



LONDON COLNEY PARISH COUNCIL

To: Councillor H Pakenham (Chair), M MacMillan, N Mahony and L Winstone

15 January 2021

You are hereby summoned to attend a **HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE** meeting to be held on **TUESDAY 26 JANUARY 2021, 3PM, VIRTUALLY**

Join Zoom Meeting

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Meeting ID: 972 9854 8212

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Emma Payne
Clerk

AGENDA

- 1. APOLOGIES**
- 2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**
To receive members declarations of interest in items on the agenda.
- 3. MINUTES**
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2020.

London Colney Parish Council, Caledon Community Centre,
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Tel 01727 821314 Web: www.londoncolney-pc.gov.uk



4. MATTERS ARISING NOT APPEARING ON THE AGENDA (For information only)

5. STAFFING MATTERS (NON-CONFIDENTIAL)

5.1 Home Working Policy

5.2 Furlough Programme

6. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

To resolve to exclude the Press and public from the following items in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960.

6.1 Staff Review

6.2 Weekend Caretaker

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9 March 2021

**COLNEY PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY 8 DECEMBER 2020, 6PM
HELD VIRTUALLY**

PRESENT: Councillors H Pakenham, D Gordon (substituting for N Mahoney), M MacMillan & L Winstone (arrived 1815). Cllr Lillico substituted for Cllr Winstone until 1815.

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr T Lillico
E Payne, Clerk

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies. Absent was Cllr Mahony who was substituted for by Cllr Gordon.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Pakenham & Cllr Gordon declared a personal interest in item 6.1 as they have a relation who is employed by the parish council. They left the meeting during this item and the meeting with chaired by Cllr Gardner.

3. MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 November 2020 were adopted as a true record of the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

5. STAFFING MATTERS (NON-CONFIDENTIAL)

5.1 Home Working Policy

This item was withdrawn for a future meeting as the wrong report had been submitted.

6. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

To resolve to exclude the Press and public from the following items in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960

6.1 Review of Staff Salary budget 2021/22 and potential savings

Members received a report outlining potential staff savings. Members were advised that with the reduction in the council tax base which is being reported to the Council meeting on 9 December 2020, the demands on the parish council's budget have been exacerbated and savings need to be achieved across the board. Undertaking savings in this budget is complex and Members were advised that the next agenda item was about a potential staff review. Members discussed how to deliver the services of the parish council more efficiently, whilst monitoring performance. It was **RESOLVED** to:

- a) Consider the grounds maintenance operation as part of a council-wide staff review with consideration towards outsourcing as one of the options**

- b) Investigate the option 2 for lunch club as outlined in the report**
- c) Obtain quotations from external contractors for cleaning of the parish council facilities**
- d) Investigate outsourcing bar operations with local licensees**

Cllr Gordon & Pakenham left during the item relating to the bar services and took no part in the decision-making process.

6.2 Staff Review

Members received a report on a potential staff review, examining a potential specification for a review of the staffing operations of the parish council. It was **RESOLVED** to:

Obtain quotations for a review of staffing operation to be considered at the next meeting

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

12 January 2021.

The meeting closed at 1856

Signed: Date:

LONDON COLNEY PARISH COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: HUMAN RESOURCES

DATE: 24 JANUARY 2021

REPORT BY: EMMA PAYNE, CLERK

SUBJECT: WORKING FROM HOME POLICY

1. SUMMARY

1.1 Considering the government's response to Covid 19 pandemic, the following working from home policy has been drafted from guidance issued by ACAS and best practice from the sector.

2. RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to adopt the Working from Home Policy outlined in this report.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The policy, when adopted, will be included in the Staff Handbook for distribution to all staff.

3.2 The policy will ensure that all staff who make an application to work from home, will be treated fairly and sets out the employer's/employee's responsibilities, especially those relating to data protection and health and safety.

