

## **What went wrong and who is responsible? Episode 12.**

In this series so far we have examined in some detail the “*lamentable process*” used by Newby and Scalby Town Council to remove our friend Helen from her job as the Head of the Wellbeing Hub. Many of our readers have testified about how important The Hub was to them and how much they miss the services that were offered. We are now going to examine the part that Judge Flanagan described as “*creative accounting*” also played in this grubby story. Later we will look at the total costs involved and will answer the question that has often been raised by our readers – “Who paid for all this?” (Spoiler alert – we paid!) Finally, we will attempt to answer the question “What is the Council for?” before looking at how things can be done better. We have work to do!

### **Creative accounting**

Knowing how quickly Newby and Scalby Town Council reaches for the most expensive law firms (at our expense, of course) when they are trying to hide their activities from public view, we need to be very careful about how we examine what Judge Flanagan has referred to as “*creative accounting*.” We need to first of all draw our readers’ attention to the fact that Employment Tribunal Judgements are made on “the balance of probabilities” and not “beyond reasonable doubt” as would be the case in a criminal case before a court of law.

This difference is important because until a criminal case is proven in a court of law, it would be libellous to accuse someone of committing a criminal act. Having said all that, we are only interested in examining the facts and findings provided to us by Judge Flanagan and the evidence we have before us. So, what evidence do we have?

*7.4 To receive details (circulated with agenda of 13/3/24) on profitability/costs of the hub, and agree action to be taken.*

The agenda item 7.4 above is taken from the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 20th March 2024 (and 13th March 2024) and informs us that a decision will be made about the “*profitability/loss of the hub, and agree action to be taken.*” If we examine the supporting documents for this meeting we find a memorandum from the Clerk to all councillors which refers to two spreadsheets purporting to show the profitability/loss making of The Hub. Having provided the information to the Council (we must not forget that the Clerk must offer independent advice to the Council) who are then invited to “*study the enclosed spreadsheets ..... and agree a course of action in respect of the hub.*”

Councillors are asked to study the enclosed spreadsheets in order to make their own assessment of hub profitability and its impact on Council's finances.

### **Recommendations**

Council is asked to consider this report and the attached spreadsheets and agree a course of action to be taken in respect of the hub.

Of course, the Council deemed The Hub to be “unprofitable” and therefore must be closed. So what did Judge Flanagan say about this? That we will examine in Episode 13.