

Melvin Kenyon and Associates

**South Derbyshire District Council (Willington Parish Council) Complaint  
LAC/78 against Willington Parish Councillor Joe Cullen**

## **Report prepared for Ardip Kaur, Monitoring Officer, South Derbyshire District Council – 12 July 2020**

### **Investigation Report – South Derbyshire District Council (Willington Parish Council)**

#### **Complaint against Councillor Joe Cullen (Subject Member)**

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

In late October 2019, Ardip Kaur, Monitoring Officer at South Derbyshire District Council (“SDDC”), appointed Melvin Kenyon to investigate certain complaints about the alleged conduct of Joe Cullen, Parish Councillor serving as a member of Willington Parish Council (“the Council”).

### **1.2 FOCUS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

There were several complaints requiring investigation in Willington and Complainants had, in general, asked for their confidentiality to be preserved, as provided for under the SDDC Complaints Procedure, though that is not the case here. To reduce the complexity inherent in preserving confidentiality and help improve understanding, the complaints have been separated into coherent, manageable groups for reporting purposes.

On 4<sup>th</sup> July 2019, a complaint was submitted for Ardip Kaur’s attention by Cllr Phill Allsopp, Chair of Willington Parish Council, that contained allegations about harassing, abusive and vexatious emails that had been sent by Cllr Joe Cullen. This report (“the Report”) and the related investigation (“the Investigation”) together focus on that complaint (“the Complaint”). The relevant text taken from the Complaint is set out verbatim in Section 5 below.

### **1.3 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the balance of probabilities and the evidence available to me, in respect of Complaint LAC/78 I conclude that Cllr Joe Cullen:

- **Was acting in official capacity when he sent the emails;**
- **Breached the Willington Parish Council Code of Conduct in that he did not treat the Chair, the Clerk, and his fellow councillors with courtesy and respect and thus did not “behave in such a way that a reasonable person would regard as respectful”. In reaching this conclusion I note that the Code makes no reference to “bringing the Council and the office of Councillor into disrepute” even though I do not doubt that Cllr Cullen’s behaviour did exactly that; and**
- **Behaved in a way that a reasonable person would regard as bullying or intimidatory.**

On the basis of the conclusions above I make the following recommendations:

- 1. That the breach of the Code of Conduct by Cllr Joe Cullen in regard to the emails considered under Complaint LAC/78 be referred to the South Derbyshire District Council Standards Committee for further action.**

2. That Willington Parish Council reviews its Code of Conduct and upgrades the Code to include, as a minimum, a clause that councillors should not exhibit behaviour which “brings the Council or the office of Councillor into disrepute”.
3. That Willington Parish Council agrees to a programme of reconciliation and a review of its working arrangements to try to restore relations within the Council and, further, that any councillor who is unwilling to take part in a programme of reconciliation should consider their position as a councillor.

## **2 OFFICIAL DETAILS OF JOE CULLEN (SUBJECT MEMBER)**

Clr Joe Cullen declined to co-operate with the Investigation (see Section 6.2.2 below). As a consequence, I have not had the opportunity to hear first-hand about his past involvement with Willington Parish Council. Evidence quickly gathered from the SDDC and Willington Parish Council websites suggests that he was elected unopposed to the Council in the autumn of 2014 (he was certainly a serving member at the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2014 meeting) and he appears to have been elected unopposed in May 2015 before being elected in a ballot in May 2019. He appears to be a member of the Recreation and Amenities Committee and the Staffing Committee and may also serve on other committees. I understand that, like his son, Paul who is also a Willington Parish Councillor, he is originally from Liverpool.

## **3 RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND PROTOCOLS**

### **3.1 LOCALISM ACT 2011**

Under section 27(1) of the Localism Act 2011 (“the Act”) a “relevant authority” (which includes a local council) is placed under a statutory duty to “promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the authority”.

Under section 27(2) of the Act a relevant authority “must in particular, adopt a code dealing with the conduct that is expected of members and co-opted members of the authority when they are acting in that capacity” (see 3.3 below).

Under section 28(1) of the Act a relevant authority must secure that a code adopted by it is, when viewed as a whole, consistent with prescribed principles of standards in public life – the so-called “Nolan principles”.

The intention of the legislation is to ensure that the conduct of public life in local government does not fall below a minimum level which endangers public confidence in democracy.

Under section 28(6) of the Act, principal authorities must have in place (a) arrangements under which allegations can be investigated and (b) arrangements under which decisions on allegations can be made. By section 27(7), arrangements put in place under subsection (6)(b) must include provision for the appointment by the principal authority of at least one “independent person” whose views are to be sought, and taken into account, by the authority before it makes its decision on an allegation that it has decided to investigate.

Section 28(11) of the Act provides that if a member or co-opted member of the authority has failed to comply with its code of conduct it may have regard to the failure in deciding (a) whether to take action in relation to the member or co-opted member and (b) what action to take.

### **3.2 WILLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL'S CODE OF CONDUCT**

Under Section 27(2) of the Localism Act, the Council adopted the "WPC Code of Conduct" ("the Code") which can be found on the Parish Council website. The Council adopted the Code on 10th July 2012 (minute 1389 refers).

The Code aims "to promote and maintain high standards of behaviour by its members and coopted members whenever they conduct the business of the Council, including the business of the office to which they were elected or appointed, or when they claim to act or give the impression of acting as a representative of the Council".

The Code is based on the seven principles of public life – the Nolan principles – and these are referred to in the "Introduction" to the Code. The Code, in particular, includes the following "member obligations":

- He/she shall behave in such a way that a reasonable person would regard as respectful.
- He/she shall not act in a way which a reasonable person would regard as bullying or intimidatory.

