

WEST SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the
FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE
held on **Monday 14th July 2025 at 6.00 pm**
Unit 25, Westmead Industrial Estate, Swindon, SN5 7YT

Present:

Cllr Peter Bates
Cllr Leon Grother
Cllr Rose Llewellyn (Chair)
Cllr Graham Philpot
Cllr Caryl Sydney Smith

Officers: Paula Harrison (Parish Manager/Clerk), Jacqui Jones (Deputy Clerk)

Public: One

Public Questions: None

Meeting start 6.43 pm

59. Apologies & Applications for Dispensation

Apologies: Cllr Ertas and Cllr T Philpot
Applications for dispensation as required by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Parish Council on 19 May 2025: None

60. Bank Statements

The bank statements for May and June 2025 were circulated, copies can be found in the Minute Book as **Appendix A**. The information was noted.

61. Admission of the Public and Press

In accordance with Standing Order 3 (d), that 'in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they be instructed to withdraw'.

6.50 pm Public withdrew from the meeting.

62. Staffing Absence and Workplace Wellbeing Update

The Parish Manager circulated a confidential report setting out three related matters; apprenticeships, sickness absence and workplace wellbeing. A copy appears as **Appendix B** in the Minute Book.

The Deputy Clerk summarised the options for apprenticeships and the costs associated. Councillors considered the information.

RESOLVED that the Parish Manager be instructed to progress the opportunity of a FTE apprentice as set out in the report, if no applicants are appointed, the Parish

Manager is instructed to recruit a part-time equivalent Parish Operative.

The Parish Manager shared a report covering a summary of sickness absence and covered the steps taken to support employees return to work and relevant adjustments. The Parish Manager highlighted that the last twelve month period had covered a number of surgeries amongst the outdoor team that was having a direct impact on the higher level of sickness absence. Occupational health reports had identified some key adjustments for some staff but did not assess immediate or longer term fitness for work.

The Parish Manager advised that it would be reasonable to seek a new occupational health report for key members of staff with surgical recovery issues in particular, to secure an independent accurate assessment of physical capability. The Parish Manager advised that an alternative provider was being sought to ensure there was an accurate report supplied. Councillors debated the Council's position and approach to absence.

The Parish Manager provided a summary of workplace wellness opportunities including mental health first aiders and counsellors support for employees. Councillors noted the information.

RESOLVED that the Parish Manager seeks independent professional and legal opinion as appropriate and reports to a future meeting.

63. Parish Depot Notice

Parish Manager gave a verbal report setting out a recent communication from the Parish Council's landlord, Staffordshire County Council proposing a lease renewal and a new annual rent. The rent was significantly higher than those established in the public domain in the local market.

As agreed at an earlier meeting on 24 February 2025, Projekt Property were appointed to negotiate on the Parish Council's behalf with the landlord's agent and this was now underway. The landlord was also marketing the neighbouring site for sale (Acorn Press). Councillors noted the information and requested that marketing particulars be shared for discussion at Full Council.

Meeting closed 7.54 pm

Signed:.....
Chair, Finance & Staffing Committee

Date: