

From: [Objector]
Sent: 22 July 2021 12:13
To: [Clerk]
Cc: [All Cllrs]
Subject: Re: AGAR meeting request

Dear [Clerk],

My apologies, but due to a number of issues I've been unable to respond in full until now, especially as my unanswered queries now span three AGARs. I feel that his whole AGAR process would be so much easier if you would just have the courtesy to meet and discuss the issues arising since your appointment last year, whether in person or via Zoom, like the previous like did. Until then, this long email will have to suffice.

Thank you for arranging the AGAR inspection meeting, but you did not make it clear that you would not be in attendance, neither in person nor via Zoom and the halls do not have a telephone. You also did not mention that Cllr Scarisbrick would be attending to oversee the meeting, nor that Cllr Clarke was attending as a member of the public (although it did make a more amiable meeting). As you are the Responsible Financial Officer, and you did not attend the meeting, my queries raised both prior and at the meeting were not answered. It seems that the abandoning of the publicly held quarterly Finance Committee meetings left the attending councillors (two of the three Personnel Committee members seemingly responsible for contracts) at a disadvantage, leaving them uninformed, or at least unclear, as to specific BPC financial decision making, leaving it in your hands as RFO.

Therefore, the councillors in attendance were not in a position to answer my questions, which have been raised for the previous two AGARs, nor, as you are aware, was the information available for me to inspect (either via the current or previous AGARs or separate information requests). Consequently I find that this process has again been needlessly obstructive and protracted, especially as I've only just had opportunity to reengage in this AGAR process and send you this email.

In summary, The AGAR notice incorrectly states "ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020". It also states, "*Any person interested has the **right to inspect and make copies of the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records must be made available for inspection by any person interested.** For the year ended 31 March 2021, these documents will be available on reasonable notice by application to:*" you (Appendix 1). Yet surprisingly you wrote in response to my related documentation request, "*The matters listed as a minimum do not form part of the accounts that have been prepared for 20/21 and examined by the Parish Council's Internal Auditor*". **To clarify, are you saying that no deeds, contracts, leases, grants or other related documents are audited for BPC at all? Are you saying that there are no checks that contracts actually exist, that the content has actually been agreed, signed and approved by full council correctly? Is this national best practice?**

You have now had nearly four weeks to find and send me, or make available AGAR related information (or via general Freedom of Information requests). Therefore, please send me the information previously requested as indicated in my original June emails, seen below in red. If you are unable or unwilling to send me this information, either under the AGAR process or a freedom of information request, please tell me your reasoning so that I may progress this matter further. Please also answer the queries raised during my AGAR inspection as listed below.

A more personal approach would have reduced unnecessary frustration or delay, and ensured no miscommunication of any query or request, so if I have misunderstood, or you do not understand anything requested, or I've made referencing errors due to time constraints, please let me know. To help expedite and simplify matters for the purposes of AGAR, which as you know ends tomorrow Friday, 23JUL21, after sending me the requested documentation, **may I suggest that you urgently set up a Zoom meeting with the three/four of us** i.e. you, me, Cllr Scarisbrick and Cllr Clarke to talk through the queries below, as they showed an interested in also obtaining answers to the queries I raised at the AGAR inspection. **I will make myself available from tomorrow onwards either in the day or evening as suitable.**

If you decide to avoid or delay answering my queries beyond the AGAR period, i.e. Friday (23/07/21), as has previously happened, please can you arrange a separate meeting with yourself/RFO, Cllr Scarisbrick and Cllr Clarke to amicably discuss and finally resolve these ongoing matters. As the government COVID19 policy restrictions have largely been lifted, and BPC now meets with public attendees, I can see no reason why this cannot now happen, as previously discussed and agreed by the above councillors.

Below are some specific queries raised yet unanswered during the AGAR inspection (and/or information requests):

INCOME AND RECEIPTS

1. £10K COVID19 Grant from NSC - BPC seems to have been holding onto £7K for the last year during the extreme COVID19 policy measures. You previously indicated that £1K was given as a grant and £2K on tablets for councillors - that were not sourced to include Zoom capability to ensure public decision making transparency? Please send me the BPC application for this grant, full council discussion minuted reference acknowledging the submission and receipt, any associated grant conditions, what it is to be spent on, etc.

