

All Town Councillors have been aware of the amount of time AKJ has spent on this case as it has been regularly reported at full Council meetings in the private of confidential section.

It must be remembered that this case was not a normal one. The claimant had done this to her two previous employers, and both made a substantial financial settlement to her out of court.

MTC was determined not to settle out of court and solely relied on AKJ and the deputy clerk to deal with all correspondence and issues involved in this complex case. At every council meeting, AKJ kept all councillors updated on progress and all councillors were aware of the volume of work involved.

It must also be remembered that all the work AKJ carried out was on behalf of many people and in turn the work protected the reputation of all involved and the reputation of the Minehead Town Council. If he had not taken on this role, MTC would have had to employ an additional member of staff to deal with the administration.

It was obvious how much work was involved when the evidence went to court in June 2022. There was over 1,000 pages prepared and documented by AKJ. Our barrister has stated that without this paperwork and professional way it was presented she would have found it harder to complete the case.

Finance

As mentioned above it was not envisaged that this case would last very long, and therefore no early provision was made to finance it, however, there is a contingency allowance in the 22/23 budget.

The Town Council is insured for all legal costs, so all solicitor and barrister costs will be funded by Zurich Insurance, and it is hoped that other costs involved in attending the court case, such as Hotel, travel, subsistence will be refunded from the insurance company.

As the claimant became more active and involved more people the workload increased, and the Council agreed to purchase a laptop and printer for AKJ to do the work. It was also agreed that all expenses would be reimbursed to AKJ such as toner costs, working at home costs, stationery, etc. and these costs have regularly been reimbursed. (See table below of all costs paid to AKJ)

In October 2021 the council agreed to reimburse any lost time to AKJ as he was fully employed at that time, and this is also included in the table.

It was obvious that AKJ was working nearly full time on this case at certain points and therefore the Council also agreed to give him an honorarium for the time he had spent on the case from the beginning up until oct 2022 over and above the time he would have spent as a volunteer councillor.

Advice has been taken on this., and it is in the Town Councils' powers to award an honorarium to councillors for work over and above their call of duty.

The final decision on the amount awarded will need to be taken to full council in July 2022.

To be able to recommend the level of honorarium the following documents need to be considered.

Appendix A- Loan given to AKJ to attend the court case and calculation of amount to be repaid.

Appendix B - table of all expenses and other payments previously made to AKJ including loss of earnings/wages.

Appendix C - List of all hours worked on the case by AKJ from April 2020 to June 2022 less Loss of earnings/wages already paid and repayment of loan.

Bryan Howe

Deputy Clerk

July 2022