### **3.3 WHEN DOES THE CODE OF CONDUCT APPLY?**

Under section 27(2) of the Act a relevant authority "must in particular, adopt a code dealing with the conduct that is expected of members and co-opted members of the authority *when they are acting in that capacity*". This section of the Act narrowed the remit of the previous national Code of Conduct with the result that the Council (as with other councils) can only investigate matters where a member was acting as a councillor or as a representative of the Council at the time of the alleged incident.

Conduct that might be regarded as reprehensible and even unlawful is not necessarily covered by the code; a link to that person's membership of their authority and specifically their role as a councillor is needed.

Some activities clearly have no link with the Council such as a purely domestic matter or something that a member may do while employed in work completely unrelated to the Council. Councillors must actually be engaged on Council business or commenting on Council business or acting as a representative of the Authority to be deemed "within capacity".

## **4 CONTEXT**

Willington is an attractive village, with just under 3000 residents, located on the River Trent around six miles south west of Derby and five miles north east of Burton upon Trent. Its Parish Council has eleven councillors. One of those, Cllr Andrew MacPherson is also a Conservative District Councillor for the Willington and Findern Ward. The District Council is South Derbyshire District Council, based in Swadlincote and its County Council is Derbyshire County Council.

## 5 COMPLAINT

### 5.1 FORMAL COMPLAINT LAC/78 DATED 4th JULY 2019

A formal complaint was raised on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2019 by Cllr Phill Allsopp, Chair of Willington Parish Council, containing an allegation about the conduct of Cllr Joe Cullen a member of Willington Parish Council. It is was received by Legal and Democratic Services at SDDC on 5<sup>th</sup> July and was assigned reference LAC/78. The text of the relevant part of the Complaint is presented verbatim as follows:

“Councillor Joe Cullen; this complaint is in regards to Councillor Joe Cullen’s harassing, abusive and general vexatious emails. I have been receiving these emails since I became Chairman of the Parish Council on the 14<sup>th</sup> May. I have included the emails in the package, I’ve tried to highlight the areas of concern but you will probably have to read them to get an idea what they’re about. For your information I didn’t reply to any of the emails after the first exchange because I didn’t want to get into an argument, this didn’t stop me receiving emails from him. Receiving the odd email that is abusive isn’t acceptable but I understand that occasionally happens but as you can appreciate to receive them on a regular basis is very stressful, I almost resigned because of this abuse but changed my mind after other Councillors called me to offer support. I understand that this isn’t the first time that Councillor Cullen has been reported, I only hope that someone will finally deal with the issue, it’s unacceptable that Councillors have to perform in this environment.

### 5.2 FURTHER EMAILS

Phill Allsopp told me that, since making the Complaint, he had received further harassing, abusive and vexatious emails from Joe Cullen and wished me to include those in the Complaint. I spoke to the Monitoring Officer about this and she confirmed that, because the allegation was the same as that made in the Complaint, then it was appropriate to consider them at the same time as the original complaint rather than raise a new complaint.

## 6 APPROACH

### 6.1 DOCUMENTS AND OTHER SOURCES

The source materials used during the Investigation are listed at **Annex 1** below. I obviously relied heavily, in particular, on the emails that were sent by Joe Cullen to Phill Allsopp and those are included separately in **Annex 2** below.

My colleague, Karen Potts, attended the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2020 Parish Council meeting unannounced - and “incognito” with her daughter-in-law - at my request (and cost). Her visit added nothing to the evidence base and I mention it solely for the purpose of completeness, openness, and transparency.

### 6.2 EVIDENCE GATHERING

#### 6.2.1 Interview details

In respect of all the investigations into complaints I carried out at the request of the Monitoring Officer I gathered evidence at interview from seventeen people. I spoke formally to all members of Willington Parish Council, with the exception of Cllr Joe Cullen (see 6.2.2 below), who declined to be interviewed:

- Cllr P Allsopp (Chairman)
- Cllr M Bartram
- Cllr T Bartram
- Cllr C Blanksby
- Cllr C Carter
- Cllr R Casey
- Cllr P Cullen
- Cllr J Houghton
- Cllr A MacPherson
- Cllr I Walters

I interviewed Mrs D Townsend, the Locum Parish Clerk. I also gathered evidence from six members of the public. Whilst it is my normal practice to list interviewees by name, in this case, because many interviewees asked for confidentiality, I have not done that in respect of members of the public.

I invited Cllr Martyn Ford who, I was told, is often present at Willington Parish Council Meetings (presumably in his capacity as a District Councillor representing Willington and Findern and Derbyshire County Councillor representing Etwell and Repton) to talk to me. I did not receive a reply to my email and did not pursue it further.

With the exception of Cllr Paul Cullen, I carried out my interviews in two groups. The first group of interviews took place between 13<sup>th</sup> November and 4<sup>th</sup> December 2019 with a single interview (delayed by the General Election and Christmas) taking place on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2020. This group of interviewees was made up of the Chairman, two other Parish Councillors, the Locum Parish Clerk and six members of the public.

I began trying to arrange to speak to Paul Cullen on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020. We finally found a mutually acceptable date and time to speak some six and a half weeks later on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2020, a Sunday. This delay meant that the interviews that were still outstanding were themselves delayed. The second group of interviews took place between 8<sup>th</sup> April and 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020 and was made up of six Parish Councillors.

