Reply to NBRA re. communication received on 30.10.16

Acting on behalf of Billingham Town Council I am responding to a communication received from Mr Bowler, on behalf of the North Billingham Residents’ Association. As Mr Bowler has acted in this capacity I shall address my remarks to him directly. He is then at liberty to share these with the NBRA.

At the meeting of BTC on 25.10.16. the reply to your FOI request was reviewed and the council agreed unanimously that this would be our full and final reply. You are well aware of this decision, as you were present at that meeting, and have also been informed by email. You now wish for further information via a review of this reply. You will appreciate that I have no power to act against council’s decision, but I can amplify that decision.

The questions which you raise would have been totally unnecessary if you or a representative of the NBRA had arranged to come to the office within the allotted 6 week period to inspect the accounts. However, you sent a series of unspecific requests via a member of council. As I said in a previous email, this did not work. We tried our best, and I even replied, as a favour to Cllr Smith, outside the inspection period. You then sent in a FOI request and the executive officer and I, acting on council’s wishes, offered to meet with you to clear up what exactly you required. You refused , claiming ( and I quote) “ I can not see of what benefit to my self a meeting would be..” ( And we thought you were acting, not on your own behalf, but on that of the NBRA! ) Furthermore, as was pointed out at council, we have seen nothing in the published minutes of the NBRA which show that the requests which you have submitted were discussed and agreed by the NBRA. To sum up, this has been an unnecessarily long and unsatisfactory process.

You may be aware that FOI requests can be charged at £25 per hour up to a maximum of £450 ( i.e. 18 hours work. ) This time has already been exceeded. and your request cannot be granted. We shall treat any further such requests on this subject as vexacious.

Yours sincerely, Colin Pollard Chair, Billingham Town Council