

From: [Objector]
Sent: 15 July 2022 15:38
To: sba
Subject: Bleadon Parish Council AGAR 2021-22

Dear SBA[xxx],

I understand that you have not yet concluded the issues raised via last year's AGAR, but the situation has not improved much this year either.

There have been problems from the start: incorrect dates were on the website's AGAR notice (see attached AGARNotice2022-Original re: June/July2020 viewing dates); there have been no AGAR postings on the village noticeboards as was practice to date; and there was no complete AGAR Part 3 at the viewing, on the website, or noticeboards. However, I'm trying to remain optimistic that the new Chair might try to make the changes needed to make the financial process more open and transparent for members of the public and councillors. I'll let you know what happens.

Tuesday, 12 July 22 at 10am-12pm was my, and Mrs (now Cllr) Clarke's, fourth attempt to see Bleadon Parish Council's full AGAR documentation, and the fourth time that I, and attending councillors, have been unable to view associated documentation e.g. contracts, leases, audit reports, etc. The Responsible Financial Officer was again absent from the viewing and so questions that arose went unanswered, as he appears to be the only person who fully understands the finances. This has again made the AGAR process much more laborious and complicated than necessary.

I have written to the new BPC Chair asking for a meeting and for further information, as attached. I have also informed them that I'd send the correspondence to you. Considering the last three years frustrations, and as the AGAR deadline is in six working days, I am writing to you now so that you are aware of this year's AGAR issues, and in the hope that you can help in some way.

At some point in these ongoing AGAR processes, please confirm that:

- you have seen all the final contractual/lease/legal documents signed in the last four AGAR periods
- whether all assets, owned or in trust, should be listed on the Asset Register; and whether Trustee assets should be listed as nil value (as previously advised by BPC) or should have a value e.g. Halls, land under youth club, Playground, etc. (See Protocol2010 attached)
- that BPC's appointed Internal Auditor is aware of the current AGAR challenge, and is aware of the queries raised over the last three years AGAR viewings, as currently I can find no reference in BPC's approved minutes. (NB BPC do not publish appendices with their Agenda and Minutes so there is no access to any Auditor reports). Please also confirm whether the Internal Auditor has seen the signed contracts, leases, protocols, etc. over the last four years.
- whether BPC should be holding publicly held, and minuted, quarterly Finance meetings as indicated in the now disbanded [Finance & Personnel Terms of Reference](#), i.e. "*To meet quarterly in public in a properly convened meeting as required by law...*".

Kind regards,

[Objector]

From: [Objector]
Sent: 15 July 2022 14:35
To: [BPC Chair]
Cc: [All Cllrs] Bleadon Parish Clerk <parishclerk@bleadonparishcouncil.co.uk>
Subject: AGAR 2021-22 and request for meeting

Dear [BPC Chair],

Firstly, belated congratulations on becoming the new BPC Chair. As you have been a BPC councillor since May 2018 you will have an understanding of the issues surrounding lack of openness and

transparency, and Right of Access to information, that have been raised over the years. Also, the outstanding and ongoing AGAR challenge/queries to Audit.

As you will be aware, Tuesday 12 JUL 22 10am-12pm was my, and (Cllr)Mrs Clarke's, fourth attempt to see Bleadon Parish Council's full AGAR documentation, and the fourth time that I, and interested councillors, have been unable to view associated documentation e.g. signed contracts, leases, audit reports, appendices, etc. As you are also aware, the RFO, who would have been able to quickly and easily answer queries, was again absent from the viewing. Unfortunately, we are now back to a laborious email process, which leads to unnecessary miscommunication and frustration for all of us.

Please confirm, with minuted references, whether the four AGAR viewings, and subsequent queries, have been raised and minuted at Full Council, as I can't seem to find them. BPC doesn't publish audited information, please confirm whether BPC's Internal Auditor is aware of the current AGAR challenge and the previous three AGAR viewings and associated queries?