### **6.2.2 My efforts to speak to Joe Cullen**

I began trying to arrange to speak to Joe Cullen on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020. I heard nothing so I wrote to him again on 28<sup>th</sup> January saying, "I would like to progress my investigation and would very much like to hear your version of events. If we are unable to meet I can, of course, progress with my work without speaking to you. However, in the interests of fairness to all parties I am hoping that we can arrange a mutually acceptable date and time".

Joe replied on 30<sup>th</sup> January saying, "I acknowledge the receipt of your email, I am on holiday for 2 weeks in February, so I will contact you when I get back, it will be towards the end of February". I replied an hour or so later asking when he would return from holiday and then again the following day saying that time was now of the essence and suggesting six largely late-February dates. I added, "If, for whatever reason, we are unable to meet on one of those dates, then I will go ahead and write my report anyway. I will share it with you before submission to the Monitoring Officer and you will be free to make comments. The report will naturally refer to the fact that we

have not met and, should my report recommend that the matter proceeds to a Standards Hearing, then you will of course be free to present your case before that Committee. I would, however, much prefer to meet you before I write my report so you can tell me your side of the story and so I can reflect that in my report”.

I received a reply from Joe on 3rd February, which included the text, “At this moment in time I do not agree that you are doing your utmost to be reasonable, if you want to be reasonable and show fairness to all parties you will agree with my timeline below. So my timeline is, that I am going to seek some advice regarding the legality of some of the statements you have made in your emails, particularly the one dated 23th January 2020, then as I have previously stated I will be going on holiday for 2 weeks, when I come back I will contact you regarding a date for our meeting, this date has to be right for me as the person that I intend to bring with me as an observer, lives quite a distance away.

On 26th February, having heard nothing more, I wrote to Joe saying, “It is now five weeks since I wrote to you and we have still not agreed a date to meet. It has therefore been agreed that, if we have not managed to meet by close of business on Friday 13th March, I should proceed to write my report and submit it to the Monitoring Officer for her consideration. In those circumstances, should I make the recommendation that there is a need to progress to a Hearing, then you will have the opportunity to present your case before the Standards Committee. I look forward to meeting you. Please note that I am not available on Friday evenings or at the weekends though I may be able to make myself available on weekday evenings by exception”.

On 7th March I received a very long email going over the history of events in Willington over the past months and the perceived delays in progressing the complaints that had been made. It began “I do not like the dictatorial attitude of your emails, nor the terms that you have laid down, for, a meeting were the terms are loaded in your favour, because you know the names of the complainants and I do not, so I have no intention of attending a kangaroo court where people have made allegations about me, but crave anonymity. If you want me to attend a meeting, to discuss these allegations then you will need to provide me with the names of these keyboard warriors and what their specific allegations are”.

The email continued, “If it was in a Court of Law and the prosecution wouldn't provide me with the names of people giving evidence against me they would be laughed out of court. In your last email you state in the interests of fairness to all parties, do you actually believe that statement”.

The email ended, “At this moment in time WPC are an absolute joke and possibly the most divisive and corrupt parish council in Derbyshire. You state that our correspondence is confidential, well I will be the judge of that, all correspondence between us will be confidential at my discretion, and my discretion will be to send all the vexatious accusations against myself, and all correspondence between yourself, Ardip Kaur and myself to the Liverpool Echo, to show them what a corrupt organisation, I am dealing with. Please do not contact me again because you people have been upsetting my wife, since last May with your accusations against me”.

I therefore acceded to Joe Cullen’s request and made no further effort to arrange to speak to him.

### **6.2.3 Interview methodology**

The first group of interviews was carried out face-to-face with my colleague, Karen Potts, observing and taking notes. Those interviews all took place either in the homes of the interviewees or those of family members or friends. Where interviews are face-to-face it is my normal practice to talk to interviewees in “neutral” surroundings, such as council offices or meeting rooms, but in this case several interviewees told me they preferred not to be interviewed in locations where they felt they might be seen talking to me. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic I carried out the second group of interviews by telephone, and without Karen’s support.

With the exception of Paul Cullen, a note was produced as a summary of each of the interviews and all those interviewed were given the opportunity to comment on the note whilst it was still in draft. Several interviewees made comments and those comments were reflected in the final versions of the notes, which were then formally agreed by interviewees and shared with them. Section 7 of the Report contains details drawn mainly from the interviews.

My discussions with the first group of interviewees were recorded. Once summary notes had been signed-off by interviewees those became the formal record of each interview and the audio recordings and any written notes taken at interview were destroyed in accordance with (i) best data protection practice, (ii) what was agreed with the Monitoring Officer before my work began and (iii) what was agreed with interviewees. When I spoke to Cllr Tim Bartram for a second time I recorded that conversation at his suggestion. That audio recording has now also been destroyed.

My discussion with Paul Cullen took place at the Donington Manor Hotel in Castle Donington and I was accompanied by Karen Potts as notetaker and observer. It was recorded, with Paul Cullen’s acquiescence, and I believe that he himself recorded the conversation. A verbatim transcript was then produced and shared with him on 5<sup>th</sup> April. He acknowledged receipt on 16<sup>th</sup> April but, at time of writing, has not signed off the transcript. I will retain the audio recording for reference until my Investigations are complete.

### **6.3 THE REPORT**

After I had completed the preliminary draft of the Report it was twice peer-reviewed – for quality and to ensure consistency of approach with similar cases across the country. Following those reviews, I shared the draft Report with the Monitoring Officer, who commissioned the Report, so that she could ensure that, on its face, it was indicative of a satisfactory investigation and was of the required standard.

I then shared the draft Report and its preliminary conclusions, in confidence, with the Complainant and the Subject Member. I received a response to the draft Report from the Complainant. The Subject Member did not acknowledge receipt of the draft Report and did not comment on it.

