

TO NOTE: UPDATE ON WORKNEST CONTRACT ACTIVITY TO DATE

In May 2024 Council agreed to a contract with Worknest, a large specialist company brought to our attention via CAPALC. Worknest works with NALC and have specialists who are familiar with Parish Council requirements.

Since the contract was agreed Worknest has provided proactive advice, support and on-line training as well as assistance with individual queries/issues.

The largest single piece of work on our behalf by the Worknest team of professional employment and legal advisers over the last three months has been the preparation of two critical documents reflecting and encapsulating the latest requirements for essential and good practice in the management of staff.

1. New Template staff contract

- 1.1. This contract covers a wider range of contractual issues than are in the current staff contracts which themselves have evolved as new staff have been appointed over the last six years.
- 1.2. It is intended that all three members of BPC staff on substantive contracts will be moved to the new contracts.
 - 1.2.1. No objections to this change are anticipated; the Clerk and Assistant Clerk are already aware of the contents of the new Template Contract as they have been directly involved in tailoring the document for use by BPC, as a small employer, within the legal and professional recommendations and advice received from Worknest
 - 1.2.2. Existing staff will not be subject to any greater requirements than their current contracts. However, the new contract template provides clarity on any of BPC's obligations as an employer and the employee's contractual obligations.
- 1.3. The person appointed in due course to the substantive part-time vacancy for a groundsman (previously known as handyman) will start their employment using the new template.

2. Staff Handbook

- 2.1. This comprehensive document (65 pages) has been adapted for BPC from a first draft provided by Worknest.
- 2.2. It is acknowledged that the Clerk and Assistant Clerk have made significant contributions to tailoring this handbook to meet BPC's needs and obligations.
- 2.3. The Staff Handbook will help ensure each of BPC's employees is clear on what is expected of them and what processes and potential penalties would apply if there were behaviour inconsistent with BPC and legal requirements.
- 2.4. This, combined with the implementation of new contracts, will address in many ways the potential for vicarious liability adversely affecting the Council relating to the actions of its employees.

The draft documentation, and the subsequent advice and guidance from the professionals from Worknest has already helped BPC to address effectively and efficiently the requirements placed on it as an employer, including the significant number of changes in employment law which became active in April 2024.

The handbook is an investment in supporting the employees of BPC and particularly the Clerk who manages our three staff. Going forward we will be making more use of the "LearningNest" online training to further support staff development and with the ongoing advice from the WorkNest employment advisers ensure we remain legally compliant and manage/develop staff in ways which benefit the residents of the Parish, Councillors and other members of the public who visit us.