

West Hill Parish Council Extraordinary Meeting  
Agenda Item 24/033  
HR Working Group - Correspondence from a Resident

Purpose

1. To advise the Parish Council of discussion at the HR Working Group and to seek views about engaging legal advice about a response to correspondence from a village resident.
2. To advise the Parish Council of a potential problem concerning the Council's Duty of Care to its employee.
3. To seek the Parish Council's view about advising the Council's insurers about the above matters.

Background

Recent correspondence from a village resident has requested a large amount of historic information. To collate all this information would require extensive searches of files and records. This work would have to be undertaken by the part-time Parish Clerk who is already under pressure due to the workload generated by the current volume of planning applications with tight timescales for response, the work required to support the working groups engaged in the Parish Council's action plan and the normal administration of the Parish Council. The correspondence from the resident included reference to passing this information to lawyers.

The additional onerous workload is resulting in increased pressure on the Clerk and there is a risk that this may affect her health. As the Clerk is employed directly by the Parish Council there is a duty of care towards her and the Parish Council must consider how to address this matter.

As these matters may potentially result in litigation the Parish Council should consider whether it would be prudent to advise our insurers. It should be understood that currently there has been no contact from external lawyers.

For Consideration

The Parish Council is requested to consider:-

1. The engagement of external legal advice on a response to the onerous workload generated by the recent request for historic information
2. How to avoid any excessive and onerous workload for the Parish Clerk that may be generated by any future requests of a similar nature.
3. Whether to advise the Parish Council's Insurers of these matters so they are alerted in the event of any future litigation.