

Complaint GOV 43

Factfinding following Meeting with Councillor David Wright (DW) and the Monitoring Officer (MO)

DW went through the complaint detail and explained that the Councillor in question did not declare a pecuniary interest because when going through the quotations at the meeting, the Councillor had no idea who had quoted. DW asked the Clerk to minute that the Councillor didn't know who the quotations were from. He said that only 2 people in the room knew who had quoted being the Clerk and himself. Therefore there was no pecuniary interest as the Councillor did not know he had one.

MO asked if that was the usual procedure to not declare the contractors' names.

DW said that it was the usual case that contractor quotes were taken anonymously at Parish Council meetings.

DW said that financial controls had not been breached and could not see a reason why this was raised and referred to the Standing Orders.

With regard to the issue raised about one of the quotes being an estimate he advised that he had agreed the format from the contractor for the stud wall and had informed the contractor that so long as he gave assurance that the work would not exceed £3,000 then an estimate would be acceptable and the contractor assured him this would be the case. There were three individual jobs by three different contractors in respect of building, plumbing and electrical works.

The complainant had sent in additional information that stated the works had since exceeded the £5,000.

DW stated that he had read out the quotes and the work involved at the meeting. He did this as he was the lead Member for the project and he had talked to the contractors and met them on site.

MO asked if there were standing orders that mentioned the Clerk should read out the quotes. DW referred again to the standing orders of the Parish Council.

DW said that the Clerk had tried to get quotes for the work but none were forthcoming and so he got involved and contacted the three contractors and met with them to go through the work and ask for the quotes. He stated that the standing orders did allow for an estimate. The Clerk had tried to get more quotes but they did not materialise and the procedures stated 'usually' get three quotes or estimates. He added that the quotes were sent into the Clerk not to him personally and they did strive to obtain three but they were not forthcoming.

DW mentioned again that there were three separate items of work and three separate quotes from three different trades ie. Electrical, building and plumbing. If one contractor

had done all the work it would be one job but as there were three items of work, they were treated individually.

DW considered that quotes should always be anonymous and presented as A, B and C so that the Council was just dealing with the content and not the names of the contractors.

DW advised that he did not intend to respond to the complainant.