



COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

Highfield Park Office
 Highfield Park Visitor Centre
 Hill End Lane
 St Albans
 Hertfordshire AL4 0RA

Colney Heath Village Office
 83 High Street
 Colney Heath
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Tel: 01727 825314 Email: clerk@colneyheathparishcouncil.gov.uk

MEETING:	Full Council
MEETING DATE:	Thursday 21 st October 2021
SUBJECT:	Correspondence Report
AGENDA ITEM No.	Item 21/22 – 63a
REPORT BY:	Lisa Chaplin: Clerk to the Council and Responsible Finance Officer

For Information?		For Action?	X	For Discussion?	X	For Resolution	X
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1. BACKGROUND

Correspondence has been received which should be noted and draft response for approval by Council.

2. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Please could you explain why you felt it was in the best interests of the Parishioners to publish the letter from 13 anonymous people that was read out at the CHPC/Scout workshop on 13th May 2021?

Firstly, at that meeting we were told we could have a copy of the letter, so after a few days, having not received anything, I requested a copy by email.

Secondly, as you had decided to publish this as a FOI why was the reply to my request sent as an normal email and not sent in the same way as you normally reply to a FOI request. You also published it at that time.

Within an hour of receiving the emailed copy of the letter from you, I had a phone call from a Parishioner saying there was letter on the FOI page of the CHPC website and asking what it was all about.

This letter was not sent out or published by The Scout Group to anyone at all for at least seven days after publication on the CHPC website. I have also been informed that the copy published in the Coal Post was obtained through the CHPC FOI site.

The editor asked for comments and because it had already been published by yourselves, we felt it was therefore necessary to respond to these accusations and replied accordingly.

The letter was posted on the FOI site at least four times by yourself.

Although you did not publish our names, you substituted these for our roles in the Scout Group. The majority of the people in the village know or could find out extremely easily that it is myself and my family involved. I feel that the Council is in breach of GDPR.

I have many signatures from villagers who have volunteered to speak up for me and that they also have never experienced or heard anyone speak badly of myself or my family and



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that it is not in my character to behave as accused.

The Council has a legal duty to provide correct information. It is clear the allegations could not have been verified by the Council in the short time between receiving the letter and reading it out and then publishing it. You claim you do not even know who these 13 people are, so you have no evidence. All of the allegations/accusations are untrue and unfounded. This letter is a gross defamation of character.

I look forward to your reply.

3. DRAFT RESPONSE

The correspondent is the same as that wrote on 9th July which was responded to by an approved Council response.

A draft response is submitted for Council to review and approve.

Please could you explain why you felt it was in the best interests of the Parishioners to publish the letter from 13 anonymous people that was read out at the CHPC/Scout workshop on 13th May 2021?

As previously explained if a member of the public requests a document held by the Parish Council, and which is disclosed to that member of the public then this is a publicly available Freedom of Information request.

Firstly, at that meeting we were told we could have a copy of the letter, so after a few days, having not received anything, I requested a copy by email.

No request was received to forward a transcript of the letter during the meeting. The meeting was confirmed as being recorded. An attendee of the meeting requested by email dated 14th May 2021, a copy was provided within 48 hours.

Secondly, as you had decided to publish this as a FOI why was the reply to my request sent as an normal email and not sent in the same way as you normally reply to a FOI request. You also published it at that time.

As the information was already provided on the website a formal response was not necessary. The transcript was sent by email out of courtesy rather than being directed to the link where the transcript was on the website, the same email was sent to any further requests for this information.

I feel that the Council is in breach of GDPR.

The Council would be in breach of GDPR if names had not been redacted in any publication or given to any person. This is not the case and therefore the Council are not



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The Council shared the letter in a closed meeting that was recorded by one party, as explained as the Proper Officer it has previously been confirmed that the Council do not hold a copy of the original letter only the transcript of what was read.

4. COUNCIL DECISION

A resolution is required on the following:

1. To consider the contents of the correspondence and proposed draft response.
2. To consider any amendment or inclusion to the draft response.
3. The Clerk will take further instructions at Council