Time is short, but over the last three days I've done the best I can to note queries and requests arising from this year's AGAR. Therefore I'm hoping that you will take the time to meet with me before the AGAR process ends, to discuss the queries raised in this email, as it would be so much easier and quicker in person, and may enable us to avoid any mis-communication. After four years of AGAR viewings, I'd like all concerned residents and councillors to be able to move forward with a clear understanding of the finances, and associated processes and procedures. I'm happy to meet you, the RFO, and interested councillors, at any time in the next week (rescheduling permitting) in order to make this happen. If you're unable to meet me, please ensure that the RFO and/or knowledgeable councillors meet with me to answer queries, or reply via email before end of day 21 July. This proposed deadline will be giving you/council four clear days to respond, and give me at least one clear day before the AGAR deadline.

To ensure openness and transparency, and as previous AGAR submissions are currently under review by External Audit, I will also send a copy of this email to them.

Below is a summary of requests to view or receive financial documentation, along with queries arising from the AGAR process.

DOCUMENTATION

For your information, I took a laptop to the AGAR viewing, so that I, and attending Cllrs Sheppard and Clarke, could check whether any missing AGAR related information was on the BPC website. This was also to help avoid the need for any subsequent unnecessary email requests to the RFO for additional information. Unfortunately, the Wi-Fi was intermittent but did assist discussions and understanding.

As you are aware, during the stated six week AGAR period, "***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.***"

- As you know, the original **AGAR notice** was posted on the BPC website for 3 weeks with incorrect dates. This was later corrected but still not posted on the village noticeboards, which has been usual practice for many years. The AGAR notice at the viewing had the correct dates as seen [online](#), but the additional two pages that are helpful to the public to understand the process and their full rights, that were included by the previous clerks, were again missing (see Rights2019 attached). **Please can you include them in all subsequent AGAR notices.**
- Only one page of the six page **AGAR Part 3** was filled in (See AGARPart3Viewing attached). This form is not on the BPC [website](#) as usual practice, nor on the village noticeboards. **Please send me a copy of the completed and signed AGAR Part 3.**
- **No internal or External Audit reports** as referenced in minutes and expenditure were at the viewing. **Please send me copies of the current and previous three year's Internal and External Audit reports**
- **No signed contractual documents** were available at the viewing. All that is asked is financial transparency for residents and councillors. I see no reason why the public/Cllrs can't

see the final signed contractual documents, especially as there are three unsigned/draft contracts at the bottom of the website's [Policies](#) page. Please explain why the Newsletter Editor contract is missing from the BPC website. The reason I would like to see them is there appear to be discrepancies between what is said, agreed and/or done. **Please send me copies of all signed contracts.**

