

HOLME VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL

STAFFING COMMITTEE

MONDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2025 at 19:00 HRS

In the EXHIBITION ROOM, THE CIVIC, HUDDERSFIELD ROAD, HOLMFIRTH, HD9 3AS

PRESENT: Cllr Colling (in the Chair), Cllr Baylin, Cllr Blacka, Cllr Kirkby, Cllr Morgan, Cllr Wilson

APOLOGIES AND REASONS APPROVED: Cllr Barnett

OFFICER TAKING MINUTES: Rich McGill, Deputy Clerk

- DRAFT MINUTES-

Public question time.

No members of the public were present.

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

2526 17 Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 amended by Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014

The meeting was being recorded and would subsequently be published on the **HOLME VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL's** *YouTube* channel.

There were no other requests for recordings to be made.

2526 18 Apologies for absence.

NOTED: Cllr Barnett had submitted an apology for absence.

The Committee considered the reason for his apology.

RESOLVED: The reason for Cllr Barnett's apology was approved.

2526 19 Items on the agenda to be discussed in private session

Members considered whether any items on the agenda should be discussed in private session.

RESOLVED: The following agenda items would be heard in private:

- 2526 25 – The Clerk's return to work
- 2526 28 – Other staffing matters
- 2526 30 – Staffing costs

2526 20 Members' personal and disclosable pecuniary interests in items on the agenda.

Members were invited to communicate any personal and disclosable pecuniary interests in items on the agenda. None were received.

There were no written requests for dispensations received from members.

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2526 21 Officers' interests in items on the agenda.

The officer's interests in items on the agenda were received. These were:

- 2526 28 – Other staffing matters
- 2526 30 – Staffing costs
- 2526 31 – Staffing budget

2526 22 Receipt of Revised Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

There were no revised Declarations of Pecuniary Interest of Councillors.

2526 23 Minutes for the Staffing Committee meeting on 21 July 2025, numbered 2526 01 to 2526 16.

NOTED: the Minutes of the STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING held on 21 July 2025, numbered 2526 01 to 2526 16, already **approved** at the MEETING of FULL COUNCIL 8 September 2025 were noted.

The Committee received information from the Deputy Clerk regarding ongoing matters arising from the approved minutes which do not appear under other agenda items:

- Staffing and Staff Training Budget 2025-26. The RFO/deputy Clerk reported the likely overspend on the Staffing salaries budget as around £3,000. The RFO's advice would be that this would be put to FULL COUNCIL 23rd March 2026 to be taken from general reserves at year end, when the likely amount is known. The RFO/deputy Clerk did not feel the need to create an earmarked reserve for this.
- Pay awards for the clerk team Following the Local Government Services Pay Agreement 2024/25, the annual pay uplifts for the clerk team backdated to April 1st had been paid, earlier than in previous years, in September 2025.

The Committee considered any further action(s) arising from the minutes of previous meetings of the STAFFING COMMITTEE.

RESOLVED: No further action.

2526 24 The use of AI

At the last meeting of this Committee, an item had been deferred regarding potential expenditure of up to £855 for the purchase of a year's access to the GovAssist Meetings Module from CloudyIT, a Council-focused AI specialist.

To better understand the offer, the Clerk had arranged a meeting with CloudyIT. This meeting was attended by the Clerk, the Assistant Clerk and Cllr Blacka as Staff Performance and Development Lead. The Clerk and Assistant Clerk felt that the GovAssist AI service did not offer a patently obvious advance over more general AI services such as ChatGPT. Cllr Blacka agreed.

The STAFFING COMMITTEE considered expenditure of up to £855 for the purchase of a year's use of the GovAssist Meetings Module plus annual licence fee.

RESOLVED: This expenditure was not approved.

After the meeting with CloudyIT, officers discussed ways the Parish Council could use AI more efficiently in its business. Officers felt that, given the advances in AI and its growing integration with other work systems, such as cloud/file storage, publishing, accounts, email, databases and so on, this might be an opportune time for the Parish Council to review all its IT and software systems and how they integrate most effectively and efficiently. Officers wonder if this may be a good time to

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seek the input from an AI-integrated systems specialist with insights on how the Parish Council might streamline business operations by embedding AI into its core digital business tools. The STAFFING COMMITTEE considered any other action with regards to the utilisation of AI in the Council's work. Cllr Baylin asked that officers contact other Parish Councils to find out how they are using AI, and which AI clients they are using.