I now submit the Final Report, containing my final conclusions and recommendations, to the Monitoring Officer.

## **7 FINDINGS**

### **7.1 EMAILS FROM JOE CULLEN**

The emails that are part of the Complaint are included in full (with associated emails) in Annex 2 so that they can “speak for themselves” but have been listed below with reference numbers. The



reference numbers are used in the report so that readers can be clear which email or email chain is being discussed. Except where noted otherwise the emails were sent by Joe Cullen.

[Email 1] To Phill Allsopp, 24<sup>th</sup> May 2019, 11:52

Email 2] To Phill Allsopp, 28<sup>th</sup> May 2019, 08:34

[Email 3] To All Councillors, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2019, 08:11

[Email 4] To Phill Allsopp, 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019, 17:17

[Email 5] To Phill Allsopp, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2019, 07:31

[Email 6] To Phill Allsopp, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019, 07:31

[Email 7] To Joe Cullen from John Houghton, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2019, 23:07 in response to Joe's email to John, 4<sup>th</sup> June, 16:10

[Email 8] To Caroline Blanksby, 25<sup>th</sup> October 2019, 10:43

[Email 9] To All Councillors, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2019, 15:28

[Email 10] To All Councillors, 11<sup>th</sup> November, 15:52

[Email 11] To Phill Allsopp, 14<sup>th</sup> December, 12:01

[Email 12] To Phill Allsopp, 15<sup>th</sup> December, 08:38

[Email 13] To Joe Cullen from Parish Clerk (Sabrina Doherty), 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020, 16:32

[Email 14] To Phill Allsopp, 4<sup>th</sup> March, 08:33

[Email 15] To Willington Parish Clerk (Deb Townsend), 26<sup>th</sup> November 2019, 21:20

[Email 16] To Willington Parish Clerk (Deb Townsend), 24<sup>th</sup> November 2019, 13:35

## 7.2 PHILL ALLSOPP STATEMENT

Those parts of the statement made by Phill Allsopp, who had raised Complaint LAC/78, which are relevant to this Investigation read as follows:

“Complaint LAC/78 referred to harassing, abusive and generally vexatious emails from Joe Cullen which Phill Allsopp had been receiving since he became Chair. Joe knew that Phill had put this complaint into the Monitoring Officer, so confidentiality was not an issue here.

“Phill then shared a number of emails (though there were others) that contained the kind of harassing, vexatious and abusive language that Phill was objecting to. Some of these had not been included in his original submission to the Monitoring Officer. Phill said that these emails and others should be read by Melvin Kenyon in detail to get a proper flavour of the kind of emails that were being sent by Joe. Melvin agreed that he would do that after the conversation. Phill said that, should any further emails arrive that he felt were similarly abusive and vexatious, he would forward them to Melvin, perhaps via the Monitoring Officer, so that Melvin could consider them to be part of this same complaint.

24th May 11:52 – This email [**Email 01**], copying all councillors, was one of a series about the recently formed Staffing Committee. At the first meeting of the Parish Council after the election

(the Annual Meeting on 14th May), when councillors indicated which committees they would like to serve on, Phill had expressed interest in the Staffing Committee. Joe had been adamant that, as Chair, Phill could not be a member of the Staffing Committee and had been very vocal about it at the meeting. This was not actually true though Phill did not know it at the time and did not push it because it was his first meeting; anyone has a right to join any committee. Phill was now a member of the Committee.

The earlier emails in the series were about a pending performance review of the then clerk Rebecca House which included, in Phill's opinion, sensitive information which Joe had shared with all councillors as well as with the clerk herself. Phill pointed this out politely to Joe (as Councillor J Cullen because he had forbidden others to call him Joe). Joe replied simply "I sent the email to the clerk and it was no mistake, I asked for information regarding the Staffing Committee, there is no sensitive information in my email, and don't reply to this email".

Phill made the mistake of replying and received a reply suggesting Phill was a member of "the clique" and referring to John Phillips, scumbags and drug dealers. Phill replied. Joe then sent the email of 24th May. Following a "rant" about his potential involvement in the Staffing Committee Joe went on to say, "Your interpretation of sensitive information and my interpretation are perhaps not the same, probably very much in the same way as your view of racist, discriminatory comments and mine are different. I stand up against them whilst your continued silence suggests you condone them. I would also add that you appear to believe that your recent appointment as Chair of the Parish Council had elevated you to some kind of "Super Councillor" status, so can I just take this opportunity to bring you back to earth and remind you the Chair has no executive powers".

28th May 8:34 – This email **[Email 02]** followed up on the previous email and asked nine questions. Phill found several of the questions and the aggressive tone completely unacceptable.

5th June 8:11 – This email **[Email 03]** was sent as a result of Rebecca House's decision to resign as Parish Clerk and shared an email from Joe to Rebecca House. This referred pejoratively to Councillors Houghton, Phillips and Walters and referred to her having to "put up with all this rubbish". Once again the tone of the email was unacceptable.

6th June 17:17 – This email **[Email 04]** was part of Joe's continuing effort to get John Phillips's "discriminatory" email onto the Parish Council agenda in face of the SDDC Monitoring Officer's and DALC's advice that it was not a Parish Council matter.

8th June 7:31 **[Email 05]** – This email related to Paul and Joe Cullens' efforts to find out why Phill had met the SDDC Compliance Officer on 5th June and why he had not sought Full Council approval (he did not need it). The meeting (by phone) had actually been about the threat of people coming to the Parish Council Meeting from Liverpool.

