

## Report from Village Maintenance Advisory Group Chairman

### **Part 1: TO ASK COUNCILLORS TO REVIEW THEIR DECISION NOT TO PUT A BIN ADJACENT TO THE SOUTHBOUND LAY-BY ON THE A1**

The Clerk has received an appeal against Council's decision to install a sign but not a bin in this location.

In December 2023 Council supported VMAG's recommendation that a bin be placed adjacent to the lay-by on the Southbound side of the A1, a short distance beyond the Shell petrol station. This decision took account of the evidence supplied by a resident of litter regularly being left in this location.

This matter was brought back to Council by the VMAG Chairman's Report in February 2024 with information on the responses received from HDC. Councillors agreed, following a discussion, that they no longer supported a bin there (because it might occasionally not be accessible to HDC staff on their weekly bin-emptying run for Buckden PC) but instead Council agreed to pay for a sign, asking people to take their litter home, provided National Highways were agreeable.

### **Part 2: PROPOSAL - TO AGREE A CONTRACT WITH WORKNEST FOR SPECIALIST EMPLOYMENT LAW AND HR SUPPORT**

Worknest is a large specialist company brought to our attention via CAPALC. Worknest works with NALC and have specialists who are familiar with Parish Council requirements. Once a contract is in place they will provide proactive advice, support and on-line training as well as assistance with individual queries/issues. The proposed contract is for 3-years with an opt-out at the end of each 12-month period. The fee is payable annually in advance. Additional benefits are included – see Fee Summary.

BPC used their FOC on-line training for Clerk & some Councillors and following that we approached them to assist with HR matters relating to holiday pay for employees including changes to the law which Worknest brought to our attention. They provided key information which helped to resolve our issues.

Following that the Chairman of VMAG (which has responsibility for Staffing matters) explored options for further support. The outcome of these discussions was reported to the Finance AG group which supports the proposal; it includes access to named specialist advisers (including lawyers) to deal with any employee issues in a timely way and a review of BPC's employee contracts, and policies and procedures, tailoring them to our needs/priorities, with advice on changes to the law affecting Employment and HR; this latter will be particularly helpful when discussing governance with the new internal auditors (CAPALC).

### **Fee Summary** **36-month Support Agreement**

#### **Employment Law and HR**

An option to execute a Opt Out - Funding is available at each anniversary.  
exclusive of VAT

£1,600 per annum

#### **HR Software**

#### **Essentials HR Software Subscription**

exclusive of VAT

£0 per annum

#### **Other**

#### **LearningNest Essentials - 4 Users**

exclusive of VAT

FREE for the first 12 months. If you love it and want to keep it after the free period, then it will be charged from year two. If you don't want to retain the service at the end of the free period, simply email us at [elarning@worknest.com](mailto:elarning@worknest.com) no later than 1 month before the first anniversary of your service agreement and we will cancel it with no fuss and no charge.

FREE for the first 12 months  
then £215 per annum