4. FINANCE

4.1 The policy states that employees will not be reimbursed for their expenses for working from home. They are eligible to apply for tax relief from the government and this can be applied for via the Government Gateway.

WORKING FROM HOME POLICY

1. Introduction

Employees may undertake some of their duties away from one of the Council's workplaces or away from their normal place of work, for several reasons and with varying degrees of frequency.

The Council recognises that working at home can be beneficial for individuals and, to this end, will seek to accommodate it wherever possible.

Working at home is understood to mean working from home on an occasional, ad hoc, or temporary basis. It simply means that employees conduct their job from home with the same contractual obligations, such as core working hours.

Regular working from home or home working is covered via the Flexible Working Policy and any applications to work from home permanently should be pursued in line with that policy.

The Council may request or require employees to work at home for a period in response to government guidelines e.g. Covid-19.

Whatever the circumstances leading to a situation where employees have been granted permission this policy applies, and all employees must comply with the requirements set out below.

2. Eligibility

Employees are eligible to apply for working at home in the following circumstances:

- where the employee has successfully completed the probationary period attached to their job role
- where the employee's role does not involve supervisory duties that require undertaking in person alongside the team members involved
- where their home environment is suitable
- no aspect of the employee's recent appraisal was marked as unsatisfactory
- the employee's disciplinary record is clean.

Applications for working at home will be granted where the Clerk is satisfied that the needs of the Council can continue to be met while the employee works from home.

Working at home must be cost-effective and ensure that there is no significant increase in workload on colleagues. The work done by the employee must be capable of being done from home.

3. Making working at home applications

Employees that wish to apply to temporarily work at home should apply via email to the Clerk.

4. Occasional/ad hoc working at home applications

The application should set out the reasons for requesting working at home.

Examples may include a project or set of tasks that requires peace and quiet and a lack of interruptions. A backlog of tasks or a major project may also give rise to an employee wishing to request working at home.

There may be family commitments such as the long-term illness of a relative or dependant. In this situation, we would also ask that you refer to Council's Staff Handbook on time off for dependants.

There could be issues relating to the recovery from mental or physical illnesses which may make a request for working at home conducive to the smooth recovery of the employee.

The above list is not exhaustive.

5. Application decisions

The Clerk has delegated powers to approve ad hoc applications to work from home for a duration of 1-2 days. Any further length of time, the request would be considered under delegated powers by the Chair of the Human Resources Committee with the Clerk.

The Clerk may visit the employee's home to carry out a risk assessment.

6. Accepted applications

If the Clerk accepts the employee's application, written confirmation will be provided detailing arrangements and timescales for the employee to sign and return.

Each request is considered on its own merits. The Council is under no obligation to permit a period of working at home just because it has agreed to it in the past.

7. Rejected applications

If the Clerk is unable to accept the employee's application, the reasons for the rejection will be issued in writing to the employee. The employee may appeal the decision within 5 working days of the decision being issued. The reasons for the appeal should be set out in writing and sent to the Chair of the Human Resources Committee.

8. Home trial period

The aim of the trial period is for both the employee and the Council to evaluate whether the new working arrangements are working out as planned.

At the end of the trial period, the Clerk will meet with the employee to evaluate the success of the trial. The Clerk will determine whether the trial has been successful and confirm that working at home may continue. During the trial period, or at the evaluation meeting, either side may propose reasonable amendments to facilitate a smoother working arrangement. The Council reserves the right to terminate working at home declaring the trial has been unsuccessful if proposed amendments are unreasonable, unworkable, no amendments can be implemented or the employee's work output, quality, oversight etc suffered to the detriment of the Council.

9. Working at home practical arrangements

The Council supplies homeworkers with the necessary equipment relevant to their job role. The equipment remains the Council's property and will be installed and removed at the Council's cost. The Council may need to attend the employee's home to update, maintain or repair/replace the equipment and will give the employee reasonable notice of the need for this.

