

Building Condition Inspection

Background

As the landlord of the former squash and sauna building, the Parish Council has a right to inspect the condition of the property as per 4.1a of the lease. Previously, this has been conducted by a member of staff or a Councillor on an annual basis. Inspections did not take place during the lockdown. Given the intervening time combined with the lack of in-house expertise and a recognition that there needed to be more formality to such inspections, 4 local estate agents were approached to undertake the inspection.

Of those approached, 3 did not carry out this type of inspection any longer and another only conducted as part of a lease rental package. Company 1's service included inspecting the property, providing a written condition report and obtaining confirmation of the required documentation from the tenants at a charge of £200.00 + VAT. They were instructed to proceed, and the inspection was scheduled for Tuesday 06 September 2022.

Inspection

In advance of the inspection, the inspector was made aware that the relationship with the tenant was complex. An offer was made to accompany the inspector which was declined. However, the inspection did not go as planned from the outset. The inspector did not call at the Village Hall to meet with the Clerk before proceeding to the former squash and sauna building as requested. They went directly to the premises. Immediately, after the inspection, the inspector called in to meet the Clerk at the Village Hall. They requested a signed copy of the lease and made comments that there are issues to resolve (other than the building condition report). Later the same day the tenant visited the Clerk making various statements about the terms of the lease and the scale of the rent. The Clerk called the inspector who denied making various statements to the tenant and the Clerk clarified several points for the inspector. The tenant has enquired when the report will be received. From subsequent email exchanges and conversations, it would appear the inspector has no plans to write up a building conditions report. From Officers' perspective, the inspector has not met the brief and therefore, no invoice is expected.

Next Steps

Officers will look at how to implement an independent building inspection. However, this unintended outcome serves to demonstrate the need to work to settle aged concerns. There will be a further report placed under confidential for consideration this evening.