Joe's email asked whether he had had a meeting with the Compliance Officer. It said, "A simple Yes or No will suffice, as long as it is an honest, Yes or No, please do not compound your mistake by giving a dishonest answer, or what little integrity/credibility that you now have, will disappear altogether". Phill did not reply for obvious reasons.

11th June 7:31 **[Email 06]** Joe followed the previous email up with one that said, "Seeing as you have not done me the courtesy of a reply to my email below, I would think that councillors will

draw their own conclusions, but not answering my question speaks volumes, but to me personally it says you are a man of no integrity and no credibility, so how can anyone ever trust you again.”

4th June 23:07 **[Email 07]** This email chain has been included to illustrate that Joe had written to John Houghton in a bid to try to exclude Phill from a discussion about the appointment of Claire Allen as the new Administration Officer.

25th October 2019 10.43 **[Email 08]** This email referred to Caroline Blanksby’s election as Chair of the Carnival Committee (which has nothing to do with the Council). The unsuccessful candidate was John Houghton who had been put forward for the same role against his will. It was John’s vote that ensured that Caroline was elected! The email, sent to all councillors (including John Houghton) said (of John) “Once people see through his façade, there was only one winner, the decision was a no brainer, they will always choose champagne over plonk. Now you just have to watch your back”.

19th October 15:28 **[Email 09]** This email is at the end of an email chain about an alleged incident involving Cllrs Ian Walters and Ros Casey outside the Council Meeting Room after a Parish Council meeting on 14th May. Its tone is offensive in particular towards the Monitoring Officer and towards Cllr Walters who already had been cleared by the Monitoring Officer when a complaint had been raised against him.

11th November 15:52 **[Email 10]** This email .... referred to the Axis 50 Planning Application, the decision to employ a Planning Consultant and the Chair’s Update to parishioners on behalf of the Parish Council. It suggested that the Chair voted against the proposal (he was actually on holiday so could not vote and would not have supported it because it was not legal). It went on, “So, why is he trying to mislead the people of Willington, when everyone who was at the meeting, and there were quite a lot all know, that he is not being honest in his report, just trying to make himself look good, but it does not work like that when people know the truth, Everyone knows the way he voted and those people who were not at the meeting and are interested in Axis 50 have been informed by me and others the way the voting went”. He later added, “And for blatantly misleading the people of Willington I believe that he should resign”.

As a result of the abusive, harassing and vexatious nature of the emails Phill no longer replied to any of Joe’s emails.

### **7.3 FURTHER EMAILS**

Since speaking to Phill Allsopp I have received copies of other allegedly harassing, abusive and vexatious emails from Joe Cullen which Phill wished me to include in the Complaint. However, I did not speak to him about those emails **[Emails 11 – 14]** which are included in Annex 2.

## **8 EVALUATION OF EVIDENCE AND CONCLUSION**

The last step, therefore, is to consider whether, *based on the balance of probabilities and the evidence that I have available to me*, there were any breaches of the Willington Parish Council Code of Conduct by Councillor Joe Cullen in respect of Complaint LAC/78.

## 8.1 Evaluation of the emails

Since Joe Cullen declined the opportunity to speak to me I in turn was denied the opportunity to understand what he was thinking when he sent the emails that are contained in Annex 2. Fortunately, however, the emails seem to speak for themselves.

It appears to me that, in considering the Complaint, there is limited value in reflecting upon the subject matter of the emails. I think it a distraction and ultimately fruitless, for example, to consider whether the Chair is “a good Chair”, whether he is permitted to serve on the Staffing Committee or whether he is in some way “dishonest”. The allegation is that the emails were “harassing, abusive and vexatious” and that, rather than the subject matter of the emails, must be my focus. In answering that I must reflect on whether the tone and style adopted by Joe when he sent those emails was appropriate for a Willington Parish Councillor when corresponding with the Chair of the Parish Council or, indeed, with any fellow Parish Councillor. Was it appropriate, too, to copy the emails into all other members of the Parish Council?

**Email 01** was sent by Joe Cullen on 24<sup>th</sup> May. It was sent in the midst of the “Megabus email” affair (detailed in two other investigations but not in this report) ten days after Phill Allsopp had been elected Chair of the Parish Council. It was copied to members of the Council. Its tone appears impolite, terse, disrespectful, and challenging. It implies that Phill is “making it up as [he] goes along”, suggests he condones the “racist discriminatory comments” made by Cllr John Phillips and seeks to “bring [him] back to earth and remind him that, as Chair, he has no executive powers and does not have “Super Councillor” status. There are no niceties, it is simply signed Cllr J Cullen.

**Email 02** was sent by Joe to Phill on 28<sup>th</sup> May, copying in members of the Council. Its first sentence reads “Could you please cc everyone into future emails as this is not a secret society and what we are discussing is not sensitive information”. It then poses nine questions including “Did you ask Councillor Phillips to review scum bags and drug dealers emails before sending it?”, “Did you ask Councillor Phillips to review his email calling Councillor P Cullen a Cowardly wimp, before sending it?” and “Did you ask Councillor Walters to review his email to myself calling me a Shit Stirrer before sending it?”. Referring to the recruitment of an Administration Assistant its eighth question reads [sic], “You say you would like some input into the recruitment process, this is not going to happen because as you say, you misunderstood, that **you are NOT a member of the staffing committee.** The tone and style of the email appear to me to be rude, impolite, disrespectful, angry, defiant, challenging and hectoring. Once again there are no niceties. An earlier email in the same email chain dated 23<sup>rd</sup> May at 14:57 includes the sentence, “Did you contact Councillor Phillips and ask him to review his emails before he sent them, or did you agree with his email, I would be interested to hear you opinion on that email, but seeing as you are one of the clique, I do not think that you wish to share it”.

