

Explanations for 'No' Responses in Section 1

Q1 – Due to having three Clerks in this year, and to the Finance Committee not functioning as it should, the Parish Council has not maintained the full systems of financial management e.g., with regard to budget setting. However, our accounts have been correctly recorded via Rialtas, invoices kept (and checked by the internal auditor) and appropriate Bank Reconciliations done, with no issues identified. The Chair and councillors voted to answer No to these questions to show that the PC is aware of failings in the way it has operated in this year and is committed to fully addressing these.

We now have a permanent Clerk/RFO and have worked together to identify shortfalls in our performance; voted for a Motion (April 27th 2022, Minute Ref. 76/4) to ensure our Financial Regulations are fully followed; and are committed to remedying these issues by ensuring our regulations are properly followed throughout the year. We will be assessing our performance regularly to ensure we are back on track. This will be done by a Finance Working Group and/or a replacement Finance Committee. We will also address the financial function of the Parish council regularly in our monthly Full Council meetings. The new Clerk is now ensuring the Payment Schedules are published with the agenda online, and will be re-introducing quarterly reviews so that we can check regularly how our spending/income tallies with our budget. The reinstatement of all systems and full compliance with our Standing Orders and our Financial Regulations is our top priority and is addressed at every meeting so that we can immediately identify areas that need attention.

Q2 – See above. We are reinstating an effective Finance Working Group and/or Finance Committee to ensure our internal control is completely effective.

Q3 – See Q1 also. We have not published all supporting documents in a timely manner and at times we have not fully followed our Standing Orders with regard to this.

However, these shortfalls have been identified and the Parish Council is working with the new Clerk/RFO to ensure all regulations are correctly followed.

Q5 – See Q1 also. Due to the clerk turnover, we failed to maintain full risk assessments. We have set up Working Groups to ensure these risk assessments are undertaken appropriately.

Q6 – See Q1 also. Due to the absence of a fully functioning Finance Committee, we did not fully follow procedures, e.g. we did not perform enough 'deep dives' into financial records.

However, we have identified these failings and are putting appropriate steps in place to ensure they do not happen again. These steps include setting up a Finance Working Group/and or Committee and reinstating good practice, along with following

all procedures as laid out in our financial regulations, and monitoring our own systems of internal audit regularly throughout the year.

Q7 – We answered No to this because we have not yet received back our Final Audit. Once it is returned, we will respond to any matters raised appropriately.

St Cleer Parish Council