BUDGET

1. The budget sheet at the inspection meeting was dated 01/10/2020 making financial end of year comparison impossible, was this the sheet submitted to audit, is there one dated 31/03/2021?
2. When an allocated budget is not spent e.g. Churchyard, A370, Playground, VE Celebrations, etc. what happens to the budgeted money, especially when the precept goes up?
 - a. please send me a list of full council approved 'virements' (e.g. Financial Regs 4.2)
 - b.
3. COVID19 GROUP
 - a. Please explain BPC's agreed relationship, role, expectations, etc. with regard to this group, where these agreements were minuted and agreed by full council?
 - b. As councillors were/are actively involved in this group why are not declarations of interest made in regards to financial decisions?
 - c. Please explain why the associated colourful public budget sheet as present at the meeting (Appendix 2) shows £2K for the COVID19 Group - this has caused confusion this financial year; yet this year the same colourful public budget sheet for 2021-22 (Appendix3) shows 3K and 9K for 2020-21
 - i. please show detailed income and expenditure for this budget heading (e.g. where the 2K came from, etc)
 - ii. June 20 (Min 333.7.9) "*Resolved that a sum of £1,000 be considered once the level of North Somerset's Grant was known.*" I can find no subsequent consideration and/or agreement by BPC to transfer £1K or for what detailed purpose, please state the relevant associated minute reference and or documentation? What was this spent on? If unspent was it returned to

BPC? Was another grant application made for 2021-22? Please send related documentation.

d. what is the £3K proposed use for and who can access it?

4. SMALL BUSINESS GRANT

- a. Is this £9K Small Business Grant (Appendix 2) the same as the £10K COVID19 Grant from NSC - please explain what this is, especially in relation to the lack of information in the INCOME AND RECEIPTS above - if it is the same why is it recorded as £9K and not £10K on 2020-21 and current 2021-22 budget spreadsheets?
- b. Please explain why the colourful budget sheet 2020-21 (Appendix 2) publicly published during budget setting, shows £10K but the Budget sheet shows £9K (APP
- c. I note that you now have 2020-21 expenditure comparison information published on the BPC website missing from last years published information

5. COVID19 GRANTS

- a. It seems that the full COVID19 Group and the Small Business Grants allocations, (£3K & £9K) appear to have been moved to the General Reserve, as indicated in the 2021-22 Budget by Centre, confusingly there has been stated expenditure from the Small Business Grant (e.g. £1K grant, and *"to resolve to use the recently received Covid Grant Monies to defray the cost of the: - Tablets £1931.00 Additional Newsletter Print for Bleadon Hill 175.00"* (Min 336.7.c))
 - i. please send me a detailed listing of the all the Reserves breakdowns and protected uses for 2020-21 and 2021-22.

6. BPC NEWSLETTER - On 14 May 2021 you wrote, the newsletter editor, *"... has editorial responsibility for the Bleadon Village News it will be entirely up to her whether or not she includes your suggestion."* On 17 May 2021, the newsletter Editor wrote, *"Firstly, I must state that the magazine is entirely my own ..."*

- a. If the editor is truly independent, with full editorial control (e.g. copy does not get approved via full council and council appear to have no say on its content) and the editor has finance raising responsibility via sponsors and can appear to offer 'deals' on advertising costs, please explain why BPC has a dedicated printing budget (£2K raised to £4.6K this year). Please also explain why income is not expected to cover expenditure, despite frequent councillor public statements that it should? It seems that a private individual is using the parish council name and public money to run their own newsletter.
- b. Why does the BPC/clerk/RFO handle the 'sponsors' income, invoicing, printing costs, VAT, etc. if the newsletter is considered independent from BPC and that councillors/BPC have no editorial control?
- c. As this new post is greater than £500 a year, council policy implies that an advert was required. Please send me the job advert and specification as discussed in full council June Min 333.9.f , *"It was agreed that the advert regarding the current vacancy should be given greater emphasis by being placed on as many village platforms as possible."* because councillors did not want to offer it to a single person as suggested

by one of the councillors without giving parishioners an opportunity for this new paid post (it was unpaid and voluntary for the previous 20+ years), this did not happen. If this was not required please explain why not.