Joe sent **Email 03** on 5<sup>th</sup> June at 8:11. It is part of an email chain about the then Clerk, Beckie House, who had received what she saw as a threatening email in the wake of the “Megabus email”. As Phill said when I spoke to him it refers pejoratively to other councillors and poses the question, “Also could Councillor Houghton confirm or deny showing the resignation email to Councillor Allsopp on his mobile at the RAC last night I actually seen you show him a message on

your mobile, if this Parish Council is going to work then now is the time to start being honest". The email is copied to councillors.

**Email 04** was sent to Phill copying in councillors on 6<sup>th</sup> June at 17:17. It continues on the previous themes of the Clerk's resignation and John Phillips's "vile and discriminatory remarks" which, Joe insists, need to be discussed by the Council and "publicly condemned". This had already been deemed to be a "private matter". The same subject was still on Joe's mind when he sent Email 14 some nine months later. It again refers to "the clique". Its tone appears challenging and rude though it does begin with "Hi".

**Email 05** dated 8<sup>th</sup> June at 07:30 is a short email. It is at the end of a chain challenging Phill on his decision to contact SDDC over his concerns that visitors from Liverpool might attend the impending Parish Council meeting (which Paul Cullen had insisted he ought not to have done without first consulting the Full Council). Its final sentence reads "A simple Yes or No will suffice, as long as it is honest, Yes or No, please do not compound your mistake by giving a dishonest answer, or what little integrity/credibility that you have now, will disappear altogether". The tone and style speak for themselves.

**Email 06** was sent on 11<sup>th</sup> June at 07:30, 12 hours before the Parish Council meeting. It is a short follow-up to Email 05 and, like Email 05, is copied into all councillors. Perhaps understandably, Phill had not answered the earlier email which, Joe says, "to me personally .... says you are a man of no integrity and no credibility so how can anyone trust you again. See you tonight". It appears to me that Emails 05 and 06 together represent a significant escalation in Joe's remarks against Phill.

**Email 07**, sent by John Houghton, Vice Chair, to Joe Cullen on 4<sup>th</sup> June at 23:07, is at the end of another email chain which was copied to Phill by John. An email earlier in the chain sent by Joe to John and copied to Ros Casey was seen by Phill as an effort on Joe's part to exclude him from playing a part in the recruitment of an Admin Assistant. It explicitly tells (sic) John Houghton "do not include Cllr Allsopp into the emails either CC or BCC, as it will all come out in the wash if you do". Joe later asks who is doing the agenda for the upcoming Parish Council meeting and says "... I don't believe it should be Cllr Allsopp because he makes too many mistakes". Sent less than three weeks after Phill's election as Chair, whilst he is very new in role, this appears to me to be an effort on Joe's part to undermine Phill and drive a wedge between him and John Houghton.

**Email 08** sent by Joe on 25<sup>th</sup> October at 10:43 refers to Caroline Blanksby's appointment as Chair of the Carnival Committee. Once again it copies in other councillors, including the defeated (and apparently unwilling) candidate, John Houghton. It says (of John), "... even better when I heard who your adversary was, once people see through his façade, there was only one winner, the decision was a no brainer, they will always choose champagne over plonk. Now you just have to watch your back". Whilst not directed at Phill this email appears pejorative towards Cllr Houghton.

**Email 09** was sent by Joe Cullen on 19<sup>th</sup> October at 15:28. It is at the end an email chain about an alleged incident involving Cllrs Ian Walters and Ros Casey outside the Council Meeting Room after a Parish Council meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May. This alleged incident was referred to by several interviewees when I spoke to them. However, that incident is out of the scope of my work. The

tone of Joe's email appears offensive towards the Monitoring Officer's professional judgement and towards Cllr Ian Walters.

**Email 10** was sent by Joe on 11<sup>th</sup> November at 15:52. It refers to the Axis 50 Planning Application. It accuses him of "misleading the people of Willington", of "not being honest in his report, just trying to make himself look good, but it does not work like that when people know the truth". It ends, "And for blatantly misleading the people of Willington I believe that he should resign". It is sent to all councillors. Once again it paints the picture of the Chair as dishonest and undermines him in his role.

**Email 11** was sent on 14<sup>th</sup> December at 12:01 to Phill alone. Joe says that he has watched a YouTube video (presumably of the 10<sup>th</sup> December meeting which was brought to an early close by Phill) and that Phill is a "star for all the wrong reasons, not being able to control the meeting and abandoning it, look forward to the next episode". He appears clearly to be mocking Phill. Some months ago, I watched the YouTube video of 10<sup>th</sup> December meeting. When I returned to watch it again whilst writing the Report I note that it is now unavailable.

**Email 12** was sent on 15<sup>th</sup> December at 08:38. This is an email that follows up the email of the previous day. It describes how Joe went to the pub and shared the video of the meeting with others there. It talks mockingly and sarcastically about Phill's abilities as Chair. It begins "... so we put the video on, after watching it the general consensus was that you could not run a pxxs up in a brewery, but I thought that was harsh on you .... and I told them that I thought that you could". Joe continues in similar vein, with passing criticism of the Clerk, before ending the email by saying "So, at the end of the day, I could not defend, the indefensible, I had to agree with them, that you were/are totally out of your dept. They are all looking forward to seeing the next meeting". This appears to heap further mockery on the Chair.

