

Briefing Note

European Pensions

for Council 24 March 2022

Agenda Item 10

Purpose

The purpose of this briefing note is for Members to consider whether the Parish Council can assist residents with European Pensions to have their claims verified.

Background

A very small number of residents (less than 6) have asked the Parish Council to verify their identities, proof of living, home address and marital status for them, so they can receive their pensions from various European countries. They are asking for a signature and the parish council stamp as verification.

The current Clerk does not feel it is appropriate for the parish council to be involved in any legal arrangement regarding foreign pension entitlements. The parish council does not hold any level of detail about the residents within the Parish.

There is no other time when a parish council is required to verify people's identities (except for grave ownership transfers) and such an intrusive certification process in the UK is normally carried out other local authorities for Council Tax and/or benefit claims purposes, doctors, solicitors or organisations such as the Post Office etc.

There is no formal reason for the parish council to assist residents with European pension claims and the principle of a parish council is to work within its parish boundaries.

European Pension Certificates

These certificates require a local authority to sign to confirm the recipient is alive, living at the address stated and their marital status. An official stamp is also required.

The UK State Pension equivalent Life Certificate form for those in receipt of a pension abroad has a much wider list of individuals who can sign and no official stamp is required. It does not envisage a local authority or administration being needed to sign and stamp the form.

WSALC Advice

Advice was sought from the West Sussex Association of Local Councils. Some Clerks provide this service out of choice but unlike local authorities on the continent there is no requirement for local authorities here at any level to provide the service being requested.

Proposal

Due to the reluctance of the Parish Clerk to support the requests from the residents, the proposal is that a Councillor, or the Chairman of the Council, could sign such a form. The unofficial stamp with

the name of the Parish Council can be used, once they are satisfied that the identity and marriage status of the applicant has been confirmed.

Recommendation

Members are therefore asked to consider the briefing note and AGREE the following recommendation:

RECOMMENDATION: That Council AGREES that a Councillor, or the Chairman of the Council, could sign a European pension claim form using a stamp with the name of the Parish Council affixed, once satisfied that the identity, address and marriage status of the applicant has been confirmed.