



COLWICH PARISH COUNCIL

Colwich Parish Council Disclosure Log

Request: CPC FOI 4/17

Subject: Various Matters from the Summer Newsletter.

Question

- **I understood that although the PC paid for the Car Park to be re-surfaced it was the memorial hall committee that did all the organising?**
- **From the various Facebook interventions on the JPF, I understood that the CCTV, lay vandalised for a number of months, and was not used to report antisocial behaviour as it did not record at night, and that the PC was not reviewing the footage.....I am be wrong here I am sure you will clarify.**
- **The two lengthsmen replacing local contractors – this is a thorny one, has anyone done an assessment of the cost of the lengths men, including Van purchase maintenance, long term Pension liability etc in relation to the cost of hiring contractors?**
- **New toddler play area was planned and saved for by previous councils and installed by contractors.**
- **The Quality Council award – you know and I know that this is the lowest possible base to work from, it wasn't awarded, it was just re-issued as the council had the award from before, collating data around a level you already hold, with not need to show improvement in any area, I would imagine does not constitute a large job, some may think so having set up things like ISO 9002 and 1402 is complex, this application is more an NVQ submission.**
- **I have also noted that the accounts have not been published in exel as they were last time, like many other parishes do.**

Response

1. Correct. The Council worked with the Great Haywood Memorial Hall to resurface the car park as a large part of the area was unusable in wet weather. The Council representative on the Memorial Hall Committee kept the Council fully informed throughout the process. The Council provided a grant to cover the cost of the work, including the VAT, under Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 s.57. This was agreed and highlighted in the 2016/17 budget and mentioned in the FOI response reference CPC FOI 3/17 available on the Council's website.

2. Incorrect. The camera on the Multi Use Games Area was damaged on 1st May 2016 by a young man firstly throwing stones and then by striking it with a branch. As soon as the Council was aware of the damage, after the bank holiday, we contacted the company and had a new camera installed. There has been no problems at all with the other cameras. The images from this camera,

together with the one from the top of the children's play area, were passed to Staffordshire Police. Unfortunately, neither the Police nor Councillors were able to identify the culprit or his friend/accomplice.

On 7th July an unofficial party took place at the JPF when damage was caused to the roof of the Youth Shelter picked up on night vision at 10:26pm. Again the images were shared with Staffordshire Police who were unable to identify the young man who kicked the roof.

The CCTV was again used to report fly tipping to the Borough Council in January and you may have read the report in the Staffordshire Newsletter of the gentleman who accepted a number of fixed penalty notices for dumping two trailer loads of rubbish at the JPF. A further video of a man and woman dumping a flat screen TV at the JPF has also been shared with the Borough Council.

3. The Council discussed the cost/benefit of employing the lengthsmen in a number of meetings. The benefits of employing, lengthsmen rather than using contractors, is the greater flexibility together with the increased works that can be undertaken at a known cost to the Council. For instance, the work on Coley Lane, up to Manor Farm Road which has so far taken almost 20 hours. Additionally, the lengthsmen have been trained in the use of the CCTV enabling the Council to download images without incurring a call-out fee.

The majority of the funding was found from:

- Not re-issuing annual contracts for cutting the small grass areas across the parish which cost £3,985.20 in 2016/17;
- The retirement of the JPF toilet cleaner who also undertook some, but progressively less, general maintenance work. The toilet cleaning contract cost £4,500 per annum with a £12 per hour charge for any other tasks, e.g. cleaning gullies and footpaths; giving an annual total in 2016/17 of £5,679.92
- No longer paying a contractor for the opening/closing of the JPF gates which cost £600 in 2016/17; and
- The Rangers were no longer able to deliver the Parish Newsletters for which they charged the Council £1,000.

By employing two part-time lengthsmen the Council has a lot more management of when and where work is undertaken. Moreover, there is a smaller contribution towards National Insurance and Pension contributions by employing two part-time staff rather than one full-time lengthsmen. By employing staff, rather than using contractors, there has been no additional charge for the additional works the lengthsmen have undertaken in weeding and clearing: Coley Lane; the two bridges over the A51; Essex Bridge ahead of the Ironman weekend; Meadow Lane; the railway footbridge behind Colwich School as well as tidying up the grass verges along Main Road, Rockhouse Drive etc. The Council has received universal praise for the work being undertaken across the parish by the lengthsmen.

There have been a number of purchases associated with these posts, which are detailed within the Full Council minutes, namely:

Van	£350.00
Road Tax	£12.25 per month
Insurance for van	£687.50
Parts, Service and MOT	£1,009.00
Personal Protective Equipment	£620.57
Lawnmower etc.	£1,128.86

The Council budgeted £20,000 for these posts in 2017/18. I calculate that in the first year the Council will probably end up spending between £23-24,000 which includes one of costs for the purchase of the van, the lawnmower etc. and PPE. I estimate that the on-going costs including salaries, NI, pension, van tax and insurance and fuel will be about £21,000 per annum.

4. Previous Councils, over a number of years, put money aside to renew the play equipment at the JPF. As you will be aware, a number of new pieces of equipment, aimed at the older children, were installed in the JPF during 2014/2015 and paid for from these and other Reserves. You will recall that the Budget for 2016/17, including the proposal to raise the precept so as to raise monies to replace the children's play equipment, was set by the Full Council on 3rd December 2015 with 10 of the 11 Councillors present voting in favour of the budget. The only Councillor voting against the precept and budget was Cllr Stafford Northcote.

5. Incorrect. When the Local Council Award Scheme (new Quality Council award scheme) was launched all those Councils which previously had Quality Council status were granted Foundation Level status. However, this was only an interim award which lasted for 1 year. To continue to hold any of the three levels involves a formal application, via the County Association, and the completion and submission of evidence for 23 items. I enclose a copy of the template received from the National Association of Local Councils together with a copy of Colwich Parish Council's completed version which shows links to the Council's website. According to a report on NALC's website, from 12th May 2017, we are one of only 6 Parish Councils in Staffordshire which have Foundation Level status or higher.

6. The Parish Council publishes its accounts from the Rialtos Business Solutions software. The RBS system has been developed to produce accounts that are in line with those required by the External Auditors. The Council does not use Excel for accounting as this is not a secure system. Using RBS provides a complete audit trail for every entry made onto the system. If any changes are required then a Contra is entered onto the system i.e. both the original and cancelling entry are retained. Using Excel, any changes can simply be deleted, which is not good practice.

Date Received: 23rd June 2017

Date Full Response: 20th July 2017

Responded within 20 working days: YES

Estimated Cost to Council: £150