

Minutes of the reconvened meeting of the 31st January 2022, the reconvened meeting took place in Bidborough Village Hall on 15th February, starting at 7.15pm

Those Present

Cllrs Mrs K Thorne (Chair), Cllr D Shepherdson (Vice Chair), Cllr L Hawksfield, Cllr R Johnson, Cllr D Moore, Cllr S Summers, Cllr K Vidler, also present was the stand in Proper Officer Linda Hedley (LH),

Prior to the meeting the Stand-in Clerk explained that she had been a clerk for over 35 years, had carried out Locum roles for many councils with precepts ranging from £5000 to £150,000. She was a mentor for new Clerks and also had been on the National Committee for the Society of Local Council Clerks; her current position was Clerk to two parish councils and was also the General Secretary for the Association of Local Council Clerk.

The items to discuss was the report sent by Mr Darren Steven of People Law Ltd., after his verbal discussions on 7th February.

This had been circulated to all Councillors by the chairman, the report included everything that had been debated at the previous meeting held on 7th February 2022.

For ease of reading, the items previously debated are copied below, from 7th February

To consider the employment status of the clerk and associated contract of employment/HR related consideration. For the purpose of

(i) To appoint People Law Ltd to advise on the matter and any other matters arising and to consider that advice

(ii) To discuss proposals for a way forward to review the accounting practice and Governance of the council.

(iii) For the purpose of (ii) to appoint a working party comprising of the chair, vice chair and one other member plus external members.

(iv) Matters which the working party is to undertake and upon which to make recommendations to the full council in relation to the oversight of the matters referred to in items (i) (ii) (iii) (iv) (v).

The report covered

The current employment status of the Clerk and a way forward

The audit report and AGAR, Whether an investigation/internal audit was required.

Councillors debated each issue at great and detailed length.

It was finally proposed by Cllr L Hawksfield and seconded by Cllr Thorne that an internal audit would take place; the vote was unanimous; it was further agreed that this would be carried out by Mr David Buckett.

At this point the meeting had not completed the outstanding items; it was proposed that the meeting be reconvened at a later date.

The Stand-in Clerk suggested that rather than reconvene again, items are deferred to the next meeting, where a confidential item would be required at the end of the open part of the meeting.

This was agreed and the meeting closed at 9.15pm