



Anston Parish Council Meeting – 18th November 2019

Briefing Paper – Update on Agenda Items

6(a) Appointment of Internal Auditor

I have obtained details of four individuals and companies which may be able to offer an internal audit service to the Parish Council but I still awaiting quotes from all of them before the Council can take a decision. I have kept the issue on the agenda as it is an important one for the Council to get tack of and I will be asking the Council whether it wants to meet in December to consider the matter along with other matters.

6(b) Local Council Award Scheme

The Local Council Award Scheme is the governance standard for the local (i.e. parish and town) council sector and there are three levels of accreditation (foundation, quality and quality good). In 2016 Anston Parish Council was accredited with foundation status and that four-year accreditation expires in January 2020.

Holding foundation level means that a local council evidences that it meets the minimum legal requirements in terms of good governance whereas holding quality or quality gold status means that it additionally demonstrates best practice in community engagement and leadership.

The principle benefit of being accredited under the scheme is as a self-improvement tool but some local councils around the country have found it helpful in terms of being able to evidence good governance to partner organisations (e.g. in giving them confidence to transfers assets).

I would recommend that the Council seeks to reaccredit in order to continue to evidence that it meets legal requirements in terms of good governance. My suggestion would be that it seeks to reaccredit at foundation level this time around and then works to reaccredit at quality or quality gold level in 2014. I understand the cost of a reaccreditation application would be £100.

Further information about the scheme can be found at <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/improvement-and-development/local-council-award-scheme>.

8(a) Recommendation from Open Spaces Committee

At its meeting on 24th October the Open Spaces Committee considered a quote from Louise Hill from MRB Ecology and Environment to refresh the Anston Stones Wood Management Plan for the cost of £1,700 and assist the Parish Council in implementing the plan. She has previously worked with Rotherham Council on similar projects and her quote was considerably lower than the c.£17,000 (excluding VAT) received from another company nearly a year ago. The difference being essentially down to her view that much of background material contained within the original plan is still valid and does not need redoing from the ground up. The Open Spaces Committee is recommending that Ms Hill be engaged and has referred the matter to the full Council as it does not have any spending powers.

8(b) Repair Works to Old Library

I understand that the external repairs to the Old Library building have been completed with just some internal plastering and repairs to electrical conduits to be completed. These should be done within the next couple of weeks. I have spoken with Fisher German who will be estimating the rental value of the property and then should be inspecting the property within the next couple of weeks.

8(c) Cemetery Extension Project

Responses have been received from the landowners whose land is adjacent to our cemetery and which we would like purchase in order to extend the cemetery. Neither response rules out selling the land to the Parish Council and one is particularly positive. I have sent the correspondence to our solicitors to seek their views about next steps.

8(d) Crowgate Recreation Ground

In liaison with Cllr Jepson Rotherham Council have been contacted to ask them to progress the resolution of a new lease for the site. I have also instructed our solicitors to contact the RMBC legal department again to try to get some progress on the matter.

9(a) Bonfire & Fireworks Display – 5th November 2019

Another successful Bonfire & Fireworks Display was delivered with only positive feedback received about the quality of the display. In addition, £850 was raised for local charities and c.£400 for the Council from the fairground rides, burger vans and the sale of tea and coffee in the Parish Hall. The start of the display was delayed again by trespassers on to the exclusion zone (from a different direction than last year) so despite having more marshals on duty we may have to employ some paid security guards next year. The RAF cadets were very helpful on the night and the Council might want to consider making a small donation to them. It would be helpful if the Council could confirm that it would like the next bonfire night event to take place on 5th November 2020.

Chris Pilkington
Clerk to Anston Parish Council
15th November 2019