

CONFIDENTIAL
LYNEHAM AND BRADENSTOKE PARISH COUNCIL

Confidential Minutes of the meeting held on 11th February 2020 at Bradenstoke Village Hall

16 2018/19 AGAR Objections reports

16.1 This exempt session was to discuss two reports from the External Auditor relating to objections to the 2018/2019 Annual Governance & Accountability Return made by an elector, the additional costs of those objections, the circumstances surrounding the objections and how such costs and objections could be mitigated in the future. The External Auditor had stated that these reports must be discussed by Councillors and must be discussed in Confidential session.

16.2 Cllr Tim Darch had questioned earlier in the meeting what the charge for "Additional fees" of £710 was for. The Parish Clerk had informed members that this charge was for two separate objections, from the same elector, received by the External Auditor, together with "a very large number of emails" between PKF Littlejohn and the objector. The External Auditor is appointed by the National Audit Office and the contract states that any such objections must be dealt with by the senior auditor in charge of the Audit team, at a set fee of £355 per hour. Each objection had taken the senior auditor one hour to deal with and respond to the objector.

16.3 The objector referred to in paragraph 16.2 is [REDACTED] absent from this meeting. In addition to making the two separate objections, which were actually rejected by the External Auditor, [REDACTED] had sent "a very large number of emails" to PKF Littlejohn. In response to a question from Cllr Tim Darch, the Parish Clerk replied that she had been told that this amounted to 184 emails in a matter of weeks. Some members of the Parish Council, and the Parish Clerk, had also received "a very large number of emails" from [REDACTED]

16.4 Alongside the two objector reports, members discussed Section 1 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2018/19. This Section is the Annual Governance Statement, consisting of 8 questions relating to Governance during the year in question, to which the answer is either 'Yes' or 'No'. After discussion it became apparent that most, if not all, of the questions to be answered in the 2019/20 AGAR would have to be given a 'No' response.

16.5 The discussion then turned to possible mitigation of costs and objections when the 2019/20 AGAR is submitted to the External Auditor. It should be possible to negate many objections that may be made merely by the fact that the Parish Council is now operating in a very open and transparent manner, with all documentation being made available publicly either on the website, on noticeboards and in the Library. However, it is necessary to try to control the number of emails being sent by [REDACTED] because of the waste of time and resources in attempting to respond to the very rambling and contentious nature of them.

16.6 The Parish Clerk had already 'blocked' two email addresses used by [REDACTED] for this reason and because the emails are sometimes of a bullying, intimidating and harassing nature. She had also banned [REDACTED] from hand delivering anything to her private mail box stating that [REDACTED] was "not invited" to deliver mail in this way, although others may be invited to do so. Although the Parish Clerk felt she may have overstepped her authority, she felt she needed to do this to protect herself from any possible confrontation with [REDACTED]

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16.7 After further discussion it was proposed by Cllr Keith Webster, seconded by Cllr Liam Broughton and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT a letter be sent to [REDACTED] stating the following:

- a) With immediate effect neither the Parish Clerk, nor any Parish Councillor, will respond to any email correspondence received from [REDACTED]
- b) Any correspondence [REDACTED] wishes to send to the Parish Council must be addressed to the Parish Council at the Parish Clerk's address and sent through the postal system with the correct value postage stamp affixed to the outside of the envelope;
- c) Any email address that [REDACTED] attempts to use will be blocked by all Parish Councillors and the Parish Clerk;
- d) All Parish Council paperwork that [REDACTED] is entitled to receive as a Parish Councillor, will be mailed to him through the postal system.
- e) This process will be reviewed in 6 months, that is in August 2020.
- f) This letter would be signed by all Parish Councillors to confirm to [REDACTED] that these conditions have been considered and resolved by all Councillors at the meeting.

The meeting was closed by the Chairman at 10pm.

Signed [REDACTED] *Y. Bell* Date *10 MAR 20*
Chairman

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]