

TEMPSFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Additional information relating to Minutes of 18th January 2016. (please keep with your Minutes)

1. Pensions auto-enrolment.

All Councils will receive their “staging date” (the date they become subject to the auto-enrolment requirements) Tempsford have received their date 1st May 2017. All Councils have to do something. The Councils (or Clerk’s) first step is to assign every employee of the Council aged under 75 to the correct one of the three auto-enrolment categories:

- ‘Eligible jobholders’: these must be auto enrolled in a qualifying scheme on the staging date unless they are already active members of a qualifying scheme.
- ‘non-eligible jobholders’: these have the right to opt to join a qualifying scheme
- ‘entitled workers’: these have the right to ask their employer to provide a pension scheme to them but it need not be a qualifying scheme and the employer need not contribute.
- The correct category depends on the employee’s age and earnings.

The Pension Regulator will contact the council about a year before its “staging date”. I have already spoken to the Pension Regulator about Tempsford position and they have all our details and the HMRC have the correct address as well.

Where a council has no ‘eligible jobholders’ it need not set up a pension scheme unless and until an employee asks to join a scheme. If, however, we have or will have any ‘eligible jobholders’ who are not already active members of a qualifying scheme, it must set up a qualifying scheme and auto-enrol these employee/s on its staging date. It is not possible for an ‘eligible jobholder’ to opt out in advance. My understanding is regarding myself having spoken to the Regulator, is that I have to ‘opt out’ after the staging date. Obviously, it depends who follows me, which would mean we set it up.

I will keep an eye on this and keep the Council up to date on the subject.

2. New Audit arrangements

New audit arrangements for 2017/18. This year we still have BDO to audit our accounts externally. However, from 2017/18 the SLB (Sector Led Body) will appoint external auditors for ‘opted in’ councils and will set their fees, just as the now abolished Audit Commission used to do. You may ask what the difference is! So you as a Council can ‘opt out’, but then you will have to find your own external auditors. I asked this question at our last meeting on 18th January 2016 and it was agreed (by Full Council) to ‘opt in’. It is believed that most councils’ will be doing this anyway. It will be for a period of 5 years to 31st March 2022. I believe we will be in Group 3 – Opted-in authorities with neither income nor expenditure exceeding 25K. Again having read external audit for smaller authorities, we will still have to pay some sort of fee to Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments Limited – possibly £200.

Again I will keep you up to date on this subject. Linda Collins – Clerk. (7.2.16).