RESOLVED: Cllr Kirkby would meet with the Assistant Clerk to map the various IT systems the Parish Council and its officers use (email, cloud storage, programs, databases, web resources, and its hardware &c).

2526 25 The Clerk's return to work

This item was taken in private session.

The clerk had met virtually with Cllr Blacka, Staff Performance and Development Lead, and agreed her return to work plan.

NOTED: The Clerk's return to work plan was approved by the STAFFING COMMITTEE.

2526 26 Appraisal/supervision 2025-26

All three members of the Clerk team have signed contracts of employment. Job descriptions are in place and time sheets are submitted in a standard format.

The STAFFING COMMITTEE considered any further actions arising on appraisals/supervisions.

RESOLVED: This would be deferred to the next meeting when the clerk has returned.

2526 27 Space and accommodation needs of the Parish Council and its staff

The STAFFING COMMITTEE considered the office space needs of the Parish Council and of the clerk team. The Civic Lease Working Group had asked the Parish Council what its needs and wishes are regarding office space. The Deputy Clerk reported that the Clerk team's needs were reasonably well met in the current office arrangements; that all three officers were only infrequently in the office together and individuals could move to the Exhibition Room as needed for more space. The Chair suggested that the Parish Council wants to provide the best working environment possible for its staff, and that the current office arrangements were not ideal. The Committee considered any further action on this.

RESOLVED: No further action at this time.

The Parish Council separately and outside this meeting would consider its needs for office space and visibility in The Civic building.

2526 28 Other staffing matters

- i. **NOTED:** The Clerk would discuss her time off in lieu (TOIL) with the Staff and Performance Development Lead and would report to the next meeting of this Committee. Nothing further at this time.

The next items 2526 28ii and 2526 28iii were taken in private session with the officer out of the room.

- ii. **NOTED:** As reported to Council, the expenditure of £150 to Hoey Ainscough Associates from 4200 Chair's Expenses on governance-related matters related to staffing was noted.
- iii. Chair of HOLME VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL to report on actions taken regarding staff concerns.

RESOLVED: Investigation of a complaint was being undertaken as per procedure.

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2526 29 Staffing and Staff Training Budget 2025-26

With regard to the ongoing Staffing and Staff Training Budget for the current year, the Deputy Clerk/RFO had prepared

- a *Salaries and Staff Training Budget 2025-26* report – to date and
- a *Staffing Budget Year to Date and Projected 2025-26* report.

NOTED: The STAFFING COMMITTEE noted the contents of these reports.

The STAFFING COMMITTEE considered any further actions regarding the staffing budgets for 2025-26.

RESOLVED: No further actions.

2526 30 Staffing costs

This was an item and proposal by Cllr Barnett who was absent from the meeting.

Cllr Barnett had asked the RFO/Deputy Clerk to report on how much would be saved by the Parish Council if the clerking team was reduced from 3 to 2. These calculations are included in the report.

For information:

- The role of clerk (or proper officer) is a statutory role.
- The role of the responsible finance officer is a statutory role.
- The clerk and responsible finance officer can be the same person. This is especially true in smaller councils.
- The role of deputy clerk is not a statutory role.
- The role of assistant clerk is not a statutory role.

The RFO/deputy clerk had also been asked to calculate the hours that would be saved if officers did not attend meetings of working groups, nor undertake work on behalf of working groups. He was also asked to calculate the hours saved if only two officers attended meetings of FULL COUNCIL.

Based on the data supplied by officers, Cllr Barnett had drawn up a report on how the Parish Council could make economies within its staffing expenditure.

In his report, Cllr Barnett proposed the following motions for consideration:

i. TO CONSIDER THAT, AS PER MOTION PLAN PART 1 IN THE REPORT:

The Council resolves to implement immediate changes to the administrative support structure as detailed in Motion Part 1 in the attached Report on Officer Hours, with the aim of absorbing clerking time into the Council's existing operational capacity, thereby achieving significant budget savings for the 2026/27 financial year.

or

ii. TO CONSIDER THAT, AS PER MOTION PLAN PART 2 IN THE REPORT:

The Council resolves to implement immediate, targeted adjustments to administrative support for Working Groups and Full Council, designed to achieve budget savings while ring-fencing statutory and key operational duties, as detailed in the attached Revised Report.

RESOLVED: No Member of this Committee wished to propose either motion i or ii, so these motions were not carried.

iii. In the light of these reports, the Staffing Committee considered any further actions regarding staffing costs of HOLME VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL.

