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Minutes of the HR Committee held on Thursday, January 29, 2026 at 13:00 in the Manor Office, 6 North Street, Crediton.

Present: Cllrs Liz Brookes-Hocking, Steve Huxtable, Rachel Backhouse and Vix Frisby

Apologies: Cllr Paul Perriman

Minute Taker: Rachel Avery, Town Clerk

MINUTES

29 INTRODUCTIONS

Cllr Brookes-Hocking welcomed those in attendance and members introduced themselves.

30 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Decision: It was resolved to receive and accept apologies from Cllrs Perriman (illness). (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking)

32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

32.1 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS (DPI'S) IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

No declarations of personal interest or disclosable pecuniary interests were received.

32.2 TO CONSIDER ANY DISPENSATION REQUESTS (REQUESTS SHOULD BE MADE TO THE TOWN CLERK PRIOR TO THE MEETING)

No dispensation requests were received prior to the meeting.

33 CHAIRS AND CLERKS ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

34 HR COMMITTEE MINUTES

Decision: It was resolved to approve the minutes of the HR Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 02 September 2025. (Proposed by Cllr Backhouse)

35 STAFF APPRAISALS

The discussion on staff appraisals highlighted the need for conducting appraisals, with the Town Clerk being the line manager for all staff. Cllr Brookes Hocking expressed interest in sitting in on the appraisals to hear directly from the staff about their progress and concerns. The committee acknowledged the importance of staff feeling heard and suggested giving staff the option to choose which two committee members they felt comfortable speaking with, and offering that as an option.

Decision: It was **resolved** that the Town Clerk would undertake appraisals as per the usual format, with staff members being offered a meeting with two members of the HR Committee of their choice. (Proposed by Cllr Frisby)

36 TOWN CLERK APPRAISAL

Items 36.1 and 36.2 were taken together

The committee discussed setting a date for the Town Clerk's appraisal, noting that the last appraisal was conducted approximately 18 months ago.

The concept of a 360-degree appraisal was introduced, which involves gathering anonymised feedback from councillors, staff, and external stakeholders. The committee considered the benefits and potential challenges of this approach, including the need for agreed questions and sufficient time for responses. The committee agreed on a timeline for drafting questions, collecting feedback, and conducting the appraisal:

- Cllr Brookes-Hocking to draft questions and circulate to members of the HR Committee by Friday 06 February for review
- Members to send any amendments to Cllr Brookes-Hocking by Wednesday 11 February
- Amended questions to be re-sent by Cllr Brookes-Hocking by Friday 13 February
- Questions to be sent to members of staff and councillors on Monday 16 February, with deadline for responses being Wednesday 25 February
- Collation of responses in preparation for appraisal on Thursday 12 March.

Decision: It was **resolved** to **approve** the timeline. (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable)

Decision: It was **resolved** that the Chair of both the Council and HR would undertake the appraisal. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking)

37 TASK TICKET SYSTEM

The committee reviewed a proposal for implementing a task ticket system to improve task tracking and communication. The system aims to streamline the management of tasks, especially those involving multiple steps and third-party involvement. The proposal included a trial period of six months to evaluate the system's effectiveness. The committee discussed the potential benefits of the system, including better communication with the public and more efficient task delegation. The discussion also touched on the current use of similar systems, such as Decisions and Planner, and the importance of ensuring councillors can contribute to the system without overwhelming staff. The committee agreed to further explore the implementation details and potential access levels for councillors and staff, with a view to utilising Planner, including adding to the website for public information on outstanding issues.

Decision: It was **resolved** that the Town Clerk would review the use of Planner and incorporate its use into day-to-day management and ensuring staff use it effectively. (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable)

Decision: It was **resolved** that the use of Planner would be trialled for six months. (Proposed by Cllr Backhouse)

38 TOWN CLERK TRAINING

Cllrs Backhouse and Frisby expressed concerns about the relevance of the course to the Town Clerk's current role and the appropriateness of using council funds for an academic course. Some felt that the skills covered by the course might not be immediately applicable. Cllr Huxtable stated that the course covers elements such as leading change, empowering

communities, collaborative innovation, and designing public service and policy into practice, which are relevant to the changing role of both the Town Clerk and the council.

Cllr Huxtable proposed funding 50% of the course cost at the end of the first year, contingent on the Town Clerk's continued employment with the council, and the remaining 50% at the end of the second year. He proposed that an increased contribution could be offered, based on tangible results linked to monitoring achievements through the appraisal process. He also proposed granting the Town Clerk study leave for one of the three required trips for the course.

There was also a discussion about the legalities of tying the Town Clerk into a contract that would require her to repay the course fees if she left the council before completing the course.

It was noted that should half of the fees be agreed, the decision would not require ratification by Full Council, in line with Financial Regulations.

Concerns that this item would not receive further consideration by the wider council were raised.

Cllr Huxtable withdrew the proposal, agreeing that it should be considered at a full council meeting.

Decision: It was agreed that this agenda item would be considered by Full Council on 17 February 2026.

39 NEXT MEETING DATE

The committee confirmed the next meeting date as Thursday, 09 April at 9:00.

Signed

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