

Acton Burnell, Frodesley, Pitchford, Ruckley & Langley Parish Council

CLERK'S REPORT

Parish Council Meeting

13 July 2021

21.7.8 Finance

We have received confirmation of exemption from external audit following submission of AGAR form.

21.7.8.3 Clerk's additional hours

I'm requesting that the Council pay for 34 additional hours worked in May and June. Most (27) of these were incurred in the week prior to and of the APCM in May. I was able to keep to my contracted hours during June. Please see separate sheet with a breakdown of the additional hours.

21.7.8.4 Budget

As a result of the additional hours worked by the Clerk, if approved the salary budget line will incur a further overspend of £377. There are no further unreported overspends this period.

If the Council were to fund the Clerk to undertake CiLCA training this financial year (see note under 21.7.9.1 below), this would cause the training budget line to be overspent by approximately £140 and the salary budget line to incur further costs in the region of £1,065 this financial year depending on what proportion of study hours the Council is willing to fund.

21.7.8.5 Lightsource Grant applications

I contacted SALC for advice as to whether Lightsource funding applications should be considered at Parish Council meetings or at a separate meeting. In line with openness requirements SALC confirmed they should be discussed at full council.

21.7.9.1 CiLCA training

In order for the Council to be able to spend its reserves, it is imperative that the Council has a CiLCA trained clerk so that it may become eligible to assert the General Power of Competence. As such, I am willing to consider starting the training earlier than planned in October 2021. The course takes 1 year to complete. The Council would be expected to pay for my application fee £410 and training costs approx. £250 and I would ask that the Council considers paying for my study hours. This is estimated to be an additional 4 hours per week; therefore would be an additional estimated cost of £2,300 if all of the study hours were paid by Council. I would advise the Council to amend the Clerk's contract in order to ensure a return on this investment, if it were approved.

21.7.10 PC Working Documents

Drafts of documents carried forward from the APCM which need to be adopted at this meeting have been circulated separately.

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21.7.10.2 Councillor's Code of Conduct

At the APCM, Councillors requested clarification as to why they were being asked to adopt the new LGA Councillor's Code of Conduct. SALC advises that it is helpful for the Parish Council to adopt the same Code of Conduct as Shropshire Council to avoid confusion in the event of any complaints or if we should require advice from the NALC legal team or the Monitoring Officer. I am awaiting confirmation of whether SC has adopted the new Code of Conduct and recommend the PC retains its current Code of Conduct until Shropshire Council informs us of any changes to its Code of Conduct.

21.7.12 Highways Matters

While I was on leave, SC held a Clerks' meeting to update on Highways Matters. The new Shropshire Council appears to be emphasising its commitment to improving road conditions in Shropshire and are aware of reporting issues and delays on responding to reports, and plan to change to system used to report faults. A Highways working group for clerks is being set up in order to continually feedback Town and Parish Councils' concerns and priorities.

Anecdotally, SC does appear to be becoming more responsive on Highways issues. I am starting to receive completed tickets for jobs raised several months ago. Potholes on Frodesley Lane have been filled and the gullies in Frodesley have been cleared in recent weeks, including the blockage causing flooding on the road at Luckington Stud.

Culvert on Frodesley Lane

Following noise complaints by residents living near to the temporary ramp over the culvert on Frodesley Lane, Cllr Morris is chasing a response from Shropshire Council on when this work may be completed.

21.7.14 Pitchford Village Hall Lightsource Community Benefit Fund Application

I received guidance from SALC that the Lightsource Community Benefit fund is covered by the Council's S137 spending restrictions, set at £4,322 this financial year. At time of writing, I am awaiting guidance from the NALC legal team as to whether more funds may be contributed under different conditions covering spending on Village Halls. I hope to be able to have a definitive answer on how much the PC could legally grant to Pitchford Village Hall by the time of the meeting.

If the PC were to grant the full £4,322 to Pitchford Village Hall, this would mean it would be unable to incur any other costs beyond its powers for the remainder of the financial year and would not be able to, for example, contribute towards any other grant applications, including the Acton Burnell and Pitchford playgroup, or any spend any money on the Parish's defibrillators.

21.7.15 Parish Matters

21.7.15.3 Frodesley traffic calming and signs

We are awaiting a price list of options for traffic calming measures and Gateway signs from SC. These should be ready for discussion at our September meeting.

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21.7.15.5 Airband update

A representative from Airband will attend the September 2021 PC meeting to give a full update and answer any questions. In the meantime, they provided the following brief update:

Work in Ruckley around 23 premises is due to complete q3 with connection q4. Work will also start in Q3/Q4 to bring fibre broadband to premises in Cound.

21.7.17 Defibrillators

21.7.17.1 Pitchford Defibrillator

At time of writing, the defibrillator in Pitchford is still out order. I have chased the Defibrillator Sales company for an update on the status of this defibrillator. It is still under warranty and has taken too long to fix and I will now make it an absolute priority to ensure this is rectified as soon as possible. I have asked that the company loan us a working machine while our machine is being looked at.

21.7.17.2 Defibrillator maintenance policy

Last week I attended a Clerks' meeting regarding maintaining defibrillators. It drew my attention to the fact that we do not have a Defibrillator Maintenance Policy. I suggest that one is drafted for approval at the next PC meeting. It was advised that Defibrillators should be checked weekly to ensure that they are in working order. It may be advisable to look for volunteers within the parish to help with this task so that it is not too onerous for the nominated Councillor. The Council could also consider offering some training on the use and upkeep of defibrillators to people within the parish, some charities are able offer courses free of charge with a donation and provision of suitable training premises.

Anna Morris
Clerk & RFO
ABFPR&L Parish Council
7 July 2021