- For many, many years residents have been led to believe that the **newsletter** advertising income should cover the cost of the newsletter. During last year's AGAR the RFO/clerk sent me a copy of the unsigned/draft Editor's contract (as attached). He wrote in the accompanying email (23July21), "*The printing budget was increased to (a) cover the printing of four editions per annum and (b) the Editor's agreed per issue payment. The agreement is that she should secure in revenue not less each issue that her issue payment.*" [sic] I can find no Full Council minuted reference to her agreed 'issue payment', nor to this agreement, **please tell me the Minute references that confirm this agreement and the Editor's agreed salary?** BPC do not publish working group minutes/agreements, nor any that were held with the Editor, and there is no reference in the draft contract, is this 'agreement' in the signed version, **please send me a copy?**
- The draft Editor contract also states, "*Advertising: Contractor to sell advertising space with maximum discretion when negotiating "packages"*", so it has been mentioned that if the Editor only has to cover her agreed per edition costs (seemingly £400) then there appears to be more incentive to do a cheap 'package' than to ensure the costs of the newsletter are covered, especially as printing costs have risen dramatically, with BPC also looking to print and distribute the newsletter outside the parish, which they did for the Mar 22 edition - **Please confirm that Bleadon precept/tax can be used in this way, especially as the income does not cover the expenditure for these non-parish precept tax payers.**
- The contract continues, "*Advertising prices to be reviewed by the parish council annually.*" **Please send me the minuted reference relating to when these prices were last reviewed, agreed and published to residents.** The Editor has previously emailed, "*I must state that the magazine is entirely my own...*", but the contract continues, "*Invoice circulation and payments together with paying the printer rests with the parish clerk*" - **Please confirm that this a legally acceptable use of parish accounts, clerk, precept, etc. by an independent person/company.** Especially as BPC requests for entries into their own newsletter seem to incur additional costs, such as the Jubilee edition for an additional £100 on top of the £6.6K BPC has already budgeted. The newsletter is perceived to belong to BPC, but it states that it doesn't produce or QA its content before publication and distribution. If there is an issue in the community with its content, e.g. Mar 22 [Letter to Editor pg3](#), then BPC publicly state the disclaimer, "*Bleadon Village News is published independently on behalf of Bleadon Parish Council. The views and comments are those of the Editor and contributors and not necessarily of the Parish Council.*" **Please clarify BPC's role in this newsletter that is distributed in its name and paid for by residents precept.**
- In May22 (Min 353.13.12) Cllrs "*Resolved that in future the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting (Annual Report) would be produced as a booklet and to be included in the Bleadon Village News*", in this year's Autumn edition. **Please confirm whether the cost of this booklet is included in the £6,600 (£2K + £4.6K see Q3 info) budget or whether this will incur an additional cost.** As you are aware the APM minutes will be Draft Minutes to be approved by residents, not by councillors, next year. NB BPC's Annual Report is not the same as the APM minutes. The Annual Report to BPC councillor presentation updates at the resident meeting, the Minutes document residents' raised queries, comments, etc., although the two have become intertwined as BPC now lead and dominate the meeting rather than chair it.
- When contracts were [awarded Nov20](#) (Min 337.7), two councillors abstained from voting due to lack of information. The **Ranger** was contracted for £6,720 yet has been paid £8,883.27 this AGAR, the **Grass Cutter** contracted for £4,000 but paid £5,271, both presumably undertook tasks that were/should be paid from related project EMRs (see Reserves below). The **Toilet Cleaner** was tasked, "*The toilets will be cleaned twice weekly from April to October and weekly from November to March in each year of the three year contract. The Contractor will pay for all products and equipment used in the operation*". The contract was for £1,674, but seems to have been paid £2,600 (£216.66 per mth). **Please explain the individual discrepancies, as no further tenders went out as far as I'm aware. Please also send me the advertised job specifications for all the contracts relating to the last four AGARs as they were not available at any viewings despite my requests.**

