

BLEADON PARISH COUNCIL

www.bleadonparishcouncil.co.uk

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Head of Challenge
PKF Littlejohn LLP

12th January 2023

Dear

Re: Bleadon Parish Council – Objections raised to the 2022 AGAR –

Herewith the Parish Council's response to the undermentioned objections raised

1. The response given to Assertion 2 of the 2021/22 AGAR (internal control)

At its meeting on the 13th June 2022 – *Minute 354.7* - the Parish Council approved Assertion 2 without any member being recorded as voting against approval.

3. The approval process for the Clerk/RFO's salary and overtime, increased hours, salary level and additional part-time jobs, as well as questioning the existence of any job specification, job description, signed contract, job evaluation documents (Assertion 2 and Box 4);

The current Parish Clerk was formally approved as the Council's Proper Officer and RFO on the 9th March 2020 - *Minute 332.7.5* – following a period of 6 months acting as a locum to the council. There was not by acquiescence of the council members a formal appointment process being that Mr Poole had previously been the Proper Office to the Parish Council for a period of 26 years. The Contract was formally signed on March 26th 2020.

Following an appraisal undertaken by the Personnel Committee the Council subsequently supported the recommendation that the hours should increase from 14 pw to 18 pw – *Minutes 343.7.1*.

The salary is at the appropriate level for Mr Poole in accordance with his qualifications FSLCC - BA (Hons) Degree in Local Governance experience of some 35 years and at the SCP rate recommended by the sector's national bodies.

At no time has overtime be paid for nor indeed has it been sought by the current incumbent.

Mr Poole has over many years with the full knowledge of the Parish Council details which were originally embraced in his contract worked for a number of different councils which is his legitimate right so to do.

4. payments in respect of the Clerk/RFO's professional subscriptions and training during the year, which you assert should be split proportionately with his other councils (Box 6)

Current Contract states attendance at two major sector-based Conferences per annum. Attendance provides training points in respect to CPD and the maintenance of the professional nomenclature. SLCC Professional Fees for 2022 -23 (see attachment) £319.00. Pro rata payment by BPC £193.00 – *Minutes 355.8.65*. For Bleadon in 2022 I attended the National Conference and for my other smaller council The Practitioner's Conference.

6. poor management of the various contracts that the Council is party to, as well as the lack of transparency of these contracts, in particular the magazine editor contract and the toilet cleaning contract (Assertion 2).

The three Contracts that the PC negotiated in January 2021 for a three-year period were approved in February 2021 – *Minute 340.7.7*. Unsigned Contracts were placed on the Parish Council Website in March 2021. Concern was expressed in GDPR terms whether wet signatures should appear on the website.

Actual report(s) of “poor management” has never been specifically or formally been brought to the Parish Council. The Editor's documentation was in the view of the writer an agreement as opposed to a formal contract. The Parish Council never went to a formal tender process and in view of the fact that no one in the village volunteered it was agreed the appointment should be instituted.

Yours

Bruce

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