

To all members of Shinfield Parish Council Staffing Committee. Notice is hereby given, and you are summoned to attend, a meeting of the Staffing Committee on Wednesday 21st January 2026, commencing 19.30 at the School Green Centre.



Bruce Winton, Clerk
16th January 2026

Members: Cllrs L James (Chair), N Masseron, Z Matic, I Montgomery & D Peer

Agenda

1. Public Questions

- 1.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** public questions

2. Apologies and declarations of members' interests

- 2.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** approval of apologies for absence
- 2.2 To **RECEIVE** members' declarations of interest

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

- 3.1 To **RECEIVE** and **APPROVE** the minutes of 12th November 2025 as a correct record of the meeting and to authorise the Chair to sign the same*
- 3.2 To **CONSIDER** matters arising from the minutes

4. General Review of staffing

- 4.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** a proposal for long-term staffing structure and resilience
- 4.2 To **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** a verbal report on staffing matters and structure by the Clerk

5. Member-Officer Conduct Protocol

- 5.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** the draft Member-Officer Conduct Protocol* with a view to recommend the document to Full Council

6. Terms of Reference

- 6.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** the draft Terms of Reference for the committee*

7. Training

- 7.1 To **RECEIVE** and **CONSIDER** a verbal update on training

8. Staff Security Matters

- 8.1 To **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** a verbal report by the Clerk on staff security matters
- 8.2 To **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** a verbal report by the Clerk on anti-social behaviour

9. Date of Next Meeting

- 9.1 The next meeting is Wednesday 20th May 2026

Minutes of a meeting of
Staffing Committee
Held on Wednesday 12th November 2025
At School Green Centre commencing at 19.30

Present: Cllrs L James (Chair), Z Matic, I Montgomery & D Peer

Attending: B Winton (Clerk)

25/SC/35 Public Questions

35.1 There were no public questions.

25/SC/36 Apologies and declarations of Members' Interests

36.1 Apologies had been received from Cllr Masseron

36.2 There were no declarations of members' interests.

25/SC/37 Minutes of Previous Meetings

37.1 The minutes of the committee meeting held on 16th July 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed as such by Cllr James.

Proposed: Cllr Montgomery

Seconded: Cllr Peer

Approved: Unanimously

37.2 Actions and Matters Arising

There were the following matters arising:

31.2 Add Terms of Reference to the agenda of the next meeting

The Clerk apologised for this not happening

ACTION – Clerk to add Terms of Reference to the agenda of the next meeting

32.1 Clerk to consider internship options for summer of 2026

The Clerk had done some initial research into providing an internship. A recommended programme would include the following steps:

- Set out the purpose (what will they learn e.g. council admin, community engagement, governance etc.)
- Duration – Recommendation is 6-8 week period of employment
- Paid/Non-Paid – If they are doing real work and not shadowing then they should be paid the National Minimum Wage
- Draft Internship agreement – Role Description, duration & hours, payment/expenses, confidentiality
- Advertise through our channels, local schools, university job boards (including Henley Business School) etc.
- Advertising in March/April to start June/July

Members agreed that this should be a paid internship if we can find the right candidate.

ACTION – Clerk to progress arranging an internship for summer 2026.

32.2 Clerk to amend the appraisal form to include a general summary of performance of the year

The form has been modified ready for the 2026 reporting cycle.

25/SC/38

General Review of Staffing

- 38.1 The Chair opened this part of the agenda by raising the issue of recent tensions within the council. These, in part, have been one of the reasons for the spate of recent councillor resignations and increased staff concerns which threaten to cause damage to the ongoing operation of the council. The Chair discussed a draft Members-Officers protocol he had prepared. The protocol would bring clarity to roles and responsibilities and how councillors and staff should treat each other. This will be discussed at the next Finance and General Purposes committee with the intention to seek ratification at the following Full Council. The Chair also asked that the Clerk sought additional guidance from the WBC Monitoring Officer.

Members agreed to this initiative.

ACTION – Chair and Clerk to develop a Members-Officers Protocol for consideration by Full Council

ACTION – Clerk to seek additional guidance from WBC Monitoring Officer

38.2 A proposal to test Long-term staffing structure and resilience.

The Clerk advised that after discussion with the Chair that he had started to conduct a review of the long-term staffing structure for the council. He explained that previously there had been tweaks to existing structure but now was the time to do a root and branch review to ensure the structure was correct for the long-term future of the council and built in resilience.