- **No signed lease documents** were available at the viewing. Despite the AGAR attending councillors being members of the Personnel Committee, both confirmed that they also had not seen the final signed Youth Club lease document since the one presented at council needed amendments. The same response was given by attending councillors last year's AGAR. **Please send me a copy of the signed Youth Club Lease.**
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- **No Asset Register** was present at the viewing. I can find no minuted reference to the register being updated and completed this year. The [online version](#) is dated 2020. **Please send me a copy of the submitted Asset Register for this year's AGAR.** As the AGAR Part 3 was not at the viewing, I can't tell if the 2020 version as seen online has been updated, e.g. AGAR pg 3 section H.
- The online Asset Register indicates that the Halls are in BPC ownership and not as a **Custodial Trustee** (see Protocol2010 attached), with the Playground and Youth Centre Land unlisted, despite BPCs [published responsibilities](#). **Please confirm whether all assets, owned or in trust should be listed, and whether Custodial Trustee assets should be listed as nil value (as previously advised by BPC) or have a value**
- The **Playground** is now indicated as a [Charity](#), with no income or expenditure for the five years listed, yet there have been 'Playground Inspections' and 'Playground Equipment' budget items, expenditure and invoices, such as the current monthly GB Sports & Leisure ([Invoice #204](#)) this year. There is also general maintenance throughout the year such as grass cutting, trees, picnic tables, bins, bark, sand, fencing, etc. Therefore, is the charity's published financial history correctly submitted and transparent to the public? (see also Grants below)
- In Dec21 ([Min 347.10](#)) it was minuted "*Correspondence (1) Charity Commission Bleadon Children's Playground BP. The Clerk advised the meeting that the required formal **annual meeting of the Playground Charity** would be held immediately prior to the January Council Meeting*" There has been no update in subsequent minutes but a verbal update at the Full Council meeting stated that the meeting was over quickly, in about 10-15 minutes. Usual process is for the clerk to publish minutes a week before the next meeting, which I presume is next year, but **please send me a copy of the Playground Charity minutes for this AGAR process.**
- The **Budget by Cost Centre** at the AGAR viewing was dated 01Apr20-31Dec21, but relevant items for the Playground can be seen (see Q3BudgetByCostCentre image). Q4 information is not on the website, perhaps because it is assumed to be referenced in the Q1 2022-3 information. However, it should be noted that the [current Q1 online information](#) has now been reduced even further, removing breakdowns of income and expenditure that were available for many years previously. For example, Q1 2022-23 format doesn't indicate **Newsletter** income or expenditure. However, for 2021-22 it indicates the Village News Advertising income to be £0 instead of at least £1,755 (compared to Q3). There is no indication of how much for the Editorship, which should be at least £1,200, nor printing costs that should be at least £2,370. For 2022-23 these are now 'hidden' within a top-level Administration value, so even the precept between years is unavailable and is obscured. Online, freely accessible financial information seems to have been removed. Therefore, **please send me Q4 2021-22 in the original detailed format. Also, please send me Q1 2022-23 in the original detailed format. Please continue to publish all future quarterly information in the original detailed format.** NB Three councillors abstained from voting on the 2021-22 budget due to lack of clear information (Dec 2020 [Min 338.7.4](#))
- **Please tell me why the figures in the published Q3 and the Q3 available at the AGAR viewing are different, even though they both end 31 Dec 21.** E.g. Village News Income differs between image and PDF versions and doesn't match AGAR income tables, yet all refer to information ending 31 Dec 21 (see attached files)
- In the Q1 2022-23 information the **Platinum Jubilee** item indicates that in 2021-22 there was a budget of £7,780 and expenditure of £4,429. **Please tell me whether the Platinum Jubilee project is a BPC managed or a community managed project.** I couldn't find any reference to this agreed level of expenditure in the minutes and/or associated receipts directly relating to the Platinum Jubilee budget. I can't find reference to this budget in the Q3 2021-22 information, nor in the Apr21-Mar22 minutes, and there are no clerk reports or project/working group minutes/actions/decisions published? **Please tell me the Full Council meeting minuted references where the Platinum Jubilee budget was discussed, agreed, publicly documented and accessible for 2021-22 and 2022-23. Please also tell me how expenditure on this specific**

- project is publicly identified in the minutes. If this is a community managed project, not managed by BPC, shouldn't there be a grant application? (see Grants below.)
- From the minutes relating to this AGAR period 2021-22, BPC paid **WebGlu**, their internet provider, for two websites, i.e. £298 for the [main BPC website](#), and £252 for the 'independent' Neighbourhood Development Plan group's website (last [minuted meeting was August 2019](#)). There has also been additional payments of £780 for website maintenance/document updates, which was a task included in the [previous clerk's duties](#), dated 2020 for an 18-hour week. **Please send me a copy of the Clerk's current responsibilities, duties and advertised job specification, and WebGlu's contract/TOR.**

BUDGETS AND RESERVES

There is a continued lack of clarity for councillors and members of the public regarding budgets, and the purpose and use of the Reserves, as indicated at Monday's meeting. This is compounded by the fact that the public quarterly Finance Committee meetings were disbanded after 2019, without a documented public explanation.