- d. Please can state where full council agreed the rate of pay for this new 'contract', see appointment at Sept Min 334.4.vi for £350 and higher rate of £400 subsequently.
 - e. See also Sept 335.7.5 "*To regularise the appointment of Miss Ellie Young as the Editor of the Bleadon Village News. Discussion was had as to how the Miss Young was introduced to the Parish Council as a potential candidate for the post of the Bleadon Village News Editor. A full time line explanation was given. A question was also asked regarding the "apparent non advertising of the post of Editor" as requested whereby the Clerk pointed out that such an advert had appeared on the Village Website which in the final outcome did not produce any results.*" This was a heated discussion whereby it was discussed that the post had not been advertised as previously agreed by councillors, that the appointment went to a person originally suggested by a councillor, and as the new editor had posted on social media that they had been appointed before the council meeting there was no other option than to appoint them. Therefore this was not an open, transparent or inclusive process. Please send me the advert and state when it was put and removed from the BPC website.
 - f. Please send me the TOR as discussed in full council after the post has been awarded (not on BPC website nor available at meeting)
 - g. Please tell me which budget the independent Editor is paid from
7. YOUTH CLUB I can find no reference to the agreed amount of Youth Club rent in the minutes, please can you send me the minuted reference and a copy of the signed Lease Agreement.
8. BLEADON IN BLOOM throughout 2020-21 BPC publicly stated that BIB was an 'independent' project, frequently stating in full council that it is up to BIB to spend the budget on whatever they wish.
- a. On 18 January 2021 you wrote to me, "*The Bleadon in Bloom group does receive a grant from the council but other than that it is not run by the council. A representative from the council keeps us up to date with the Bleadon in Bloom group but it is independent of the council.*"
 - i. BPC only seem to budget £500 for grants, how can the independent BIB group seem to be in receipt of an ongoing £10K+ grant?
 - ii. Where were grants of this level of funding stated to the public, can anyone/group request this level of funding?
 - b. In 2019 BPC won the Bleadon in Bloom award (14 Oct 19 Min 327.9). Please tell me when full council discussed and agreed to hand this project over to an 'independent' group
 - c. Please tell me what assets, physical and financial, went with the project
 - i. which assets are still maintained, insured, etc. by BPC (see Asset register of tubs, etc)
 - d. If the project is independently grant funded please can you tell me why there is a BPC £1,500 budget (not a grant application), an Ear Marked Reserve

of £1,406.18 dated 30/09/20 (Appendix 4), and BPC VAT submitted receipts for BIB this AGAR.

- e. Please can you explain why BIB is listed under 'What We Offer' on the BPC website, implying a BPC run and funded project
- f. If there is a relationship between BPC and the publicly stated independent BIB, please send me the full council agreed arrangement/protocol/TOR
- g. if the the group is independent please explain why active BIB councillors do not need to make a declaration of interest during budget setting if their group is appearing to receive £10K+ this financial year (£8,466 + EMR £1,406), especially without a grant application request
- h. If BIB is independent why is BPC receiving and paying invoices on the project's behalf (e.g. Invoice #190)
- i. please send me copy of the BIB grant applications since the transfer and reference to when they were approved by full council (e.g. BPC Financial Regs 1.11, 1.14, 5.8)
- j. How did an EMR of £1,406 arise?
 - i. June 2020 (Min 333.7.3) "*To consider a suggestion from the Bleadon in Bloom Group that any unused budgeted monies from 2019-2020 be transferred over and added to the 2020-2021 budget Resolved that the unused 2019-20 budget in the sum of be transferred and added to the 2020-21 budget.*"
 - ii. Shouldn't this be a new grant application? Especially as according to the Grant Policy 2018, "*If an organisation is unable to use all or any part of the award for the stated purpose then all or any monies not used for the stated purpose are be returned to the Council.*" Thereby allowing other groups to bid for available grant money the following year.

9. GENERAL GRANTS

- a. Please can you tell me what the COVID19 Group spent the £100 and £1K on
 - i. e.g. June 20 (Min 333.7.9)

10. PENSION

- a. Please explain this expenditure as as far as I'm aware there is no clerk pension currently e.g. Budgeted £700 and actual £126

11. OPEN SPACES

- a. As of your appointment there are no longer any Open Spaces Committee meetings or associated minutes, please can you explain what the open spaces £1,931 IT equipment is for (rather than Administration IT)
- b. please send me a copy of the Waste contract

12. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - frequently stated to be an 'independent' non-council led project

- a. As the 'independent' NDP group, has not released any minutes since around October 2019, please can you tell me what the £120 (now £183 on the BPC website) was spent on
- b. Are they any ongoing NDP costs, e.g. website?

