

**QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO RENDLESHAM PARISH COUNCIL IN PAPER
FORMAT - MEETING 24TH January 2025**

Q: On the Charity Commission's website it clearly states that Rendlesham Parish Council is a trustee of Rendlesham Community Centre Charity. It also states that no trustees should receive any remuneration, payments or benefits from the Charity.

A: Rendlesham Parish Council is a separate legal entity which exists in perpetuity regardless of its members.

Rendlesham Community Centre Charity is a separate legal entity.

The Parish Council is currently the sole trustee of the Community Centre Charity so you are correct the Parish Council as the trustee can not receive any remuneration, payments or benefits from the Charity.

Q: Why has the post of Community Centre Facilities Manager been given to the Chair of Rendlesham Parish Council when she will receive remuneration pro rata of £30,000 p.a

A: The post has not been given to the Chair of Rendlesham Parish Council nor has any remuneration been paid.

Following a local advertising campaign for the post no applications were received. The Chairman of the Parish Council did not apply for the role (although she was considering this and correctly declared an interest and left the room every time this was discussed either by the Council or the Community Centre Charity) She had been doing the role on a voluntary unpaid basis for around 18 months and had advised that for personal and family reasons she was no longer able to continue with the heavy workload involved. Hence, with no other volunteers available from the Council, and fears that the Community Centre may have to close with no-one to run it on a day to day basis, the role was advertised as a paid post and with no applicants the Community Centre Charity Committee offered the role to the Chairman. The Chairman subsequently declined the offer.

Q: Is the high level of salary necessary for the skills required for the post considering the Council's dire financial situation and does the now incumbent have the skills to qualify?

The salary was set at a level commensurate to similar roles in the industry. The salary will be paid by the Community Centre which is an independent legal entity with its own

bank accounts and finances which are entirely separate to the Parish Council. There is currently no one in post but the Community Centre Charity will consider all applications alongside the published job description/person specification when making its final decision about who to employ. Individual skills, qualifications and experience of successful applicants will remain confidential.

Q: Why were the two members of staff that were recently made redundant not offered the opportunity to apply?

A: The Council can not comment on HR matters relating to individuals. The redundancy process was outsourced to a professional HR company and the Parish Council are confident that all procedures were followed correctly and in accordance with employment law. The Community Centre posts were (and are) open to anyone to apply if they so wish - new employees will be employed by the Community Centre Charity NOT the parish council.

Q: Where were the two positions advertised and on what date.

A: The vacancies were posted on the website for Rendlesham Parish Council, the Notice Board outside the Community Centre, Facebook and on the SALC job vacancies website. They were advertised between 19th December 2024 and Monday 13th January 2025.

Q: Can you confirm that there have been no accounts supplied to the Charity Commission for the Community Centre

A: No accounts have been submitted to the Charity Commission since the Parish Council took over as Trustee in 2022 . The Charity are currently finalising the 2024 accounts and plan to submit all figures by April/May 2025.

Q: Are the accounts in full detail going to be made available to the parish without redaction to allow scrutiny of the decision to withdraw the money set aside for the skate park and are those figures audited yet.

A: For the purposes of answering this question we are presuming you mean the Parish Council accounts.

The Council's financial year end is 31 March 2025 so this year's figures are not yet audited.

The Council will comply with the necessary regulations in respect of making accounting information available to the public as detailed below. Redaction relating to staff salary payments will take place for the purposes of public availability of information.

Regardless of this a full payments list now appears on the Council's website alongside copies of bank statements. This is over and above that required under Audit Regulations or transparency laws and enables full scrutiny of all individual payments made this financial year, by any member of the public wishing to review the transactions.

Further to this, detailed minutes on the Council's website over December and January explain the reasons for the erosion of funds previously set aside for the skatepark over the 24/25 financial year.

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 local authorities must allow public rights of inspection each year after the accounts have been approved and published.

Exercise of Public Rights (usually June / July each year)

*The exercise of public rights involves a 30 working-day period in which accounting records must be made available for inspection to any interested person, and **the AGAR must be approved and published before this inspection period starts.** Within this period, electors can inspect and raise questions regarding the accounting records of the financial year in which the audit relates. They also have the right to request copies of accounting records during this period. *Documents containing information that is personal or protected by commercial confidentiality cannot be inspected.*

As the name suggests, the Council must advise the public of the period of the exercise of public rights, and this includes advertisement through the council website. The advertisement must include the following:

- *the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights*
- *how you can communicate to the Council that you wish to inspect the accounting records and related documents*
- *the name and address of the auditor*
- *the relevant legislation that governs the inspection of accounts and objections*

Q: Was the AGAR report submitted by the locum clerk accurate or has it been withdrawn to be amended and re-submitted?

A: Accounts for the financial year 2023/2024 were signed off by the Council at their meeting in May 2024. There has been no suggestion that these figures need to be reviewed.

Q: When will you publish the legal advice referred to at the last meeting be published without redaction including the name(s) of the person consulted , the brief that was given to them and the cost charged for such advice?

A: See attached appendix 1 for legal advice sought from Suffolk Association of Local Councils. The cost of the advice provided is covered in our Annual Subscription fee which was £881.43 for the 24/25 financial year.

Q: In the last meeting you said you would write to tell me the situation with respect to the Youth Club. When can I expect this to be delivered?

A: Negotiations are active and ongoing. Full information will be made available as soon as we have confirmation.

Q: We note the vexatious complaints policy has been withdrawn. Can we be assured that when it is re-published the references to Bradfield Parish Council will have been removed.

A: This mistake was down to a human error in initially posting a draft copy of the policy on the website rather than the final version which had already been corrected on the website at the time of receiving your question.

Q: Given the dire financial position of the council through apparent mismanagement that they are taking advice around implementing governance and controls and appropriate training is being considered for new and existing councillors and in what timeframe.

A: A workshop has been organised for all councillors on Thursday 5th February 2025 run by Suffolk Association of Local Councils.