In 2015, when over half of the councillors resigned, and the clerk of 26 years (Bruce Poole) retired, there was stated to be £82K in the Reserves. BPC then went through several years of actively spending the Reserves, e.g. Four years later, the "Reserves at 1.4.19 = £66,518.09" with "TARGET reserves 1 April 2020: £44,100" ([July19 Min 324.14](#)). There was no public/Full Council discussion or explanation, this decision was only "NOTED".

As you will recall BPC had publicly-held Finance & Personnel Committee meetings up until 2019-20, which had been [in operation since at least 2006](#) as the current clerk can confirm as he attended the meetings (along with publicly held Planning and Open Spaces committees). Some previous F&P Agenda and Minutes are also on the BPC website ([select Personnel Committee](#), all years and all documents). Following my Sept 21 meeting with the Personnel Committee, the four attending councillors (the majority of 8 at the time as it included the BPC Chair) unanimously put forward four of their (not my) agreed recommendations, to improve internal and public financial communications. It was minuted ([Min 345.7.7](#)),

"a) Reinstate the three Committees, i.e. Finance (& Personnel), Planning and Open Spaces. (b) Release minutes as soon as possible. (c) Release an agenda pack with the Agenda (d) State value of the current Reserves in each monthly minutes in the finance section.
By a majority decision [BPC Chair changed her mind] it was: Resolved that the foregoing recommendations be struck from the Council's Agenda and discussion not therefore proceeded with. **The Clerk emphasised that in respect to (b) and (d) those actions were already in place and had been since the 1st March 2020. As to (c) he would only circulate agenda packs to parish council members as per his report (Appendix D)"**

Again, no publicly documented explanation was given for (a), even though the previous [F&P Terms of Reference](#) stated, "To meet quarterly in public in a properly convened meeting as required by law"? The last documented solely financially related meeting was the precept and budget setting [Jan2022 extraordinary meeting](#) (NB The detail of the budget was to be confirmed later but was not published. This lack of transparency makes it difficult to identify where budgets were agreed, e.g. 2021-22 Platinum Jubilee £7K budget didn't seem to appear as a line item until [Q1 2022-23](#) retrospectively, and Bleadon in Bloom financial visibility was removed when compared to Q3 2021-22 (see attached Q3-2021-22Published)? The precept rose 8% not 5.9% as stated in the approved minutes i.e. £50K to £54K. **Please send me a copy of the agreed individual budgets for 2021-22 (Also, agreed budgets 2022-23 e.g. arising from the January budget and precept setting meeting.**

Please tell me why BPC no longer hold quarterly publicly minuted Finance meetings, despite repeated councillor requests in Full Council. Item (b), BPC do not release minutes to the councillors or the public until a few days before the next meeting, limiting both councillor and resident understanding and interaction in decision making. This can be from a month up to year, or more, e.g. resident's Annual Parish Meeting. Item (c), BPC doesn't publish agenda or minute appendices to the public, which makes the minutes misleading as the public have no access to the information that is referred to, or being used to make decisions. Working group meetings and related decisions and expenditure are also undocumented. The clerks monthly progress update reports are also therefore 'secret', despite multiple requests to publish all non-confidential appendices to enable councillor's decision-

making information transparent. Item (d) not correct, as can be seen by viewing any of the monthly minutes, the Reserve values are not stated, nor are the purposes or values of the individual EMRs. [Please explain how BPCs current approach conforms to Openness Regulations 2014 as stated on the front page of every BPC Agenda.](#) The above simple changes requested by the Personnel Committee would make a significant difference to both councillors and the public understanding of BPC finances.

The **Summary Receipts & Payments** ending 31MAR22, that lists the Ear Marked Reserves (EMR) was at the viewing (see attached ReceiptPaymentMar22) but it is not available online, [please send me a copy of the Summary Receipts & Payments.](#)

Over many years I, and various councillors, have asked for clarity on the Reserves. Monday's 12Jul22 Full Council [Agenda item 355.7](#) states, "*Resolutions 1. To resolve to move the following EMRs into General Reserves*" There was no other public information available with the Agenda. If usual practice is undertaken, the minutes of yesterday's meeting will not be publicly available until the week before the next meeting, i.e. September, so [please correct me if I've misunderstood anything:](#)

