FAIR OAK & HORTON HEATH PARISH COUNCIL
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Minutes of the special **FINANCE COMMITTEE** meeting held on Friday, 2 May 2025 at 2.00pm at the Parish Office, 2 Knowle Park Lane, Fair Oak

Present: Cllrs Couldrey, Douglas (Chair), Marsh & Tennent

Officers in attendance: Joanna Cahill, Responsible Finance Officer and Melanie Stephens, Clerk.

Apologies: Cllrs Barrett, Chivuchi, Forfar & Higby

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

28. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present.

29. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

RECOMMENDED:

That, under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies Admissions to Meetings Act 1960, the public and the Press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information which would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of its confidential nature.

30. APPOINTMENT OF EXECUTIVE OFFICER & INTERIM STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee considered the appointment of the Executive Officer following interviews held on Thursday 1 May 2025 and the interim staffing arrangements prior to their appointment.

Following the formal resignation of the Clerk, the Council at their meeting on 20 March had approved a draft advert, job description and person specification for a replacement Proper Officer. The Council had agreed to a change in job title to Executive Officer, with the salary increased to reflect the growth of the Council and to remain in line with other Clerk salaries in Borough.

The post was advertised from 24 March to 20 April 2025. Seven applications had been received, one outside the deadline; three candidates had been invited to an interview. Of these candidates, the interview Panel (Cllrs Bird, Couldrey & Douglas) had recommended that Andy Lowe be appointed to the post.

Following the recommendation of the Panel, members unanimously approved the appointment and subsequently requested that a formal offer be made on scale point 42 (subject to satisfactory references and employment checks).

It was anticipated that there would be at least a two-month period prior to the new Executive Officer commencing the appointment where the Council would be without a Proper Officer. As such, it was recommended that the current Deputy 'act up' as Clerk in the interim period. In addition, the Committee recommended that a temporary Clerk be appointed for a two-week period to cover from 7-21 July during the Deputy Clerk's annual leave. This would ensure continuous service delivery and functionality of the Council.

Members also agreed, in the interim period, that the Parish Offices be closed to the public on Fridays due to limited staff cover. Staff working at home would remain available for enquiries via telephone and email.

Following discussion on the appointment and interim arrangements, it was:

RECOMMENDED:

That the Council agree the following: -

(a) That Andy Lowe be appointed as Executive Officer for 37 hours per week on Scale Point 42 (subject to satisfactory references and employment checks);

(b) That the Deputy Clerk act as Interim Clerk for 30 hours per week on Scale Point 37, prior to the Executive Officer's formal start date;

(c) That a Temporary Clerk be appointed for a two-week period (7-21 July) to cover the Deputy Clerk's holiday at a rate of up to £30 per hour, with the current Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, being given delegated authority to advertise and appoint a suitable locum; and

(d) That the costs associated with the appointment of the interim Clerk for a two-week period (£960) be met from the staffing & sickness budget.

Signed ……. Chairman

Dated:

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