- c. Please send me detailed information on how the NDP grant was spent in 2019-20 and 2020-21 as this detailed information is/was not available on either the BPC or NDP websites for the last two AGARs.
 - d. I understand that the NDP consultant, as paid for via BPC, was commissioned to write a report and attend a public meeting. The public meeting agreed by BPC in Oct 2019 was unilaterally cancelled by NDP/BPC chair via the Winter Newsletter. In Nov 2019 the consultant was paid £1,200, was this the full payment or has money allocated for public attendance carried forward? Please tell where this is listed in the financial records?
 - i. Oct 2019 (Min 327.9) "iii. *Notes from the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group held on Wednesday 25th September 2019 : with recommendation Council RESOLVED to; accept the recommendation made by the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group that: - A public meeting be called at which further public consultation could be carried out, ... The Clerk to liaise with Mr Quick and the Hall Booking Clerk to find a suitable date at the end of November and publicise this date in the noticeboards, the Council's website and Neighbourhood Plan website, as well as in the Bleadon village News.*"
14. e. Please send me a copy of the consultant's, Graham Quick, contract

EAR MARKED RESERVES

- a. Although you have updated the current website budget information dated 05/07/21 (Appendix 5) I can't find detailed end of year information relating to the Ear Marked Reserves for last year or this year, and any associated virements, please send them to me (e.g. Summary of Receipts and Payments like the Sept 20 version attached)

FEES

- 1. Please can you explain when a advert or article is paid for and when it is not
- 2. Please send me the schedule of fees and 'deals' (as mentioned in full council) as this information is not accessible on the BPC website

VAT

- 1. If Bleadon In Bloom is independently grant funded, please explain why BPC claims VAT for BIB purchases

ASSET REGISTER - dated 01/04/2021

- 1. As you may recall you signed the Halls Protocol in 2009 when you were previously BPC clerk for 26+ years up until 2015. In July 2008 you minuted "*Resolved to receive Custodian & Management Trustees Report and to accept the Clerk's following recommendations: That the*

Parish Council is the Custodian Trustee and as such should record the asset on the Parish Council Asset register That the value should be listed as Nil value" (July 2008 [Min 205.10.5](#))

- a. Please can you explain why it is now recorded as £752K but not indicated that it is a trustee asset
2. Please can you explain why the childrens Play Area is not listed as an asset, nor a trustee asset
3. If BIB is now an independent group, are new tubs bought by the group theirs or BPC's?
 - a. Who has liability for any issues arising?
 - b. who is responsible, including financially, for new tubs, street furniture, etc. the group installs?
4. Where are the 10(?) new 'Samsung tablets' listed? e.g. open spaces £1,931 IT equipment
5. The clerk/you uses a Mac as frequently stated in public meetings, who uses the £1,675 NEC computer and when was it purchased?
6. Where is the clerks contract mobile phone listed, or is it on contract?
7. where is the portable hard drive listed?
8. Where is the new printer listed (Invoice #165)?
9. Where are the new filing cabinets listed?
10. If BPC own and maintain the CCTV cameras (Invoice #167), why are they not insured?
11. Please state which fences and gates BPC own (I understand that Public Rights of Way are NSC and landowner maintenance responsibilities)
12. please explain why Fencing and gates are insured at three times their current value
13. As the Ranger is now contracted, please explain who uses and maintains the Mowers and Similar Machinery
14. Please explain why the Village Market Cross is listed as a War Memorial

INVOICES

1. The ranger seems to take on regular additional work e.g. dog bin emptying that is publicly implied to be part of his job/contract, he is also rumoured to do work for BIB on behalf of the council - please send me his contract and agreed duties
2. why is the ranger budgeted salary greater than actual expenditure?

CONTRACTS

1. There were several contracts awarded this year but there seems to be no invitation to tender, adverts, job descriptions, etc. e.g. (newsletter May 20, and November awards Min 337.7.), As these 'contracts/awards of service' were greater than £500, please explain why there were no adverts (no advert invoices) or published invitation to tenders?
2. How were these positions sources and awarded especially full council, nor the Personnel Committee, proposed or discussed any 'job/contract' details?
3. Please send me copies of all the contracts, job descriptions, service agreements, etc.
4. Please send me the list of recurring financial payments
 - a. E.g. Financial Regs 5.6. *"For each financial year the Clerk and RFO shall draw up a list of due payments which arise on a regular basis as the result of a continuing*

contract, statutory duty, or obligation (such as but not exclusively) Salaries, PAYE and NI, Superannuation Fund and regular maintenance contracts and the like for which council may authorise payment for the year provided that the requirements of regulation 4.1 (Budgetary Controls) are adhered to, provided also that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council."