- Over the course of this year there have been various concerning financial statements e.g. "**General Reserves were seriously depleted. Steps should be taken to reduce some of the unused Ear Marked Reserves.**" ([May 2022 Min 353.13.1](#)) "*The Clerk advised the members of the current perilous level - not considering the ERMs of the General Reserve showing a deficit figure of £450.00. When asked what immediate positive steps need to be taken. The response was to formally resolve what ERMs are not required and as a result transfer them back to the General Reserve.*" ([Jun 2022 Min 354.7.3](#))
- As you will recall, it was publicly stated that there was no reference as to the purpose of the **Special Reserve EMR**. FYI, this reserve has been around since at least 2011 when Bruce Poole was the RFO, and it has appeared to have continued to date (see attached BVN93pg7). This EMR may have a defined purpose, but as it has existed since 2011, without any knowledge, investigation or concern as to its purpose, then it could be seen that the resident's precept taxes have been nearly £8K too high for the last 11 years. This is precisely the reason why I, and other residents and cllrs, have been asking questions for many years. This is why the public/residents/cllrs have the Right to view and scrutinise the accounts, can undertake FOI's, attend public meetings, request associated information whether Agenda, Minutes, Appendices, Reports, legal documentation, etc.; it is also because it is residents who councillors are taxing, directly demanding and spending resident's money.
- After years of BPC publicly stating there's plenty of money to spend on all sorts of projects, on Monday Councillors proposed and stated that the £7.6K deficit budget to be taken from this Special Reserve as agreed at the Feb 22 ([Min 350.7.5](#)). [Please confirm that the Churchyard wall fund, that previous BPC Chairs have been concerned about for many years, is still covered in the remaining EMRs.](#)
- It was proposed and agreed for £10K to be taken from the **Contingency EMR** to cover any shortfall of the clock renovation. NB July 21 (Min 344.7.3) states that "*... expected in-situ charge of £12,000. However in the event that insufficient funds were realised any shortfall would be underwritten by the balance of the Covid-Grant*" (I'm assuming this refers to the Business Grant EMR as the COVID EMR has been stated not to belong to BPC).
- As you are aware, the **Business Grant EMR** came from a £10K North Somerset Council Business grant for the Toilets. BPC's newsletter [BVN#117pg7](#) states states, "**Local authorities are banned from producing a deficit budget...**", yet minutes Jan 22 ExMeeting (Min 349.3) state, "*To Resolve a Budget for the Financial Period 1st April 2022 to the 31st March 2023. Resolved unanimously that the the Budget for the Financial Period 1st April 2022 to the 31st March 2023 should be £64,158. Members were reminded by the Clerk that this figure reflected a potential deficit of £7.697 and as such would have to be made up from Reserves.*" . BVN17 continues "*...The council earlier this year applied for a Small Business Grant on the basis that it owned a rateable asset in the village i.e the public toilets and was successful in securing the sum of £10,000.*" [please tell me whether there were any conditions attached to expenditure. Part of this money will/has been used to provide IT equipment for each Councillor so that they might fully participate in now needed Zoom Meetings.](#)" BPC also stated that £1K went to the COVID19 group, so [please explain how there is still £9K listed in the Summary Receipts & Payments EMR.](#) On Monday it was proposed and agreed to reallocate this grant to the Coronation Halls costs. [Please can you confirm which are internal](#)

or external hall costs, as it has previously been stated that the [Halls is an independent charity](#) that is responsible for internal costs, BPC being responsible for structural and external costs **Please confirm where this agreement is documented** (see May 22 [Min 353.14](#) "The Clerk suggested that when future works were required by the Hall Management Committee that it provides the Parish Council (Custodial Trustee) with a proposed works schedule prior to the Council seeking quotations.")

