

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL

Personnel Committee
4 October 2022

Minutes

Present:
Councillors:

Alcock	How
I Fradgley	Vos

Clerk: Town Clerk
Press: None
Public: None

29) Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Dowling, Mackenzie and Warren-Howles and accepted for the reasons given.

30) Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

31) To receive written requests for dispensation for disclosable pecuniary interests

There were no written requests for dispensation.

32) To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate

There were no requests.

33) Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

34) Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting held on September 6 September 2022

It was Proposed, Seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting held on 6 September 2022 be approved as a correct record.

35) Matters referred To Committee

Minute 31 – The Council's Chaplain

At the July 2022 Council meeting, the Minutes of the Personal Committee held on 28 June 2022 had been considered. This Committee had recommended:

That from 2023, the incumbent should be addressed as the Council's Advocate but the job description for the Council's Chaplain would still be fit for purpose with slight amendment.

Council had considered at that time that the matter required further consideration and should be referred to this Committee for further deliberation.

Prior to the meeting, Revd Dr Paul Edmondson and, Revd Dr Roy Lodge MBE, had submitted their further thoughts and observations on the issue. (Appendix A and B to these Minutes)

To assist the Committee in its deliberations, Revd Dr Paul Edmondson was invited to address the meeting and included some further reflections.

The subsequent debate made it apparent that Members no longer considered the designation "Council's Advocate" suitable for the role.

Members were now firmly of the view that the appointment should be more inclusive. As such they were content with the additional points raised by Revd Dr Paul Edmondson that should be included in the future job description for the position.

- 1) *Aiming for the betterment of the spiritual, moral, pastoral, and cultural well-being of the Mayor and the Town Council;*
- 2) *Presenting a 'Thought for the Day' at the beginning of council meetings;*

- 3) *Commitment to engaging with other faith groups at a civic level;*
- 4) *Civic commitment;*
- 5) *Acknowledging that the role is not a platform from which to proselytise or to try to convert people; and*
- 6) *Possibly being invited, by the vicar of Holy Trinity Church, to take part in the annual Civic Service.*

The Committee considered that by including the above, this would allow for the opportunity to embrace and develop relationships which could lead to further candidates for the role.

It was Proposed, Seconded and unanimously

RECOMMENDED: That the post remain as the Council's Chaplain but the job description be amended to reflect the opportunity to broaden the engagement process for a suitable candidate.

In view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the Chairman proposed and it was AGREED to move the meeting into Confidential Session. The minutes relating to the outcome of the business transacted are open and recorded below.

36) Staffing levels

It was noted that the current staffing levels were adequate and fit for purpose. The Town Clerk informed the meeting that the Responsible Financial Officer post (part-time) was currently advertised via a variety of platforms. The Committee noted the potential impact of the current job climate but it was agreed to wait and see if there was any uptake on this post.

37) Remuneration

It was noted that the current pay award for 2022/23 was still pending, a provision for 2023/24 should be included in the budget and 5% was suggested.

38) Budget 2023/24

Submitted to the Committee was an initial draft of the Budget for 2023/24, which required scrutiny and amendment over

the next few months. The Committee acknowledged the economic financial challenges facing the Town Council under the current economic climate and also that the Council's General Reserves had already fallen below the level required by the Reserves Policy.

In considering the budget in relation to this Committee specifically, Members considered that a robust training budget should be retained and the increased provision for the annual pay award. Issues with recruitment were noted. Areas to be looked at were suggested by Councillors and the Town Clerk undertook to liaise with the Responsible Financial Officer on these.

39) Sickness

The report was noted.

40) Job Descriptions

The Job Descriptions of the Town Hall and Cemetery Co-ordinator, Open Spaces Operatives and Open Spaces Foreman were unanimously recommended for approval and adoption without amendment.

41) Issues Relating to the Wellbeing of the staff

Consideration was given to a proposal to a change the working hours for those staff who worked at the Town Hall for a full day. The proposal was that the offices would close at 5.00pm as opposed to 5.30pm (Monday to Thursday). The half an hour shortfall would be made up by staff by either starting at 8.30am or taking only half an hour for a lunch break.

The Town Clerk indicated that there were no financial implications arising from this change to working hours and the core opening hours of the Town Hall would remain unchanged.

AGREED: That the proposal to a change in office hours be agreed.

42) Town Clerk's Verbal Report

Following a suggestion by the Town Clerk, The Committee indicated their support to encourage members of staff to have their annual flu jab.

43) Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 6 December 2022 at 4:30pm at the Town Hall.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.50pm

A discussion paper on the Town Council Chaplaincy

In light of the Town Council meeting 26 July 2022, I should like to raise the following points for acknowledgement, consideration, and discussion:

That the Chaplain's role includes:

- 1) Aiming for the betterment of the spiritual, moral, pastoral, and cultural well-being of the Mayor and the Town Council.
- 2) Presenting a 'Thought for the Day' at the beginning of council meetings.
- 3) Commitment to engaging with other faith groups at a civic level.
- 4) Civic commitment.
- 5) Acknowledging that the role is not a platform from which to proselytise or to try to convert people.
- 6) Possibly being invited, by the vicar of Holy Trinity Church, to take part in the annual Civic Service.