He identified the following changes since 2022:

- Increases in staff numbers
 - Facilities 2 > 3 but only adding 27 hours pw. Despite covering two new building (Manor & High Copse) additional cover was needed in the evenings
 - Youth team 3 > 4 (reflecting increased numbers of children attending youth club)
- Increases in hours for existing staff
 - Finance Manager (18 to 37 hours)
 - IT & Comms Manager (18 to 37 hours)
- Significant growth in room bookings (volume and also complexity of bookings)
 - September 2022 - 215 bookings compared to September 2025 - 370 bookings and increase of 72%
 - The length and complexity of bookings was increasing and there was a need for more/quicker turnarounds
 - The Supervisor role is now much more demanding
- Council Business
 - In 2022 there were 48 council meetings a year, which rose to a maximum of 66 and has only recently reduced to 53 (plus 3 extraordinary Council meetings in 2025)
 - There has been a significant increase in the number of Working Parties, each of which brings more admin and work for those officers on the WP
- Community Events
 - The Council is adding more events, each of which requires staffing and, when new, also require more planning than a well-established event e.g. first art exhibition compared to Remembrance Sunday

It was agreed that the Clerk should pursue initially with his team, and then with the Staffing Committee members, to ensure that appropriate provision was discussed with Full Council and any relevant budget provisions made.

ACTION – Clerk to develop a long-term staffing plan

- 38.3 In support of the above exercise it was also recognised that the Council needed to review existing IT systems. It was proposed to set up an IT Working Party to conduct the review and recommend appropriate upgrades and/or new software as part of reducing workloads where practicable and supporting the resilience programme

ACTION – Clerk to arrange a meeting with Cllrs James, Johnson, and Matic regarding potential new IT systems

- 38.4 A verbal report on staffing matters and structure by the Clerk

The Clerk advised that the unplanned taking the café in-house had caused a period of significant extra workloads for all staff (either directly café related or indirectly). That period had now passed and there was a return towards normal working practices. The Clerk wanted the committee and the Council to be aware of the excellent work to achieve the transition.

In particular the café team that had transferred across were performing well with the lead supervisor showing signs of being able to progress eventually to a Café Manager role.

Member **NOTED** the Clerk's Report

25/SC/39

Training & Development

- 39.1 Training since last meeting
- Various office staff on Allergens and other food hygiene courses
 - All Café Staff Level 2 Food Hygiene
 - Café Supervisor working towards Level 3
 - One councillor on Charing Skills
 - One councillor on Knowledge & Core Skills
- 39.2 Future Training
- One councillor is booked on a NALC 'Local Council Governance' course
 - Two staff are booked on NALC "Navigating Tough Decisions"
 - One member of staff booked on NALC "Digital and Data Compliance"
 - Two staff are booked on "Procurement Training"
 - One member of staff booked on "Future Leaders: Attracting Young Talent"
 - One member of staff booked on "Introduction to VAT"
- 39.3 Clerk's Training

The Clerk advised that his final set of results would be available on Thursday 13th November. Post Meeting note: The Clerk passed with an expected final grade of Pass with Merit (2:1 equivalent).

25/SC/40

Security Matters

40.1 Staff Security

The Clerk advised that there were no specific reports directly affecting staff.

40.2 Anti-Social Behaviour

The Clerk advised that there had been ASB on Millworth Recreation Ground in the summer and ongoing break-ins at Ryeish Green Pavilion all of which are reported to the police and covered at Facilities Committee meetings. There had been no ASB directed at council staff.

25/SC/35

Date of Next meeting

35.1 The date of the next meeting was the Wednesday 21st January 2026

The meeting ended at 20.45

Summary of Actions

25/SC/31.2	Clerk to add Terms of Reference to the agenda of the next meeting	Clerk
25/SC/32.1	Clerk to progress arranging an internship for summer 2026	Clerk
25/SC/38.1	Chair and Clerk to develop a Members-Officers Protocol for consideration by Full Council	Chair/Clerk
25/SC/38.1	Clerk to seek additional guidance from WBC Monitoring Officer	Clerk
25/SC/38.2	Clerk to develop a long-term staffing plan	Clerk
25/SC/38.3	Clerk to arrange a meeting with Cllrs James, Johnson, and Matic regarding potential new IT systems	Clerk

DRAFT

Member – Officer Conduct Protocol

Introduction

This protocol sets out the practical measures for ensuring effective and professional working relationships between Members and Officers of the Council. It is based on the Model Councillor Code of Conduct, the guidance for officers in the Staff Handbook, and the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life—selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership. These principles emphasise mutual respect, impartiality, and professionalism.

