

Thank you for your query attached.

Firstly we would like to formally thank FORS for their contribution to the Christmas 2024 Community event by providing the usual Santa's Grotto - without FORS there would have been no Santa's Grotto this year, so your contribution was invaluable and serves as an example of how a community pulling together can be successful. All the volunteers involved should be highly commended for giving up their time freely to contribute to what was a very successful village event.

To answer the question raised, we can confirm that the information given at the parish council meeting on 24th January regarding parish council decisions was correct. Individual councillors can not make **ANY** decisions at all on behalf of the Council, including spending decisions, nor can they be delegated such powers as individuals.

In order for any decision to be made, including using council tax payers funds for donations, items for consideration must be placed on a Council agenda for consideration and voting by all council members present. The only legal and valid decisions are those made by the Council as a corporate body via this route.

As the first part of your query states you are clearly now aware that an individual councillor could not promise these funds, it will then be clear to you why a donation has not been made to FORS answering the second part of your query.

Whilst we fully appreciate it is frustrating for you, we make no excuses for the fact that, on this occasion, the Council have acted entirely correctly by ensuring payments were not made following a conversation with an individual councillor and we hope you will support us moving forwards as we work towards educating all councillors and regularising these matters.

Equally the councillor involved acted correctly by referring the matter back to the Council. This Councillor had, in fact, requested that the Council consider a small donation as thanks for FORS assistance, and she had been informed that this would be tabled for consideration by the Council at the earliest possible opportunity. Had we received any communication for FORS about this matter we could have re-assured them that this had not been forgotten and would be dealt with as soon as we had regularised the situation regarding the Council's finances. Unfortunately, as you will have been made aware from the meeting on 24th January, this Council has been paralysed for some months by having to deal with so many extraordinary matters which have halted the normal business of the Council, and until we had had ascertained the exact financial position of the Council we would not have been in a place where we could consider 'out of budget' donations such as this.

However, now that the Council is clear on the funds it has available to spend, there is an agenda item for the February Full Council meeting asking the Council to consider a small donation to FORS of £50 as a thank you for assistance at the Christmas event. It will be down to

the Council as a corporate body to review their financial situation and decide whether this donation can be made and FORS will be advised of the outcome shortly after the meeting.

We trust that this has answered your query and we thank you in advance for your ongoing support of the Council as we attempt to regularise our processes and procedure and support our councillors with obtaining the training and knowledge required to move forwards in 2025.

For full transparency we will be placing your enquiry and response on the Freedom of Information page of our website