

New RFO Report for Nocton Parish Council - 21st February 2023

Some time has been spent familiarising with various financial aspects. The Parish Council's Accounts have been reconciled for January to get a better picture of where things are at currently. Items to note:

Setup costs & overtime

Some additional expenditure has been needed to undertake the role, such as purchasing Microsoft Office 365, new backup drive, stationary etc. Also, to note that overtime has increased quite a lot whilst getting started, attending meetings, and addressing various tasks. Hopefully this should reduce once things get back on track.

Record Keeping

Due to previous changes of clerk and RFO, the system of keeping records needs improvement. Some physical copies should still be maintained to support any digital records. Currently a new filing system and accounting spreadsheets are being built to make things easier to locate and monitor.

Employer Records

Although the Council uses an external Payroll Service, we seem to be missing some records that legally as an employer the Council must have and maintain. We also do not currently have access to the Council's HMRC Business Tax Account and PAYE Online Services which is one of the most important accounts employers should have access to and monitor on a regular basis.

The Payroll Service has confirmed that they have an agent account and details of a government gateway account for the Parish Council. Still some uncertainty why we as the employer do not have the details and who has had access in the past.

Recommended that the Council request the details are changed by the Payroll Service and they assist us to gain access. It would also be beneficial for the Council to review the terms and conditions of the Payroll Service going forward.

Account Logins

Working through changing various account details, some have not been accessible due to past activity. Majority of them have been recovered and details updated.

Insurance Policy

Some difficulties were experienced with contacting the insurer. Fortunately, Cllr Kaye had a direct point of contact, which proved successful and policy details have now been updated.

The Council are on a Long term contract until 31st May 2025. Therefore, a renewal quote has been requested and the cost of any penalties should the Council decide to change provider earlier than 2025.

Hub Invoicing

It will be necessary to look at ways to improve this in future so that it is easier to track and maintain for the Clerk and the hub manager. The Council is currently paying £50 a year for the Hallmaster Invoicing feature but have never used it. Will need to examine this and test whether it is worthwhile.

Hub Manager's Phone

This is currently paid on recurring payment from the Equals Top up Card. We have agreed to look into changing this over to a direct debit payment to ensure that funds never run out and risk transferred to the Council instead of the Hub Manager.

Bank Access

Currently awaiting access after a slight delay. The previous RFO is assisting with banking tasks in the meantime.