Item 11 -- Parish Caretaker or Warden

Meeting: Full Council on 24 September 2026

Motion(s): To approve a job description and advert for a recreation ground caretaker/warden.

Author: Clerk to the Council

Background

The Parish Council has identified a need for a Parish Caretaker or Warden to undertake a range of practical tasks, inspections and routine checks across the parish.

Job description

A range of possible tasks and the role description were previously discussed.

Role	Core purpose	Typical duties
Caretaker	Looks after the building and grounds	Opening/closing, building inspections, bins, maintenance, heating, grounds, security,
Cleaner	Keeps the premises clean and presentable	Cleaning toilets, replenishing consumables, cleaning floors, kitchens, dusting, rubbish disposal, deep cleaning
Warden	Looking after the parish's physical assets and environment	Keeping public areas clean and tidy, undertaking minor maintenance, maintaining records and reporting defects or issues to the Council.

Cleaning has since been outsourced. It is considered the proposed range of tasks now sits better with the job title of Warden as this is a broader role covering more responsibilities across the parish than cleaner or caretaker.

Duty	Approx. hours/month
Fire safety checks	2 hrs
Legionella monitoring	1 hrs
Playground inspections	2 hrs
Litter picking	1 hrs
Periodic parish asset inspections	~ 1 hr †
Watering trees, summer only	~ 3 hrs †
General maintenance	~ 2 hrs
Total	Around 12

† averaged across the year.

The role as outlined here would be approximately **12 hours per month**, although the actual hours are variable depending on the time of year and the work required. For example, tree watering will mainly be required during the summer.

Options:

As this is a new role, it is not yet clear how the arrangement will work in practice or whether the role will develop into a permanent position.

Two options have therefore been considered:

1. Employing a Parish Warden directly; or
2. Engaging a Parish Warden on a self-employed basis.

A summary of the two approaches is given below:

	Employed	**Self-employed**
Relationship	Employee of the parish council	Independent contractor
Hours	Contractual clarity from day one	Work agreed as required
Payroll	Council responsibility	Contactor invoices council
Holiday	Employee entitlement	No holiday entitlement
Tax/NI	Council handles PAYE and employer obligations	Contractor responsible for own tax/NI
Admin	More	Less
Control over work	Greater control, within reason for a part-time position.	Must reflect genuine contractor relationship.
Insurance	Covered by parish council	Contractor holds own insurance
Initial arrangement	Could be 12-month fixed-term employment contract	Could be 12-month service contract, subject to review

Variable hours and employment

The hours required for the Parish Warden role are expected to vary considerably depending on the season and the work required. An employee arrangement for a genuinely irregular hours worker creates additional administrative requirements around timesheets, variable pay, holiday entitlement, holiday pay and record keeping.

For an irregular-hours employee, holiday entitlement would need to be calculated by reference to hours worked. Rolled-up holiday pay is permitted for qualifying irregular-hours workers and can reduce some of the administration, but it still requires the correct calculation and separate identification of holiday pay on payslips.

There is also a risk, depending on how the employment contract is worded, that the Council could be committed to employment costs at times when there is less work available or where planned tasks have not been required or completed.

An important consideration is that the Clerk currently undertakes a number of the practical and operational tasks that are being considered for the proposed role. The purpose of creating a new post should therefore be to achieve a genuine transfer of work and a net reduction in the Clerk's operational workload, rather than simply transferring tasks to an employee while creating additional supervision and management responsibilities.

Given the relatively small and variable nature of the work, a self-employed arrangement may provide a more straightforward way of commissioning the services required, with payment made against work undertaken and invoiced monthly.

The arrangement would need to be structured and operated as genuine self-employment, with the Council obtaining appropriate advice before proceeding.

Financial implications:

- The cost needs to be included within the Council's approved budget.
- An employed post would be counted under ‘Staff Costs’.
- A self-employed post would sit under General Maintenance.
- If the budgetary provision is not sufficient, the council should increase the budget allocation under the appropriate heading.

A financial comparison is given below based on an anticipated average of 12 hours per month or 144 hours annually. Actual costs may vary depending on the amount and timing of work required, particularly for seasonal tasks and responsive maintenance.

	Employed	**Self-employed**
Basic rate	£15.31 per hour	£20 per hour
Holiday pay	£2.30 per hour (rolled up)	N/a
Employer NI	Below threshold	N/a
Pension	Below lower limit	N/a
Payroll/admin ‡	£ 132	N/a
Total cost (144 hrs)	£2,667	£2,880

‡ Based on 30 minutes per month to run payroll in house.

Recommendation

The Council is asked to consider the two options and agree whether the Parish Warden should be engaged as an employee or on a self-employed basis.

As this is a new role and the Council does not yet know the full extent of the workload, it is also recommended that the arrangement is initially considered for a **12-month period**, with approximately **12 hours of work per month**.

The role should be reviewed towards the end of the 12-month period to consider:

- the actual amount of work required;
- whether 12 hours per month is appropriate;
- how well the arrangement has worked for the Council;
- whether any duties need to be added or changed; and
- whether the role should continue and, if so, on what basis.