Scope & Purpose

Positive relationships between Members and Officers are essential for good governance and the effective running of the Council. Trust, openness, respect, and constructive communication underpin these relationships. The purpose of this protocol is to clarify expectations and support a shared understanding of roles, responsibilities, and behaviours. The reputation of the Council depends significantly on how well Members and Officers work together. Members set policy, make decisions, and provide community leadership. They must not involve themselves in day-to-day administration, which is the responsibility of the Clerk and Officers.

Focus on Issues

Members may robustly challenge ideas, proposals, and policies, but must not direct personal criticism, attacks, or offensive behaviour toward individuals. Officers are similarly expected to focus on issues rather than personalities.

Roles and Responsibilities

Councillors

Councillors are responsible to the electorate and serve only so long as their term of office lasts.

Councillors are responsible for:

- Setting the Council’s policy direction and providing community leadership
- Monitoring performance and delivery of services
- Representing the Council externally
- Acting as advocates on behalf of residents.

Councillors should focus on strategic matters and must not micromanage staff. Individual Members, including the Chair, cannot direct staff; instructions must come from the Council as a whole or through the Clerk.

Chairs and Vice-Chairs

Chairs and Vice-Chairs have additional responsibilities, including:

- Leading and managing meetings
- Working with the Clerk to agree draft agendas
- Exercising a casting vote at meetings where required
- Acting as the public face of the Council or committee
- Supporting good governance, conduct, and meeting discipline

They must continue to respect the impartiality of Officers, must not request politically partisan work, and must not put Officers in a position that conflicts with Standing Orders or Council policies.

Officers

Officers are responsible to the council. Their job is to give advice to councillors and to the council, and to carry out the council's work under the direction and control of the council and relevant committees.

Officers, managed by the Clerk, are responsible for:

- Providing professional advice
- Implementing Council decisions
- Managing daily operations.

Certain officers (e.g., the Clerk and RFO) have statutory duties that may override instructions from Members. Members must respect these obligations and not obstruct Officers in fulfilling them.

Officers must be able to offer professional recommendations freely, even when these may not align with Member preferences. Where Members disagree, they should do so respectfully and ensure that reasons are clearly recorded in the minutes.

Mutual Respect and Trust

Members and Officers must work together with mutual trust, courtesy, and respect. Uncivil or discourteous behaviour is unacceptable.

Each should support the other's role

- Members should value professional expertise
- Officers should respect the democratic mandate of members

Expectations

Members can expect Officers to:

- Demonstrate commitment to the Council as a whole
- Work in partnership with members
- Understand and respect respective roles, pressures, and workloads
- Provide timely responses to enquiries and complaints
- Offer impartial, politically neutral professional advice
- Provide relevant and up-to-date information
- Be aware of the political environment while remaining politically neutral
- Demonstrate respect, dignity, courtesy, and appropriate confidentiality
- Maintain integrity and adhere to policies and procedures
- Avoid using relationships with Members for personal gain.

Officers can expect Members to

- Work in partnership with officers
- Understand and support respective roles, pressures, and workloads
- Provide leadership while maintaining appropriate boundaries
- Demonstrate respect, dignity, courtesy, and confidentiality
- Avoid bullying or applying undue pressure
- Consider the seniority and authority of Officers when making requests
- Avoid using their position for personal benefit or inappropriate influence
- Comply with the Council's Code of Conduct.

Impartiality and No Political Pressure

Shinfield Parish Council supports the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) policy that party politics should not influence parish councils. Councillors serve their community, not political groups.

Officers:

- Must not attend party group meetings or prepare partisan material
- Are responsible to the Council as a whole, not to individual Members or groups;
- Must not be asked to act in a politically biased way or undertake tasks that further party interests
 - Reports and advice must be factual and impartial.
- Must treat all Councillors fairly and provide the same information to all Members unless a legitimate reason prevents this

Confidentiality

Information acquired through Council roles must remain confidential unless disclosure is authorised, required by law, or deemed to be in the public interest following consultation with the WBC Monitoring Officer.

Communications

Members should direct operational requests through the Clerk or Deputy Clerk rather than approaching junior staff. Where communication with a specific officer is appropriate, the Clerk or Deputy Clerk should be copied in.

Officers should ensure the whole Council or relevant committees are informed of responses where appropriate.

A professional tone is required in all communications—no shouting, rude emails, or hostile exchanges.

Problem Resolution

Minor issues should be resolved informally wherever possible. Where informal approaches are insufficient, formal processes apply.

