

Minutes of the meeting of the **Staffing Committee** held at the **Shire Hall** on **Wednesday 16th September 2026** at **7pm**

Councillors:

Present: Cllrs. Sue Bale, Eamonn O’Nolan, Nigel Phipps, Simon Sadler and Catherine Walsh.

Apologies: Cllrs. Ellie Beck, Geoff Holdcroft, and Martin Wilks

In attendance: Town Clerk (Mr G E Diaper), and no members of the public.

1. Apologies for Absence

The Committee agreed to approve the absence of Cllrs. Ellie Beck, Geoff Holdcroft, and Martin Wilks

2. Declarations of Member Interests.

No members made any declarations of interests in relation to items on the agenda.

3. Requests for dispensations.

There were no requests for a dispensation in relation to items on the agenda.

4. Public Question Time.

There were no members of the public present.

5. To agree and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28th May 2026

The minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held 28th May 2026 were approved as a true record.

6. To note the receipt of the Local Government pay agreement for 2026.

The Committee noted the receipt of the Local Government pay agreement for 2026.

7. To exclude the Public and Press from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 because of the confidential information being discussed.

The Committee agreed to exclude the Public and Press from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 because of the confidential information being discussed.

8. To receive a verbal update from the Chair on the Strategic Change Management Specialist position

The Chair provided verbal update on the potential recruitment of a Strategic Change Management Specialist, following the closure of the application window two days before the meeting.

The Town Clerk was asked to create a 'Staffing Committee' confidential folder on SharePoint and save all applications to this folder. Members were asked to provide their opinion on the candidates by Monday 21 September to the Chair, from where a shortlist will be produced for interview.

9. To consider a report from the Estates Manager in relation to operational and staffing requirements of the estates/ horticultural team.

The Committee noted the resignation of Frankie Freeland from the position of Assistant Gardener to Woodbridge Town Council, which as undertaken during his probationary period, was almost immediate (last day, 18 September).

The Committee considered a paper from the Estates Manager in relation to the staffing requirements of the Estates Team and agreed to recommend to Full Council:

- That on the approval of Full Council, advertisements be placed for a replacement Assistant Gardener to be employed at the earliest opportunity to replace Frankie. The Town Clerk was asked to discuss the advertisement particulars with the Estates Manager and Head Gardener, namely a proposal that the Assistant Gardeners work during weekends, and the potential employment of the lawn specialist ahead of the plant specialist.
- That the proposal for a second Assistant Gardener, to be employed in spring 2027, be acceptable, and that Council are asked to consider the proposal and instruct the Finance Committee to prepare the 2027/28 Staffing budget accordingly.

10. To receive an update from the Town Clerk in relation to personal matters and to agree any next steps.

The Committee noted the Town Clerks request for paternity leave following the announcement of his partners pregnancy and due date in early December.

The Committee agreed that the Town Clerk be provided six weeks of paternity leave at full pay. Two weeks must be taken immediately following the birth of the child, with the remaining four weeks to be taken in blocks, in agreement with the Town Mayor and Chair of the Staffing Committee.

11. To receive an update from the Town Clerk in relation to internal staffing matters and agree any next steps.

The Committee agreed that the Town Clerk is to advise the Deputy Town Clerk that her main working focus, until completion, is her CILCA qualification and clerking of the Amenities and Climate and Ecological Committees; the associated project work will take an acceptable 'back seat', until such time. The Committee requested that the qualification be completed no later than 31 July 2027.

The Committee also agreed its position following complaints made about the behaviour of a member of staff in a public meeting.

12. Closure

The meeting was closed at 8.54pm

Councillor O'Nolan
Chair