**Email 13** was sent to the new Clerk, Sabrina Doherty, on 11<sup>th</sup> February at 10:05. It says, after further passing criticism of the (then) former Locum Clerk, Deb Townsend, "I believe that she wanted to show Cllr P Cullen and myself in a negative way and leave is open to ridicule, for the benefit of the Chairman". It ends "... it will give the Chairman a pulpit to have a pop at whomsoever he chooses, so if this goes ahead I would hope that I am afforded the same opportunity". Sabrina replies robustly later that day and says, "I hope we can [sort this out] amicably as I do not wish for a repeat of what I have seen on previous videos and if that occurs then I shall have no choice but to tender my resignation as I do not wish to be associated with or subjected to such disgraceful behaviour [alluding here to the 19<sup>th</sup> December Council meeting]". Amongst other remarks it says, "The continued refusal to accept the authority of the Chairman (whatever you may think of him personally) serves only to bring the Council into disrepute and also the office of Councillor and Chairman" and "The position of Chairman is one of authority and to be respected as such since that person for their term of office is the "First Citizen of the parish". It appears to me that, once again, Joe is showing disrespect for the Chair and, in doing so, tries to undermine his standing in the eyes of the new Clerk. Sabrina resigned on 18<sup>th</sup> February after nine days in post. Her resignation letter is scathing.

**Email 14** sent by Joe on 4<sup>th</sup> March at 08:33 is to Phill alone. It proposes items for 10<sup>th</sup> March agenda. It contains several proposed items about the conduct of the Chair, again with passing criticism of the Locum Clerk, Deb Townsend, who had returned to Willington following Sabrina

Doherty's short-lived stay. The Chairman, Joe says, had "conspired" to have Joe and Paul Cullen removed from the 19<sup>th</sup> December meeting, must make "a full and unreserved apology", had "persistently acted beyond his level of responsibility", had behaved "inappropriate[ly]", and "deliberately kept [some councillors] in the dark".

**Email 15** was sent to the Parish Clerk by Joe on 26<sup>th</sup> November at 21:20 and copied into Phill and other councillors. It appears insulting to the Clerk when it says, "I cannot believe that the organisation of the Locum is that bad that 21 hours before the interviews [for Clerk/RFO] we do not know the venue".

**Email 16** was sent by Joe on 24<sup>th</sup> November at 13:35 to the Clerk and copies in all councillors. It is a very long and detailed account of a recent meeting that Joe has had on behalf of the Council with a representative of South Staffs Water and related matters. The basic premise of the email is that for many years the Council has not been paying for water and has openly encouraged a third party (a builder) to steal water. He says, "... it's a fairly good bet that over the years lots of councillors have known and turned a blind eye" and admits that he himself knew about it from March 2015. He suggests that the Council "have been obtaining water illegally for 40/50 years" and is "collectively at fault". He goes on to point the finger in particular at John Houghton (referred to three times in the email simply as "Houghton"). Joe says that, "As the vice chairman of the PC, Cllr Houghton is also Chairman of the Finance Committee and I would suggest his position in both of these rolls now becomes untenable". Joe ends his email by saying, "I also think that anyone involved in this dishonesty, should not hold the office of Vice Chairman, or Chairman of ANY committees".

### 8.2.2 Was Councillor Cullen in capacity?

Before reaching a conclusion on whether a breach or breaches of the Code took place, I must first establish whether Cllr Joe Cullen was "in capacity" when he sent the emails that have been attributed to him between May 2019 and March 2020. The legal position has been discussed in some detail in Section 3.3 above. Given that the Subject Member was serving as a member of the Parish Council and was on each occasion commenting on Parish Council business **I conclude from the evidence available to me that Joe Cullen was acting in official capacity when he sent the emails.**

### 8.2.3 Conclusion

I now turn to whether Cllr Joe Cullen breached the Willington Parish Council Code of Conduct.

Phill Allsopp was elected Chair of Willington Parish Council in a democratic, but close (six – five) vote on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019. Joe Cullen voted against his election and that of the Vice-Chair, John Houghton.

The Chair's first few weeks in his new role were plagued by fallout from the "Megabus email" (covered in other reports but not here), the heightened emotions surrounding that and Joe's insistence, which seems to continue to this day, that the Parish Council had "agency" to deal with the matter. That insistence continued (and appears to continue) despite the then Clerk's confirmation that the Parish Council had no agency on 3<sup>rd</sup> June and despite John Phillips's resignation as a councillor on 6<sup>th</sup> June.

Notwithstanding the democratic vote of the Council to elect Phill Allsopp as Chair, Joe Cullen was already showing antipathy towards him within ten days of his election. It is not possible for me to say to what extent that antipathy was a result of Phill's perceived support for, or refusal to condemn, John Phillips, or for some other reason. But whatever the reason Joe appears to have been persistently opposed to the Chair since then.

Looking in as a reasonable person and a serving Chair I believe that the language, tone, and style adopted by Joe in demonstrating his opposition to Phill was frequently inappropriate. Words that come to mind include impolite, rude, hostile, challenging and disrespectful. In a work context such language would, in my view, be totally unacceptable. Joe appears to be either unaware or not to care about the impression that he is creating when he writes his emails.

Joe does not reserve his disrespectful emails for Phill alone. There are examples of emails that show similar disrespect for John Houghton, the Vice-Chair, and for Ian Walters. He also shows disrespect for the Clerk, Deb Townsend. I note in passing (because several of those I spoke to referred to it) that other clerks - Laura Storey, Justina Nurse and Jacqui Storer had left the Council in fairly quick succession before Rebecca House (and, of course, Sabrina Doherty) did the same. However, their departures and the reasons for them are out of scope of my investigations.

