

**RINGMER PARISH COUNCIL
EXTRAORDINARY MEETING MINUTES**

**Minutes of Ringmer Parish Council Extraordinary Meeting
Held on Thursday 29th July 2021 at 6.00pm**

PRESENT: Cllr John Kay, Cllr Marcia Morgan, Cllr Sarah Phillips, Cllr Gordon Sims (C),
Cllr Richard Turner and Cllr John Whitlock

Also in attendance: Gail Metcalfe – Administrator

Members of the Public: 0

Agenda Items

1. TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies were received from Cllrs Tara Barber, Margaret Crompton, Johnny Denis, Clare Herbert, Gavin May and David Terry

2. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS AND DISPENSATION REQUESTS

2.1 There were no declarations of members interests and dispensation requests.

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

This item shall last not more than 15 minutes or at Chairman's discretion and no contribution shall last more than 3 minutes.

Due to contractual matters being discussed there will be an exclusion of the press and members of the public in accordance with the Admission to meetings Act 1960 – Council to resolve the exclusion of press and members of the public

3.1 There were no members of the public or press present.

4. TO RESPOND TO CORRESPONDENCE SENT ON BEHALF OF SPOTLIGHT HR

- a) To consider a Parish Council response
- b) To consider next steps and actions going forward

Report previously circulated to all Members. Any decisions made will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting

4.1 The Chairman explained that the issue at hand was whether to pay the outstanding amount requested of £818.43 or to contest it. His view was that RPC should only pay the elements of the work completed as a large chunk of the work had not been provided i.e., the analysis of staffing roles and functions. The Chairman went round the room to gauge Cllrs' opinions.

One Cllr said that the claimant should not be paid as the work had not been completed.

Another Cllr thought that we should pay it and draw a line under it and put it down to experience explaining he was concerned for RPC's reputation if we did not honour the contract. Another Cllr refuted this by saying that equally it could be argued that RPC's reputation could be tarnished if known to be bullied into paying an invoice.

A further Cllr believed that RPC should enter a defence expressing surprise that a claim had been brought with no attempt at mediation. The Chairman explained that he had requested to meet with the claimant on several occasions, but these offers had been rejected. The Cllr added that RPC had an immaculate paying record of over many years and this would not tarnish our reputation.

Another Cllr agreed that the claim should be contested and that we had a good defence. He did not wish for us to be blackmailed and this is what it felt like was happening.

The next Cllr agreed that we should only pay for the service received. If the claimant was prepared to do the outstanding work, this should be negotiated.

An absent Cllr's opinion was read out by the Chairman. This Cllr felt that the work requested had not been delivered and was shocked at the unprofessional behaviour of the Claimant.

The missing work was discussed and identified as there being no preliminary work done on the permanent staffing structure required for a Parish the size of Ringmer. The questions of what staff do we need and what hours were not addressed in the report. Further, there was no analysis on comparator councils re. their staffing and hours.

It was **resolved** that the Council agreed to enter a defence, whilst seeking to negotiate, with delegated authority given to Cllrs John Kay and Gordon Sims to draft a defence in consultation with the Clerk. It was noted that a response was required before **4pm on 9th August 2021**.

5. URGENT ITEMS AT THE CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION REQUIRING DECISIONS WHICH CANNOT BE HELD OVER UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING

5.1 There were none.

The meeting closed at 6.35pm.

THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS HAVE A RIGHT AND ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND

Date of Next Council Meeting **12th August 2021** at **7.00pm**
in the Parish Rooms, Lucy Stone Room

Please be advised that all Parish Council documents that require publishing are available on the Parish Council website, which is often updated. Please look out for any notices. Latest documents are also announced on Ringmer Village News Facebook Page.

<http://ringmerparishcouncil.gov.uk.84-18-198-198.enterprise3.lightning1.net/>