BUDGET HEADINGS AND VIREMENT

1. Financial Regs 4.2 *"No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure other than by resolution of the council, or duly delegated committee. During the budget year and with the approval of council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate 'virement'."*
 - a. I can find no virements in the 2020-21 minutes - please confirm if there were any virements, especially in relation to unspent money and EMRs
2. As BPC doesn't publish associated reports, financial or otherwise, at its publicly held meetings, nor publish them on its website afterwards, please send me the overspend reports for 2020-21
 - a. e.g. Oct 20 (Min 336.7) Resolutions

(1) (b) *"to receive a report on the current overspends (see accompanying Clerk's Report)*
3. Please can you send me information that indicates what budget and/or project an invoice was associated with?
 - a. E.g. Oct (Min 336.7.1.(c)) *"to resolve to use the recently received Covid Grant Monies to defray the cost of the: -Tablets £1931.00 Additional Newsletter Print for Bleadon Hill 175.00"*
 - b. *Where can I find individual listed expenditure for budgets, projects, e.g. the newsletter, NDP, BIB, church yard, park, ranger, grass cutter, etc.*

I look forward to acknowledgement of this email and response.

Kind regards,
[Objector]

From: [Clerk]
Sent: 29 June 2021 10:46
To: [Objector]
Cc: [All Cllrs]
Subject: RE: AGAR meeting request

Dear Jo

You have requested to inspect the Accounts for the period 2020-2021. Within that documentation is what is required to be produced by the External Auditor. Other documentation which we are required to provide within the terms of the Council's Publication Scheme is set out on the Council's Website. Might I suggest that if there are any outstanding questions following your inspection and pertaining to the period in question that you list them and I will endeavour to provide answers if the requested information is available.

Thank you

Bruce

From: [Objector]
Sent: 29 June 2021 09:59
To: [Clerk]
Cc: [All Cllrs]
Subject: Re: AGAR meeting request

Dear Bruce,

Thank you for arranging the inspection, I look forward to your responses to the outstanding related queries below, before tomorrow's meeting.

Kind regards,

[Objector]

From: [Clerk]
Sent: 28 June 2021 11:29
To: [Obector]
Cc: [All Cllrs]
Subject: RE: AGAR meeting request

Dear Jo

The arrangements for your inspection have now been finalised.

The Accounts Box (2020/2021) will be available as from this Wednesday afternoon(30th) from 1.00 pm to 3.00 pm in the Coronation Hall. Cllr. ID Clarke will be "sitting in" as it were to see amongst other matters that the required social distancing regulations are adhered too.

Thank you

[Clerk]

From: [Objector]
Sent: 24 June 2021 16:48
To: [Clerk]
Cc: [All Cllrs]
Subject: Re: AGAR meeting request

Dear [Clerk],

Again, you make simple requests for information so complicated and laborious, of course if this information was freely available on the BPC website, or sent when requested, I wouldn't need to bother you. So here we go again with the lengthy correspondence.

From the delay in arranging a meeting, and the questions and responses you have given so far, I can only assume that you have never arranged for a member of the public to inspect the accounts to date, or it's been a long time since the last public inspection.

Meeting

Last week I gave you four clear dates and very flexible times for this week, and a further week of possible opportunities to book a meeting, this appears to be insufficient. I am therefore further simplifying the task for you by offering a further third week of potential dates.

1. To be clear I am stating that at this point in time I will make myself free every day for the next two weeks, between 10am and 3pm, taking you up to the end of the fourth week of the allotted six week AGAR period, i.e. Friday 09 July 21. I believe this will be sufficient time for you to book a meeting and any subsequent meetings if necessary. I look forward to receiving a date and time in the near future.

Attendees

You surprisingly state, "... *I will make the booking and also arrange which councillors will be available to be in attendance*".

2. Please confirm why one or more councillors must be in attendance, how many, who will be attending and what their role will be whilst I inspect and copy the accounts, especially considering government policies, and as you state that many councillors are in the 'vulnerable age group'.

