

Statement from Farnsfield Parish Council in relation to the £10,000 grant awarded to Farnsfield Tennis Club in 2017 to build an extension to its club house

Farnsfield Parish Council (The Council) was asked by a member of the public to investigate if the £10,000 grant requested by Farnsfield Tennis Club (the Tennis Club) in 2017, and paid to them in 2018, was awarded appropriately by The Council and used correctly by the Tennis Club.

Following a detailed investigation of all the available evidence The Council has concluded that there were errors made by the then council in the approval and payment of the grant. The Council did not follow the Grant Policy that was in force at that time. The Council has also concluded that there were errors in the way the Tennis Club applied for and used the grant.

The Council resolved (June 23 2020 full council meeting, item 20.62) to request that the Tennis Club return the £10,000 grant. Representatives of The Council met with representatives of the Tennis Club to request that the Tennis Club return the grant and reapply for it using the correct procedures. This request was aimed at protecting both The Council and the Tennis Club from possible legal action and further criticism. The outcome was that the Tennis Club has refused to return the grant (July 28 2020 full council meeting, item 20.72) on the basis that it is in the best interest of their members and the wider community.

The Council has always supported the Tennis Club and its proposal to build an extension. The Tennis Club has now started on the extension funded partially by the grant awarded by The Council in 2017.

The Council has considered the options available to recover the £10,000 grant awarded incorrectly, including the option of taking legal action. However, this route would be disproportionately expensive; the only winners would be the legal profession.

The Council has now concluded its investigation. The £10,000 grant awarded in 2017, and paid to the Tennis Club in 2018, was not applied for, awarded, paid out, or used correctly and in line with the Grant Procedure in force at the time. The Council has resolved not to take legal action at this time as this would not be in the best interests of The Council or the Tennis Club, or appropriate use of public money.

The behaviour of The Council is governed by its [Standing Orders](#). Standing Order 7 says, “**A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion and no similar motion may be moved for a further six months**”. As such, although the Tennis Club has refused to return the grant, there will continue to be a requirement on the Tennis Club to return it until such time as The Council effectively resolves, by resolution and subsequent vote, to either write off any claim to the £10,000, or further pursue the return of the grant.

The Council is very aware that correct procedures were not followed in the award of the grant to the Tennis Club and has taken rigorous steps to ensure such errors do not reoccur. This has included reviewing its funding policies and making sure that they are followed strictly in the future. The current Clerk to The Council already holds the Introduction to [Local Council qualification \(ILCA\)](#) and intends to gain her Certificate in [Local Council Administration \(CiLCA\)](#) qualification within 12 months. This will enable her to continue to ensure good governance of The Council.