acknowledged that whilst 20 contracted hours per week are being worked, workload regularly exceeds this. Members discussed previous practice, the importance of sustainability, wellbeing, and ensuring appropriate remuneration for work undertaken. It was agreed that clearer identification, allocation and monitoring of Clerk time for major projects would support transparency, accountability, future planning, and budget control.

Members were supportive of:

- Allocating dedicated, project-specific Clerk hours to significant projects, monitored and reported separately to core duties;
- Establishing clearer project planning processes to prevent “mission creep” and to ensure realistic expectations of Clerk capacity;
- Reviewing hours and workload again once a full annual cycle of work has been completed.

It was agreed that a contingency fund for project-related Clerk hours should be considered as part of budget planning.

Agreed Actions:

1. That the Clerk’s time and motion review is noted and welcomed as a useful planning and monitoring tool.
2. That project-specific Clerk hours will be identified, allocated and monitored separately from core hours for significant projects going forward.
3. That the Council will make provision for a contingency fund to support additional Clerk hours on defined projects, subject to budget approval.
4. That workload, hours and priorities will be reviewed again following completion of a full annual work cycle.

b) To consider any staff training and development requirements

Members considered current and future training needs. The Clerk continues to access appropriate sector training and professional support networks. Members discussed Councillor training, including induction and “core skills” training for new councillors. It was acknowledged that the Council currently manages training effectively on an informal basis, with Members generally proactive in identifying relevant opportunities.

Members considered whether a formal training policy was required at this stage and concluded that existing arrangements were functioning well, but should be reviewed in future as the Council develops.

The importance of civility and respect training was discussed and Members considered delivery options, cost implications, access arrangements and attendance requirements. Options for individual versus group access were explored, together with practical considerations and budget availability.

Agreed Actions:

1. That current training arrangements remain in place and continue to be monitored.
2. That Councillor and staff training needs will be reviewed again later in the year (aligned with wider review processes).
3. That the WALC hosted online civility and respect training will proceed, with access arrangements to be confirmed by the Clerk following liaison with Members, ensuring best value and practical attendance.

c) To make recommendations to the Finance Committee and Full Council regarding any future budget requirements or processes

Members considered budget implications arising from staffing workload, operational requirements and training. It was noted that budget provision has been reviewed with the Finance Committee Chair, with adjustments made where appropriate (including subscriptions, telephony and anticipated pay increments). Hidden cumulative costs were discussed, and Members agreed that transparency in budget presentation is important.

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Members agreed that the staffing cost and associated budget considerations should be forwarded to the Finance Committee and Full Council, subject to appropriate redaction of personal financial information.

Agreed Actions:

1. That the reviewed staffing-related budget information be referred to the Finance Committee and Full Council for awareness and consideration, subject to removal of personal or sensitive data.
2. That Members noted sufficient current training budget provision remains for the remainder of the financial year.

25/26-189 Annual Performance Reviews

Members reviewed the current position in respect of staff appraisal processes and documentation. It was noted that an historic Appraisal Policy has been located; however, there is no evidence that it was previously adopted or that formal appraisals have historically been undertaken. Members agreed that it is important that a clear and supportive appraisal framework is in place, enabling staff to feel valued and to ensure objectives are aligned with council priorities.

Reference was made to SLCC and NALC guidance contained within the agenda report. Members discussed the difference between appraisal (a reflective, supportive process) and performance management (a separate process used only when concerns arise). It was agreed that the council's approach must make this distinction clear.

Members discussed whether external stakeholder or public feedback should form part of the appraisal process. Concern was expressed that this could introduce subjectivity, lack of accountability and inconsistency. It was agreed that any feedback used should remain proportionate, relevant, and primarily limited to those who work with the Clerk in a formal capacity (e.g. council, committees, sub-committees and working groups). Informal feedback already received during the course of the year may also be acknowledged when appropriate.

It was noted that appraisals will take place annually, with October being the intended appraisal point, and that documentation should reflect SMART objectives and best practice guidance.

The Clerk's current development objectives were noted, including completion of sector-specific knowledge development and implementation of Microsoft Teams for improved council working and communications. Future objectives will be formally set within the new appraisal process.

Agreed Actions:

1. That the Parish Council will implement a formal appraisal process in line with sector best practice and the principles set out within SLCC/NALC guidance.
2. That the process and documentation will clearly distinguish appraisal from performance management.
3. That external/public stakeholder feedback will **not** be formally sought as part of appraisals; feedback will be restricted to council, committees, sub-committees and working groups, together with any relevant informal feedback already received.
4. That the Chair and Clerk will review the draft appraisal documentation, amend it accordingly, and present revised documents to a future meeting for consideration and formal adoption.
5. That annual appraisals will take place, with October as the intended appraisal period.

25/26-190 Other Staffing Matters

Councillors were provided with an opportunity to bring any matter not on the agenda to the committee for attention (for information, anything requiring decision will be carried forward to a future meeting). There were no items raised.

25/26-191 Resolution to Revert Confidential Session

With the confidential session of the meeting concluded, it was **resolved** that the meeting was reverted back to open session.

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25/26-192**Items for Next Agenda**

Councillors were provided with an opportunity to raise any matters to be included on the agenda for the next Staffing Committee meeting.

Review and adoption of the appraisal policy documents, also the roll out and review of MS Teams were both requested to be included.

25/26-193**Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Staffing Committee is to be determined, although a date of Tuesday 3rd March 2026 at 6pm was provisionally set if required.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 6.48pm.

Signed..... Date.....

DRAFT