Account Records

You state that "*The matters listed as a minimum do not form part of the accounts that have been prepared for 20/21 and examined by the Parish Council's Internal Auditor*" and "*The greater percentage can be located within the Parish Council's records as set on the Website such as Agendas Minutes and Financial Records.*" As you are aware none of the specific associated job specs, service agreements, TOR, lease, grant agreements, or contractual details are posted on the website, or in the agenda, minutes or financial records on the website, hence my requests over the last two years both during and outside the AGAR period, which have been unfulfilled to date, and at times ignored and or timed-out by BPC.

I would assume that any financial expenditure by BPC would infer a service or agreement to be undertaken that could be considered contractual. As you are aware the AGAR notice states, "**Any person interested has the right to inspect and make copies of the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records must be made available for inspection by any person interested.**"

3. Therefore, please advise me as to why you consider each of the following matters do not form part of the accounts for AGAR purposes:
 - All service contracts/agreements/arrangements/TOR/job descriptions for all regular weekly/monthly/quarterly/annually payments
 - e.g. as indicated May 21 Min 342.14 and including staff, contractors (webglu, grass cutter, ranger, newsletter editor), etc.
 - All payments for adverts for the above posts, if readvertised in the last year, and the advert posted
 - All lease agreements
 - All deeds
 - Grants received and awarded by BPC
 - COVID related income and expenditure
 - Reserve income and expenditure
4. Please send me the full documentation of internal and/or external auditor's report relating to last year or this years' record

Previous requests for contractual information

You state, "*Please provide copies of your e-mails of the 14th and 24th January although on reflection I am surprised that you have not asked for replies beforehand which suggests I may not have originally received them*". I have attached the emails as requested, and as you can see you were copied in to ensure that a reply was received, but I can find none. From my perspective, you seem to make it as laborious, difficult and un-transparent as possible for members of the public, especially me, to fully access any information, especially accounting related. You frequently avoid the initial request and divert the issue, then proceed to imply to councillors, sometimes in public, that my requests are time consuming, as this current request and associated correspondence highlights. You could have easily just checked your emails or recalled the response, as I'm assuming that you don't get that many requests to see contractual information from the public. I've yet to receive a single copy of even one contract.

5. Please send me BPC's response to the attached 'Contracts and Job Descriptions' request email chain

Budgets 2016-19

"I have recently attempted to peruse documents that are located in the Coronation Hall and I have been unable to locate any working documents/papers that reflect the Budget preparations for the period of 2016-2019."

6. To be clear are you stating that neither you/the clerk/RFO, nor any councillor, nor any internal or external auditor has any electronic or paper budget records for years 2016-19 - including 'Detailed Receipts & Payments by Budget Heading' or 'Forward Budget Detail - by Centre' or even a 'Budget Overview' of income and expenditure, or 'Summary of Receipts & Payments' - only AGAR submissions?
7. So there is no access to any transparent detailed comparative budget performance data published by BPC over the previous 5 year period

To minimise meeting time

8. Please send me a copy of the 'Summary of Receipts and Payments' that also gives a breakdown of 'Reserve Balances'. As you may recall you used to publish this information annually in the Parish Newsletter along with an Annual Report, which BPC has subsequently declined to do for the last few years despite requests (e.g. page 15 at [BVN Summer 2014 issue 99 \(bleadonparishcouncil.co.uk\)](http://BVN Summer 2014 issue 99 (bleadonparishcouncil.co.uk)))

Longevity of information

You state, "*Your request for detailed information for 2019/2020 is completely disproportionate to the time I have available especially as the audit for that financial period has been signed off by the External Auditor.*"

9. At a minimum, are you stating that you do not keep lists of 'contracts', key renewal information and associated documentation?

Your responses imply that financial information, e.g. contracts, deeds, budget, etc, is destroyed at the end of each year, is this correct?

10. Please tell me how long BPC keeps the associated financial documentation for each AGAR, or for any retrospective financial audit or performance analysis?

Kind regards,

[Objector]

From: [Clerk]
Sent: 23 June 2021 09:26
To: [Objector]
Cc: [All Cllrs]
Subject: RE: AGAR meeting request

Dear [Objector]

Thank you for your e-mail of yesterday's date in which you set out a number of requests with regard to financial aspects of the Parish Council.

Firstly I will deal with your request to inspect the accounts for the financial year ending 31st March 2021.

