

## **OGBOURNE ST GEORGE PARISH COUNCIL**

### **FULL COUNCIL REPORT**

#### **TRANSPARENCY CODE FUNDING TO PURCHASE OFFICE EQUIPMENT**

##### **Background**

The Smaller Authorities Transparency Code came into force on 1 April 2015 and requires the online publication of certain information which the Government requests, to provide taxpayers with a clear picture of the authority's activities, spending, and governance, and will improve the ability of communities to hold local public bodies to account. This includes any information on joint committees. All smaller authorities must make sure they are compliant.

Under the Transparency Code, from April 2015 smaller authorities, including town and parish councils with a turnover of less than £25,000 are required to publish the following information online:

- all items of expenditure above £100
- end of year accounts
- annual governance statement
- internal audit report
- list of councillor or member responsibilities
- the details of public land and building assets
- Minutes, agendas and meeting papers of formal meetings

##### **Transparency Fund**

NALC is administering a Transparency Fund over three years (2015-2018) to assist smaller authorities to comply with the Code. The fund was opened in September 2015 and applications are being considered on a monthly basis, while funding remains available.

The purpose of the Transparency Fund is to cover the extra burden resulted from compliance with the Transparency Code, aiming to promote democratic participation and make smaller authorities more transparent by giving electors access to financial information with ease.

Compliance with the Transparency Code is compulsory for all smaller authorities with a turnover of less than £25,000, whether or not they received funding from the Transparency Fund.

From 1 April 2017 the publication of the Transparency Code requirements for smaller authorities will entirely replace external audit, therefore, compliance with the Transparency Code is taken very serious by Ministers. Failure to comply with the Code may result in judicial proceedings, which by nature are likely to be costly and lengthy.

##### **Requirement**

Funding can be used to purchase items to enable the Parish Council to comply with the Transparency Code. For example, councils will need access to a computer and the Fund can provide up to £350 (ex VAT) to purchase a computer. Other items that are covered by

the fund include a scanner, a website, training, and the extra time a clerk needs to upload the documents.

**Clerk's recommendation**

To apply for a £450 grant and purchase a basic laptop and printer/scanner to enable Ogbourne St George Parish Council to comply with the 2015 Transparency Code. If funding is not successful then the expenditure will be met from the Salaries/Clerk's Expenses budget.

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