



COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

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Colney Heath Village Office
83 High Street
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23rd December 2020

RE: Freedom of Information Act 2000

Colney Heath Parish Council – Neighbourhood Plan History and Budget/Costs

I am replying to you in response to your Freedom of Information request email received 28th October 2020. My sincere apologies for the delay in responding several locations had to be searched for the evidence to respond to your request:

Your request:

A potted History of the Plan including the minutes etc that started the process along with minutes and documents showing progress to date excluding any paperwork or minutes from January 2019 onwards as these can be obtained from another source.

Our response:

The Neighbourhood Plan was first noted in the Parish Council minutes of 7th March 2013. A link to these minutes can be found here: <https://www.colneyheathparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CHPC-Minutes-Full-Council-7th-March-2013.pdf>

These minutes noted the services of DLA Associates to commence and prepare the Colney Heath Neighbourhood Plan at a working group meeting to be held on 26th March 2013.

In May 2013 minutes <https://www.colneyheathparishcouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CHPC-Minutes-Full-Council-9th-May-2013.pdf> there is reference to a grant being applied for of £7,000 for the Neighbourhood Plan.

There is an update reported to the working group by DLA Associates 25th June 2013 that was noted in minutes 11th July 2013.

By the minutes of 12th September Mr J Lewis has become Project Manager of the Neighbourhood Plan. There is no indication within the minutes that Full Council approved this appointment or indeed any update as to what happened to DLA Associates and the output from these presentations.

Your request:

Details of monies expended in respect of the plan and the accompanying documents that record the expenditure and indeed authorise it. Please also provide details of minutes authorising budgets agreed etc and those councillors charged with managing the project.

Our response:



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Within financial records from 2013 it is confirmed that DLA Associates invoiced the Parish Council for £2,200 in respect of the CHPC Neighbourhood Plan

Between 11/09/2013 and 31/07/2015 Mr J Lewis was paid £25,728.23 in respect of the CHPC Neighbourhood Plan inclusive of expenses.

There is no evidence of budgetary control of this expenditure and neither is there any reference to approval of this level of expenditure for either consultant.

Your request:

Details of the specification issued to the consultant along with minutes detailing and authorising that specification.

Our response:

This extract is taken from the consultant contract issued to the Parish Clerk on 14th November 2013.

There is no evidence that Council reviewed this contract prior to commencing payments to the consultant on 11th September 2013.

Your request:

Letters of engagement issued by the consultant to CHPC and copies of minutes authorising the agreement to those letters and signing of them

Our response:

There are no letters of engagement only a copy of a draft contract with terms as quoted above.

The draft agreed contract for the consultant Mr J Lewis was signed by the Parish Clerk on behalf of the Council confirming a maximum of 300 hours at a total cost of £7,500. We do not hold a contract signed by both parties

Your request:

Details of outputs from the consultant and actions taken.

Our response:

It is challenging to provide actions taken due to the lack of records held although some updates are still available. The following is known:

The consultant



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Held 2 Parish wide meetings to give members an update on progress. At the last meeting agreed the setting up of a communication/consultation grouping group (basically the forerunner of what is now the steering group).

Arranged Visit/s to Building Research Establishment at Bricket Wood

Arranged 2 workshops @ Oaklands College

Communication/consultation group

2 meetings to setup survey

Arranged with SADC to use their Survey Monkey for online responses

Carried out some work obtaining responses from business along the Hatfield Road.

Set up Google Drive for members to share information

Held regular meetings with the former Parish Clerk

Meeting with SADC planning department advice on way forward.

Your request:

Explanations for any budget overruns and authority given to payments outside of the budget.

Our response:

There are no explanations or permission to overspend above 300 hours and £7,500.

I hope this information is useful and successfully answers your request.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Chaplin LCGI PSLCC CPFA CiLCA
Clerk to the Council
For and on behalf of
Colney Heath Parish Council