A councillor's misconduct (e.g. bullying the Clerk/other staff) may trigger a Code of Conduct complaint to WBC's Monitoring Officer. The Monitoring Officer may seek local mediation first, but if that fails, the matter can be investigated and potentially lead to sanctions on the councillor (though limited, since parish councillors cannot be suspended or removed by the parish). Nevertheless, even a finding of a breach with a formal censure is reputationally significant and can lead to pressure to resign if severe.

An employee's misconduct (e.g. an officer showing disrespect to an elected member or failing to follow council instructions) is handled via the council's disciplinary procedure. The Staffing Committee will oversee any investigation, with the employee having rights to representation, etc. If a councillor is dissatisfied with an officer, they should not themselves attempt discipline but refer it to the Clerk or Staffing committee.

The Council (via the Staffing Committee) has the authority to handle personnel matters, and the Chair of the Council should not individually attempt to deal with complaints about staff outside the proper process.

Shinfield Parish Council Staffing Committee Terms of Reference

Status

- This is a standing committee of Shinfield Parish Council

Purpose

- The Staffing Committee is responsible for
 - Making decisions regarding staffing structure, policy and procedures (unless reserved for Full Council – see below)
 - Line Management of the Clerk (through the Chair of the Committee)

Membership

- The Committee shall have at least four and no more than five members
- The Committee shall comprise of
 - Vice-Chair(s) of the Council as determined each year at the Annual Council Meeting
 - Three other members of the Council as appointed at the Annual Council Meeting
 - Ideally appointees should have experience in one or more of the following areas
 - Employment law and best practice,
 - Management of staff and/or
 - Appropriate training agreed by the Council
 - The Chair of the Council shall not be a member of the committee
- Quorum
 - The quorum for the committee is three members.
- The Chair of the committee shall be the Vice-Chair of the Council with designated responsibility for Finance & Staffing
- The Committee shall elect a Vice-Chair annually at the first meeting of the committee held after the Annual Council Meeting in May each year
- The Clerk shall attend these meetings as clerk to the committee and to produce minutes

Meetings

- The committee will meet at least FOUR times per annum
- Meetings will normally be held on the third Wednesday of January, May, July & November (no meetings scheduled for March and September each year)

Aims and Objectives

- Ensuring that the council's staffing arrangements are adequate and robust to cope with current and anticipated workloads and make recommendations to Full Council for any variation to the structure
- Review and approving the individual job descriptions, hours and grades
- Ensuring that all legal arrangements are in place for each member of staff
- Ensuring that the appraisal system is applied fairly and consistently
- Managing the Clerk's performance including setting objectives and performance targets agreed with the Clerk for the reporting year
 - The Chair of Staffing Committee to conduct a formal Annual Review

- Overseeing the processes for staff recruitment and ensure implementation of an effective induction process for all new staff
- Overseeing the Council's policies for training and development of staff and members and make recommendations to the Council
- Overseeing the Council's policies in relation to Health and Safety matters
- Monitoring the Council employment policies and processes as listed in the Council's Employee Handbook and give guidance and make recommendations to Council
- Overseeing staff disciplinary issues in conjunction with the Clerk
- Ensuring that staff are aware of grievance policies and procedures
 - Where grievances are not, or cannot be, addressed by the Clerk, the committee shall act as the body to receive and resolve such grievances

Delegated powers

- The committee has the following delegated powers:
 - Delegation of work to the Clerk
 - Delegation of work to a Sub-Committee
 - The Committee has the power to spend within its budget
 - Budget may be reassigned against individual line items
 - Any proposal to exceed the total expenditure budget limit must be approved by the Finance and General Purposes Committee prior to that expenditure being committed or incurred

Reserved for Full Council

- The following items are reserved for Full Council
 - The appointment and dismissal of The Clerk, The Deputy Clerk, Facilities Manager and Responsible Finance Officer (if this role is not filled by the Clerk)
 - Approval of new staffing structures

Reporting on the activities of the Committee

- The following reporting shall take place
 - The DRAFT minutes of each meeting of the committee will be tabled at the next Full Council meeting
 - The Chair and Clerk shall provide additional information on the committee's activities as requested by members

Training Recommendations

- It is **recommended** that each member of this committee attends training as arranged through Hampshire Association of Local Councils on
 - "Managing Employees in Local Councils"
 - "Appraisals"
- Alternative courses covering the same syllabus would also be suitable training for members of the committee

Review

- The Committee shall review these terms of reference annually at the first meeting after the annual meeting of the council.