- It was also stated at Monday's meeting that the **toilets still need major renovation**, potentially new urinals and drains. **Please tell me where the toilet renovation expenditure would come from if the toilet related Business Grant has been spent on the Halls.** (NB: These are the same toilets that were agreed to be renovated last AGAR, July20 ([Min 334.7.7](#)) then unagreed in Sept ([Min 335.4.i](#)), and ended up being painted instead this AGAR year ([invoices #222 and #223](#)). **Please send me a copy of the original July tender/specification for the toilets as agreed by Council it has never been published.**
- As you are aware, at Monday's Full Council, Cllr Clarke voiced her concern over the level of spending and sought reassurance, especially as, in her opinion, there was a high level of spending on 'nice to have' activities rather than ensuring that existing responsibilities, including maintenance and health and safety, took priority and/or were catered for, e.g. toilets, trees, etc. **Please tell me who is ultimately accountable for the precept/budget spending**, i.e. all councillors as they approve the minutes each month; only those councillors that authorised the payment/budget; and/or the RFO.
- There is no longer a Finance sub-committee, but at Monday's meeting, and the budget setting meeting in January, it was clear some councillors are more aware of the BPC finances than others. From the authorisations noted in the minutes, only four of the current nine councillors have mainly been responsible for authorising expenditure in the current AGAR period, less than half of all councillors. At Monday's full Council Meeting Cllr Davies was asking for other councillors to become more financially aware, perhaps if all councillors took part, and the F&P meetings were re-instated, then maybe it would raise awareness and understanding for all councillors (I'm assuming that all councillors have been made aware of the NALC [Good Councillor Guides](#) especially on Finance & Transparency). **Please explain me why all councillors have not participated in the authorisation of payments** NB on the recent May and June minutes some named councillor authorisations and approvals are missing.

PROJECTS

Each year I/residents try to ascertain total spending per project and EMR and associated individual expenditure, but we can never get a simple, clear answer. This year [2022-23 Budget by Centre](#) for the Platinum Jubilee project states a £7,780 Budget with £4,429 spent in this 2021-22 AGAR period. **Please send me itemised spending for each project and EMR** (as indicated in the attached ReceiptPaymentsMar22) for this AGAR accounting period.

I still haven't received any clarity on how projects are budgeted, funded or managed by BPC as associated project group meetings are generally undocumented. (Bleaddon in Bloom, Jubilee Project, etc.) For example 18JAN21 the clerk wrote, "***The Bleaddon 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 Bleaddon in Bloom group but it is independent of the council. However they are happy for us to share their budget on the Parish Council web site as it was submitted to the Parish Council.***" At the April 22 APM BPC stated that it was not a grant but 'a budget line item', with you and the clerk reiterating that the project wasn't managed by BPC. (NB All the contact information on the website refers to you/Kirsten, not Cllr/Chair Hemingway, ensuring no link to BPC). **If the project is independent from BPC and is not managed by BPC, why wasn't there a Grant application made through the council (see Grants below)?**

GRANTS

Transparency of public spending and funding is the key issue, not necessarily that money is given, nor the amount.

The [Halls Committee](#) (3 former Cllr trustees), [Youth Club](#) (2 former Cllr trustees) and [Playground](#) (all current Cllrs) are all independent charities, with BPC also a Custodial Trustee of the Halls, car park,

land, etc. Each of these entities have current and former councillors involved in their associated committees. It has become increasingly difficult to understand who is requesting money/grants/finance and how these subsequently get tabled and awarded. Any other organisation or group requesting money, donations, etc. would be asked to fill in a BPC Grant application form that states, "Only registered charities, voluntary groups or community organisations are eligible to apply for a grant. National or regional charities are not eligible, nor are individuals."

The official total Grant available for each year has been listed as £500 for many years, nowhere near the levels of money given to the charities and community groups above. The last 'outside' request for a grant that I recall was in Aug 2018 ([Min 312.14](#)) by ContactUs. The request was deferred to Sept ([Min 313.22](#)) as the Grant Application process/form had not been completed or submitted in time. A "... grant of up to £100, reimbursed on production of receipts" was subsequently approved. Please can you explain why, in recent years, payments are made to the Youth Club e.g. Inv #24 Lighting Donation, Halls e.g. Inv #81 Wifi Contribution, BIB Budgets £1,500, £8,466, etc. Platinum Jubilee Budget £7,780, all. without an official Grant application or subsequent publicly identifiable and accessible expenditure listing, prior and post spending?