In recent weeks, I have come across these words by Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. As a priest in The Church of England I have found them helpful in thinking about how we continue to evolve our understanding of the role of Chaplain, as well as how we think about the role of the our nation's established church in public life.

From a speech given by Queen Elizabeth II at Lambeth Palace, 15 February 2012:

'The concept of our established Church is occasionally misunderstood and, I believe, commonly under-appreciated. Its role is not to defend Anglicanism to the exclusion of other religions. Instead, the Church has a duty to protect the free practice of all faiths in this country.

It certainly provides an identity and spiritual dimension for its own many adherents. But also, gently and assuredly, the Church of England has created an environment for other faith communities and indeed people of no faith to live freely. Woven into the fabric of this country, the Church has helped to build a better society – more and more in active co-operation for the common good with those of other faiths.

Faith plays a key role in the identity of many millions of people, providing not only a system of belief but also a sense of belonging. It can act as a spur for social action. Indeed, religious groups have a proud track record of helping those in the greatest need, including the sick, the elderly, the lonely and the disadvantaged. They remind us of the responsibilities we have beyond ourselves.'

Paul Edmondson, Town Council Chaplain.

Meaning of the word Chaplain - Discussion paper.

Understanding the meaning of the title Chaplain.

A Chaplain is a certified clergy member who provides spiritual care for individuals in a non- religious organisation, rather than a church congregation.

Chaplains can work in government roles and serve members of the military in different locations.

Chaplains are based in a community rather than a particular church. Although they apply to be chaplains through their own church, they are trained to minister to all faiths.

Traditionally a chaplain is a minister, such as a priest, pastor, rabbi, imam or lay representative of a religious tradition, attached to a secular institution such as a hospital, prison, military unit, school, police department, university, or private chapel.

Types of Chaplaincies:

Military Chaplains

Healthcare Chaplains

Correctional and Rehabilitation Chaplains

Public Safety Chaplains

Education Chaplains

Corporate Chaplains

Chaplains for Civic, Private, and Nongovernmental Organisations.

Although many chaplains are ordained ministers, you don't have to be ordained to work as a chaplain , but you do have to have an endorsement or commission from your faith group.

Usage of Chaplain as a generic and pastoral term.

Though originally the word chaplain referred to representatives of the Christian faith, it is now also applied to people of other religions or philosophical traditions.

The concepts of a multi faith team, secular, generic or humanist chaplaincy are also gaining increasing use, particularly within healthcare and educational settings.

Pastoral care is an ancient model of emotional, social and spiritual support that can be found in all cultures and traditions. The term is considered inclusive of distinctly non religious forms of support, as well as support for people from religious communities.

The Non-Religious Pastoral Support Network is an organisation supporting a network of people who work in non-religious pastoral care which also promotes and advocates for non-religious pastoral care provision with the UK in institutions such as the NHS and HM Prison and Probation Service, the Forces and within the British education system.

Chaplains are professional clinicians who seek to build a relationship of trust through compassionate presence, offering spiritual guidance to many.

General conclusions.

From this paper it can be seen that the word Chaplain is a non threatening word without an overly religious prejudice or bias.

It can also be deduced that the word Chaplain is compatible within a religious and non religious context and can be seen as representative of a diverse cross section of the community whether belonging to a faith tradition or other atheistic philosophies.

The key ingredient in any Chaplaincy appointment is that of relationship building , pastoral support and spiritual guidance.

It is therefore possible for a Mayor or Council to appoint a Secular Chaplain or a Chaplain from a faith tradition who would both be obliged to exercise the role in accordance within a specified Job Description drawn up by Council.

By appointing a secular chaplain or person from a non faith tradition does not mean a secularisation of the Chaplaincy. Such a person would bring to the Thought for the Day moral and spiritual insights from their perspective of life . Likewise the Chaplain of faith of whatever religion would be speaking from within his/her faith

tradition. What they would have in common is the understanding that this is not a platform to preach or proselytise so much as to aim for the betterment of the moral , spiritual -in the broadest sense- pastoral and cultural well-being of the Council.

Civic commitment.

On the basis of the forementioned premise there is therefore no reason why the relationship that has existed for many generations between the parish church of Holy Trinity and the Town Council should discontinue and worth remembering that the Mayor and Council members attend the civic service in Holy Trinity as representatives of the people of the town irrespective of their own religious or moral philosophy.

It should be down to the Vicar of Holy Trinity to determine the nature of the civic service and whether to invite the Chaplain to participate either by giving the Homily, reading a biblical Lesson or other appropriate readings.

I believe we can move forward with the status quo accepting the title Chaplain within its broadest meaning and the Thought for the Day or Contemplative Thought as the recognised opportunity for reflection at the beginning of Council meetings.

Dr. Roy Lodge MBE.

Former Mayor Stratford upon Avon.