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RESOLVED: The Parish Council would undertake an externally run wholesale review of staffing efficiency in the early part of Council year 2026/27. This had been suggested some time ago but had been somewhat waylaid by reconstitution of the Parish Council's committee structures. This review would consider the role of Working Groups and the roles of officers in them. As a starting point it would have to consider: 'What is the role of the Parish Council?'

2425 31 Staffing Budget 2026-27

The STAFFING COMMITTEE is to approve a Salaries budget for 2026/27 to recommend to the FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE for their budgetary considerations.

The Deputy Clerk/RFO was out of the room for much of these deliberations as he had a pecuniary interest in the item.

The assistant clerk had written a benchmarking report, showing how HOLME VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL's staffing costs and arrangements compare to other Town and Parish Council's in Kirklees, Yorkshire and across England.

NOTED: This report was noted by the Committee.

The Salaries budget consists of the gross salary (before pensions, tax and NI are deducted) of all workers plus the employer pensions contribution for all workers plus the employer National Insurance Contribution for all workers.

The RFO/deputy clerk had created an initial draft Salaries budget.

This is based on:

- the continuation of the staff roles as currently constituted (3 x 25hrs/week)
- a projected uplift of 3.2% (a replication of this year's uplift) payable from 1st April 2026.
- a projected pay spinal column point uplift of the Assistant Clerk to SCP23 from 1st April 2026.

This would represent a budget of **£103,316**.

The staffing arrangements and accordingly the Salaries budget should be based on the organisational goals, and the workload demands of the Parish Council.

On rejoining the meeting, the Deputy Clerk/RFO was asked if he had included a potential salary uplift for the Assistant Clerk should she undertake and complete the CiLCA. He said he had not. The STAFFING COMMITTEE proposed an additional £1,000 to cover this possibility.

- RESOLVED:** The STAFFING COMMITTEE resolved to recommend to FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE a Salaries Budget 2026-27 of £104,316.
- The STAFFING COMMITTEE considered any further actions regarding the staffing arrangements of HOLME VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL.
RESOLVED: No further action.

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2425 32 Staff Training Budget 2026-27

The STAFFING COMMITTEE is to approve a Staff Training budget for 2026/27 to recommend to the FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE and to full COUNCIL for their budgetary considerations.

The Staff Training Budget 2025/26 is £2,300. Projected expenditure is £1,039 and the projected unspent budget at year end is £1,261. The reason for the budget being significantly higher than expenditure was that provision was built into the budget to allow the assistant clerk, should she so wish, to undertake the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA).

RESOLVED: The STAFFING COMMITTEE resolved to recommend to the FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE a Staff Training Budget 2026-27 of £2,300.

2526 33 Other budgetary considerations

The RFO/Deputy Clerk reported that his laptop is now 10 years old. It originally ran Windows 8 and now runs Windows 10. Microsoft stopped doing updates on Windows 10 in October 2025. This means there will be no more security updates, bug fixes, or technical support for most users. Windows 10 will still function, but it will become increasingly vulnerable to security threats over time.

With this in mind, the STAFFING COMMITTEE considered a recommendation to FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT regarding adjusting the 4245 Office Equipment budget which 2025/26 was budgeted for £300.

RESOLVED: The STAFFING COMMITTEE would recommend the addition of an extra £600 to the 4245 Office Equipment budget line for 2026/27 so as to total £900.

2526 34 Training received by Officers

For 2025-26 there is a budget of £2,300 for staff training.

Deputy Clerk reported on training received by officers since 21 July 2025.

- Clerk – SLCC Webinar: Civility and Respect – AUG 2025
- Deputy Clerk – SLCC Webinar: How to use ChatGPT for council tasks – OCT 2025
- Deputy Clerk – SLCC Webinar: Everything you need to know about VAT (in 2 parts) – OCT 2025
- Deputy Clerk – SLCC Webinar: Managing village halls – SEP 2025

NOTED: Training received by Officers since the STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING on 21 March 2025 was noted by the Committee.

The Committee considered any upcoming training by staff:

- Clerk – SLCC Webinar: Quotes, Tenders and Contracts – OCT and NOV 2025
- Clerk – SLCC Webinar: How to use ChatGPT for council tasks – NOV 2025
- Deputy Clerk – SLCC Webinar: Canva training – JAN 2026

RESOLVED: This training was approved.

The meeting closed at 2050hrs.

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