The [BPC Grants policy](#) states, "The Parish Council requires that any individual or group requesting funding from the Parish Council should if possible be represented at the meeting where their application is to be considered in order to give background and information at the request of the Chairman" If this process was undertaken, with any involved councillors declaring a financial interest for their project, then the request and expenditure would be more transparent, with the associated grant form becoming part of the legal minutes and documentation.

I'm aware, and grateful, that the independent Bleadon in Bloom (BIB) transparently post their expenditure on the BPC website. The Grants policy states, "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 to be returned to the Council." BPC Q3 Budget by Centre publicly indicates a 2021-22 BIB budget of £8,466. Yet the [BIB budget](#) publicly states a 2021-22 budget of £10,127.50, with a 2019 'carry forward' of £1,411.00, and "Grant needed for 2021 BiB £8,466.50". I believe that the BPC publicly stated BIB budget of £8,466K is misleading as it has actually budgeted a minimum of £9,877 of resident/public money for 2021-22. Please explain how this independent group is allowed to use BPC accounting, clerk, invoicing, etc. similar to the independent newsletter, and possibly the Platinum Jubilee group, with no overriding BPC financial or project management or documented working group decision making and expenditure.

INVOICES

Some of the following invoices were not authorised in the minutes, as verified by the officially signed versions present at the viewing. Please confirm whether/how they were authorised, when and by whom:

[Jun21 Min 343.8](#)

#32 is missing from the Jun 21 minutes (should be Opus Energy £14.11 which is listed as #34)

#34 invoice is Opus Energy £12.22 (£11.64+£0.58) (and should be #32?)

#47-#47A? Unnumbered Postage charge (£15.85) not found at viewing, please explain

#54 Green Waste - please explain who/what this is for

[Jul21 Min 344.8.1](#)

My AGAR viewing notes indicate a #62A Youth Club £208.79 - please explain and send me a copy

[Sep21 Min 345.8.2](#)

#115 missing from Sep 21 minutes (£40 Adrian Project Services - Toilet seats)

Additional #226 Ellie Young missing from May 22 minutes (£400)

[May22 Min 353.14](#)

#227? missing from May 22 minutes - Church Rooms Bleadon Help Network Craft & Chat - states duplicate of Chq#951 - was one or no payment made for the Church Rooms? If so, please tell me what BPC activity/project was it for?

#228 Bruce Poole Homeworking missing from May 22 minutes (£26)

INCOME

Please can you explain why BPC Income, is no longer recorded in the monthly minutes, as was

standard practice for the two previous clerks up until Sept 2019 ([Min 326.24](#) - document missing on BPC website)

Newsletter Advertising Income

As seen below it seems that the newsletter income is based on an average of 8 advertisers a month, and clearly doesn't cover its costs, with 'packages' negotiated as indicated in the Editor contract attached..

Edition #118 - Mark Howe invoiced £40 but listed as £55 (See attached AdvertTable image)? **Please explain**

Edition #117 - 7 items in table only 2 invoices? David Plaister Full invoice price not listed? **Please explain**

Edition #117 Full £500. Total £580 * missing info

Edition #118 Full £867, Total £750

Edition #119 Full £690, Total £610

Edition #120 Full £690, Total £610

The total for 2021-22 should therefore be £2,550? **Please can you explain why the value on the Q3 Annual Budget by Centre Dec 21 at the AGAR states it to be £2,250.** See attached BudgetByCostCenter and AdvertTable image re: Dec 21.as taken at the AGAR viewing.

Please confirm receipt of this email.

I look forward to receiving the requested additional information and discussing this with you, RFO and/or councillors in the near future.

Kind regards,

[Objector]