



“Follow the Money” is now regarded as investigative journalism’s greatest mantra but is actually an invention of the writer William Goldman for the movie “All the Presidents Men”.

The movie was about the Watergate scandal. Following the 1972 break-in at the Democratic Party’s National Committee Headquarters, in the Watergate complex, by ‘operatives’ connected to Nixon’s re-election team – it was initially portrayed as a simple burglary – but it led to a massive cover-up by the White House, eventually leading to Nixon’s resignation in 1974 to avoid impeachment and affirming the rule of law. Leading to another mantra ‘it’s not the crime, it’s the cover up’ being applied frequently in political and other circles.

The movie tells the story based on the true events but with some ‘licence’ as written by the novelist / writer William Goldman. It follows the Washington Post journalists Woodward (Robert Redford) and Bernstein (Dustin Hoffman) with the significant role of renowned newspaper Editor Ben Bradlee ((Jason Robards). The invented phrase ‘follow the money’ is spoken by the informant referred to only as ‘Deep Throat’ who may have been a composite of many.

That combination of ‘follow the money’ and ‘it’s not the crime it’s the cover up’ can be seen as applying to most scandals, arising from corruption or incompetence by public bodies, many of which could be resolved by the admission of guilt. But that would be contrary to behaviour which arises from the fear of action, including legal action against the ‘guilty’, including corporate bodies.



Organizations, including Public Bodies as Legal Entities should have policies as defences against corruption or incompetence. This would include regular independent audit, not just for financial arrangements, but of policies, processes, the setting of objectives and monitoring.

There should be oversight by an independent Board of Governance – this being lacking in Parish Councils structure where, in theory, the ‘oversight’ is by the electorate. That oversight does include rights of access to information, to attend Meetings and the Annual Parish Meeting for this purpose – these rights being rarely used by the electorate.