Employees should take reasonable care of Council equipment and only use it for Council business. IT and telephony equipment may only be used in accordance with the Council's IT, data protection and monitoring policies.

Personal equipment that an employee uses for work purposes remains their responsibility and the Council is not liable for any loss, damage, repair, or replacement of any personal equipment. If an item of equipment is deemed necessary for work, the employee should contact the Clerk.

Employees should maintain regular contact with the Clerk so that the Council can work towards early resolution of any problems. This applies to problems with Council equipment and also in relation to the ongoing suitability of the working at home arrangement; pressures and stress occur equally to employees who work at home as they do to those working at the Council's offices and the Council encourages the early reporting of these issues so that practical steps can be considered and implemented to the mutual agreement of both the employee and the Clerk.

The costs of electricity, water, heating, telephone, broadband and other utilities will not be covered by the Council. These costs will remain the employee's responsibility.

Employees must always keep Council data and Council materials safe and secure, ensuring reasonable precautions are being taken to maintain confidentiality in accordance with the Data Protection policy.

Employees should refrain from revealing to residents or contractors, that they work from home and should not share their personal address or personal contact details. Meetings between residents, contractors and employees at home are prohibited. All communications should be routed through the Council workplaces.

10. Health and safety for employees working at home

The Council's health and safety policy applies to employees working at home. Employees should refer to the separate health and safety policy for more details.

Employees are required to comply with several health and safety considerations in respect of the space utilised as their workplace in their home environment. Employees are required to attend the office to undergo health and safety training.

11. Risk assessment

A risk assessment will be undertaken to determine any relevant risks and to prevent harm to the employee or anyone else who may be affected by their work, in respect of the workplace itself and the working arrangements. The Council may need to check such workplaces from time to time as the working at home arrangement proceeds. The Council may require self-assessment of some aspects of the workplace and training may be provided as necessary. Any steps necessary from these various risk assessments will be undertaken to ensure the employee has a safe workplace.

A specific risk assessment will be done on employees who inform the Council that they are pregnant. In order for this to take place, employees who become pregnant should notify the Clerk of their pregnancy immediately.

12. Positioning of equipment

Training on the ergonomic positioning of IT equipment will be provided during the implementation of the working at home arrangement, together with best practice guidance on breaks. The Council will provide a DSE checklist for this for the benefit of employees.

13. Working hours

Employees are responsible for ensuring they complete their working hours as defined in their contracts of employment.

14. Working time

Employees are responsible for ensuring they take their rest breaks as defined in their contracts of employment. Working time should be monitored and rest breaks of at least 20 minutes for every six hours of working should be taken.

15. Home insurance

Working at home may invalidate an employee's home contents insurance policy. Employees are required to check the policy prior to applying to work at home.

16. Employee conduct

If working at home becomes unsuitable due to employee conduct or performance, the working at home arrangement may be terminated immediately. Further disciplinary action may also be taken in line with the Council's disciplinary and grievance procedure.

LONDON COLNEY PARISH COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

DATE: 26 JANUARY 2021

REPORT BY: EMMA PAYNE, CLERK

SUBJECT: FURLOUGH PROGRAMME - JANUARY 2021

1. SUMMARY

1.1 The Government announced a third period of lockdown starting on 4 January 2021. The community centre, and other community facilities including sports, are currently closed until further notice.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 Members are asked to:

- a) Note the delegated decision taken by the Chair of the HR Committee, with the Clerk, to furlough the Weekday Caretaker and Cleaner until further notice.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 At the HR Committee meeting held on 12 November, it was agreed that any future furlough of staff would be paid at 80% of their salary, with no top up.

3.2 The cleaner and weekday caretaker have previously been furloughed on two separate occasions:

April – August 2020
December 2020

3.3 The Bar Manager and two cooks are already Furloughed until the end of March 2021.

4. FINANCE

4.1 Furlough pay is 80% of the employee's salary. The council decided at the previous lock down period, to not top employee's salaries to 100%.