I have noted that in the first instance you are suggesting a two hour slot for the proposed inspection.. So that I can book the Coronation Hall for this proposed inspection please provide me with a number of alternative dates and times. Thereafter I will make the booking and also arrange which councillors will be available to be in attendance. Currently there are understandably regulations laid down by the Coronation Hall Management Committee as to the use of the Halls in line with current Government Regulations which must of course be complied with.

As a comment [... *disputed comments removed as not related to AGAR*]

Now to endeavour to answer the other matters in your request.

Please provide copies of your e-mails of the 14th and 24th January although on reflection I am surprised that you have not asked for replies beforehand which suggests I may not have originally received them. The matters listed as a minimum do not form part of the accounts that have been prepared for 20/21 and examined by the Parish Council's Internal Auditor. The greater percentage can be located within the Parish Council's records as set on the Website such as Agendas Minutes and Financial Records.

As to 2019/20 Accounts I made it quite clear what the limited arrangements were in assisting you with the inspecting of the accounts due to the Covid-19 Regulations that were in place. Despite your apparent need to remind me of the JPAG arrangements I can clearly indicate that I have been fully recognisant of the requirements and how they have impacted on the Council. The attempt to make the arrangements that were mutually acceptable on both sides were not in way called into question by the External Auditor. As I was not in post when the 2018/2019 accounts were prepared I cannot answer what prevailed at the time. What I can confirm is that I have attempted to mitigate in some way by publishing all of the AGARs from 2015 to 2019 as well as latterly on a quarterly basis full details of Budget versus Spend. Your request for detailed information for 2019/2020 is completely disproportionate to the time I have available especially as the audit for that financial period has been signed off by the External Auditor.

I have recently attempted to peruse documents that are located in the Coronation Hall and I have been unable to locate any working documents/papers that reflect the Budget preparations for the period of 2016-2019. Yet again I would refer you to the AGARS for that period that are on the Council's Website.

[Clerk]

From: [Objector]
Sent: 22 June 2021 14:35
To: [Clerk]
Cc: [All Cllrs]
Subject: Re: AGAR meeting request

Good Afternoon [Clerk],

As I have not been given the opportunity to inspect the full accounts for the last two years AGAR's I have no idea of the volume of documentation, or how long it will take to inspect it. Nor do I appear to have received a response to my request to see contractual and job description information in my 14th & 24th Jan 21 emails (if you sent a response, please resend it).

At a minimum I would like to see the following:

- All service contracts/agreements/arrangements/TOR/job descriptions for all regular weekly/monthly/quarterly/annually payments
 - e.g. as indicated May 21 Min 342.14 and including staff, contractors (webglu, grass cutter, ranger, newsletter editor), etc.

- All payments for adverts for the above posts, if readvertised in the last year, and the advert posted
- All lease agreements
- All deeds
- Grants received and awarded by BPC
- COVID related income and expenditure
- Reserve income and expenditure

I would also like to see the above for last year's AGAR:

- NB during last year's AGAR you informed me, "*I am not intending to send you the financial information for 2019-20 as this will be easily extracted when you have had an opportunity of inspecting the accounts ...*" No meeting was arranged, despite JPAG/NALC advice that electors still had the right to inspect the Accounts 'in person' (see attached)?

I would also like to see the finalised agreed budgets and associated breakdowns for 2016-2019, as last year you implied they were only accessible in paper form from the cabinets in the closed village Halls, which are now open.

Considering the above I suggest I view the accounts for two hours and if that is not sufficient time to see the full accounting information, that we arrange a further meeting.

I look forward to hearing of a date, time and place to meet.

Kind regards,

[Objector]

From: [Clerk]
Sent: 18 June 2021 09:09
To: [Objector]
Cc: [All Cllrs & Clerk]
Subject: RE: AGAR meeting request

Good Morning [Objector]

If you would advise me please as to approximately how long you think that your inspection of the accounts will take I will then make the necessary accommodating arrangements.

Thank you

[Clerk]

From: [Objector]
Sent: 17 June 2021 17:28
To: [Clerk]
Subject: AGAR meeting request

Hi [Clerk],

Please can you arrange for me to inspect Bleadon Parish Council's accounting records in relation to the AGAR process as soon as possible.

I'll be free to attend Tuesday-Friday next week, and most days the week after, between 10am and 3pm.

Kind regards,
[Objector]