

On Fri, 18 Sep 2020 at 6:53 pm, Helen Savidge wrote:
Thank you for the update and all your work!

The minutes make interesting reading.....

Not sure on the ethics of ctte members paying themselves for time from the Derby Rd Fund? What amounts of money are we talking here?

Have a great weekend
Helen

Footpath Costs

simon scaddan

Sep 18,
2020, 10:37
PM

to me

Evening David

Helen Savidge has raised a question with me having read the redacted minutes of our August meeting about the costs for the work you and Jamie carried out on the footpath around the Pinch Point. She has questioned the ethics of paying members of the Committee for undertaking work on the road and has asked what amount will be involved.

I assume any work undertaken by members of the Committee is likely to be cheaper than work undertaken by contractors. Can you let me know what the costs are going to be? Did you obtain an estimate of costs from an outside source so that a comparison could be made?

Kind regards

Simon

simon scaddan

Tue, Sep
22, 9:47
AM

to Helen, bcc: me

Morning Helen

I promised to get back to you with the amount spent on laying down the path around the Pinch Point.

Two members of the Committee volunteered to work on the footpath. They spent 30 hours preparing and installing it and the timber posts. The total labour cost amounted to £450. This was in line with the average rate paid to ground workers of £14.88 per hour and excludes a similar number of hours pre installation obtaining approvals and materials.

The Treasurer has always had in mind the need to obtain value for money in any project the Committee has authorised. When agreeing to this project it recognised the experience, both professional and practical, that Mr Moro possessed and would bring to the work and it agreed to have it done in house. It was also felt that by carrying out the work in this way by members of the Committee, who were 100% committed to the project, the results would be better than employing outside contractors who would have been on a much longer lead-in period taking us into the winter. I think you will agree the area around the Pinch Point now looks attractive and provides a safe pathway for residents. It has also attracted compliments from lots of residents and once the verge grass is re-established it will finish it off nicely.

You questioned whether payment to Committee members was ethical. I believe it was. There was no question of a hidden agenda or suggestion of financial impropriety. The Committee was involved with the project throughout.

Kind regards

Simon

On Tue, 22 Sep 2020 at 6:49 pm, Helen Savidge wrote:
Thank you for getting back to me - much appreciated

Whatever the outcome of the work and whether it is complimented or not - the issue is due process.

My understanding is that one resident requested a path - and that has now resulted in over £450 (cost of materials to be added) of all of our money being spent on that one persons request. Is that reasonable?

You mention value for money - no quotes were obtained so there is no evidence of this. Is that reasonable?

I think that the ctte has to be seen to be squeaky clean when it comes to money. There are strict rules around the procurement process in schools. There was also a third person helping I believe from Field View - following on from the description of what happened, why was he not paid? Why were only members of the ctte paid?

Thank you for the letter regarding the AGM. Please could you update me on what is happening with the constitution. Is it ready to be sent to residents along with the details of the AGM?

Best wishes

Helen

On Tue, 6 Oct 2020 at 10:31, Paula Benham wrote:
Good morning, Helen

Simon gave me a nudge yesterday to reply to your query with regard to the amount spent laying down the path around the Pinch Point.

The total cost of the footpath is in the order of £1200.00 and the breakdown of the expenditure can be seen in our accounts. If you still feel strongly about this matter, then please comment on the Voting Sheet/Comments that will go out on Thursday, which will then appear in the Minutes of the AGM. However, as a committee we thought it was excellent value, particularly as the two committee members who did the work only charged £15/hour (the average rate paid to ground workers of £14.88/hour). One resident from FV volunteered to assist and would not accept a remuneration (he has also put himself forward for working parties - an added bonus). He was given a personal 'thank you' by the two committee members. No charge was made for drawing up the plans, attending a site visit by RBC etc etc. All together they spent 30 hours installing the path and timber posts.

You questioned whether payment to committee members was ethical, we believe it was. There was no question of a hidden agenda nor suggestion of financial impropriety. The committee was involved with the project throughout. It was also felt that by carrying out the work in this way by members of the committee, we were 100% committed to the project, and the results would be better than employing outside contractors.

You are correct in your assumption that we did not seek outside quotations. (Personally, I know how difficult it is to get tradesmen interested in giving a price and even when they do I wonder if they've included a holiday in Barbados in the figure!) Our Treasurer has always had in mind the need to obtain value for money and the committee recognised the experience, both professional and practical, that he possesses and so we had utmost confidence in him and agreed unanimously to have the work done in-house.

You mentioned that we have undertaken this project at the request of one resident. However, I'm sorry but you have been misinformed. This has been in the pipeline ever since the pinch point was mooted and formed part of the original plans for the area. I think the footpath to which you are referring might be the suggestion made at last year's AGM for one all along Derby Road. This would have appeared on the Agenda for this year but has been held over for the next Committee to possibly take forward.

We hope you will agree that putting your trust in the committee (that was) (and Simon especially) to do the right thing and, in this particular case, providing an easy access for wheelchair users especially, was correct. The latest levelling and re-seeding should also improve the appearance - an attractive area as opposed to the quagmire that it had become.

Kind regards. Paula

Helen Savidge

To: Paula Benham

Cc: David Moro, Jamie Harcourt

Sat, 10 Oct at 10:10

Good morning

Thank you for your email, my apologies for the delay in getting back to you. I am currently working 50+ hours a week at school

2 Your comments about it now being an attractive area and the difficulties in getting quotes, having confidence in David etc confirm for me that the committee still does not understand that it needs to be seen to be following procedures and due process.

To state that is good value for money when no quotes were obtained is quite frankly ridiculous. It is also ridiculous to state that this is because it takes a long time to get tradespeople to come round - that may be true but it has to be done. Why can the committee not see that for its own protection it has to be seen to be transparent and following due process? 3 There is clearly the implication of financial impropriety here when the committee decides to pay itself without following due process. The committee's reassurances about the way it is deciding to spend our money are not enough - I do not understand why the committee cannot see that it has to be evidence based. The fact that the committee consider it to be an attractive area now, that they consider the quality of work to be good is completely irrelevant because the committee decided not to get any quotes.

We have also have another example of lack of transparency from the committee in the email. . Please see below your quote Paula from facebook on a conversation in August 'A resident asked for a footpath to provide access for pushchairs and wheelchairs when the PP closed.'

Now the committee is telling me that I have been misinformed. My information came from your post. The committee has now changed this to stating that this path was part of the original plans. Please direct me to the minutes that state this and to the paperwork that was provided to residents to show this as I have no record of this or recollection of this. Please provide the evidence of what you are stating.

You mention about having trust in the committee - the repeated shifting of information on several occasions over the last couple of years surrounding the pinchpoint in particular and the repeated lack of transparency make that very difficult, particularly as Simon has now left

I look forward to hearing from you

Helen