**In light of the above I conclude, based on the balance of probabilities and the evidence that I have available to me, that Cllr Joe Cullen breached the Willington Parish Council Code of Conduct in that he did not treat the Chair, the Clerk, and his fellow councillors with courtesy and respect and thus did not "behave in such a way that a reasonable person would regard as respectful". In reaching this conclusion I note that the Code makes no reference to "bringing the Council and the office of Councillor into disrepute" even though I do not doubt that Cllr Cullen's behaviour did exactly that.**

I now move, finally, onto whether Cllr Cullen went further than disrespect in his emails to Phill Allsopp and whether he behaved in a way which a reasonable person would regard as "bullying or intimidatory".

I begin by asking "What do "bullying" and "intimidatory" mean?" The Cambridge English Dictionary defines "intimidate" as "to frighten or threaten someone, usually in order to persuade them to do something that you want them to do". It defines "bullying" as the behaviour of a person who hurts or frightens someone smaller or less powerful, often forcing that person to do something they do not want to do".

The Government definition of bullying in the workplace includes the following examples of bullying and harassing behaviour – spreading malicious rumours, unfair treatment, and picking on or regularly undermining someone. The definition tells us that bullying and harassment can happen face-to-face, by letter, by email and by phone.

I choose these "reasonable" definitions by design instead of those of organisations that might be said to be part of the "bullying industry".

In reviewing the emails in Annex 2 I note the regular, persistent, derogatory nature of Joe Cullen's comments about Phill Allsopp, often shared with all councillors. The emails began within ten days of his election in May 2019 (Email 01); they continued into June when Joe described Phill as "a man of no integrity and credibility" and questioned his honesty (Email 06 and 07); they were still



going on in November when, once again, Joe accused Phill of “not being honest” and this time said that he should resign (Email 10); and became particularly nasty on successive days in December (Email 11 and 12). The pressure on Phill was also there in March (Email 14).

The language used – the chosen words include “dishonest”, having “no integrity or credibility”, “totally out of your depth”, and “totally incapable of” controlling Parish meetings (which can be found in the particularly nasty Email 12) – speaks for itself. Not only does the language seem completely unacceptable, its intent appears to be to undermine the confidence of the Chair in an effort to force him to resign. That was certainly what Phill said when he submitted the Complaint. This behaviour appears to fall squarely in line with the definition of bullying and intimidation set out earlier in this Section.

It therefore seems to me, based on the facts and the balance of probability, that some of the emails sent by Joe Cullen might be construed by a reasonable person as bullying and intimidating.

**In light of the above I conclude, based on the balance of probabilities and the evidence that I have available to me, that Cllr Cullen behaved in a way that a reasonable person would regard as bullying or intimidatory.**

## **9 RECOMMENDATIONS**

On the basis of the conclusions above I make the following recommendations:

- 1. That the breach of the Code of Conduct by Cllr Joe Cullen in regard to the emails considered under Complaint LAC/78 be referred to the South Derbyshire District Council Standards Committee for further action.**
- 2. That Willington Parish Council reviews its Code of Conduct and upgrades the Code to include, as a minimum, a clause that councillors should not exhibit behaviour which “brings the Council or the office of Councillor into disrepute”.**
- 3. That Willington Parish Council agrees to a programme of reconciliation and a review of its working arrangements to try to restore relations within the Council and, further, that any councillor who is unwilling to take part in a programme of reconciliation should consider their position as a councillor.**

**ANNEX 1 – DOCUMENTS AND SOURCES**

In the course of my investigation I reviewed a variety of source materials. These are listed below.

- (1) “Willington Parish Council Code of Conduct” - accessed on the Parish Council website <https://www.willingtonpc.org.uk/>
- (2) South Derbyshire District Council “Complaint Form” and “Procedure for considering a complaint that a member has breached the Code of Conduct” - accessed on the SDDC website <https://www.southderbyshire.gov.uk/>
- (3) South Derbyshire District Council website <https://www.southderbyshire.gov.uk/>
- (4) Willington Parish Council Minutes 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019, accessed on Parish Council website
- (5) Gov.uk definition of bullying in the workplace - <https://www.gov.uk/workplace-bullying-andharassment>
- (6) YouTube video of 10<sup>th</sup> December Parish Council Meeting (now unavailable) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mMDUeSFHM9I>

**ANNEX 2 – JOE CULLEN EMAILS**

The emails and related chains that are relevant to this Complaint are included in full in the 70 pages that follow this “cover sheet”. **Readers will note that the pages that follow are unnumbered.**

The emails and related chains have been listed below with reference numbers in square brackets e.g. **[Email 1]**. They are referred to in the Report itself using these numbers and are identified in this Annex using the same (handwritten) reference numbers so that readers can be clear which email is being discussed. **When reviewing these emails readers should ignore all handwritten notes and numbers other than the handwritten reference numbers in square brackets.**

All emails were sent by Joe Cullen.

- [Email 1] To Phill Allsopp, 24<sup>th</sup> May 2019, 11:52
- [Email 2] To Phill Allsopp, 28<sup>th</sup> May 2019, 08:34
- [Email 3] To All Councillors, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2019, 08:11
- [Email 4] To Phill Allsopp, 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019, 17:17
- [Email 5] To Phill Allsopp, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2019, 07:31
- [Email 6] To Phill Allsopp, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019, 07:31
- [Email 7] To Joe Cullen from John Houghton, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2019, 23:07 in response to Joe’s email to John, 4<sup>th</sup> June, 16:10
- [Email 8] To Caroline Blanksby, 25<sup>th</sup> October 2019, 10:43
- [Email 9] To All Councillors, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2019, 15:28
- [Email 10] To All Councillors, 11<sup>th</sup> November, 15:52
- [Email 11] To Phill Allsopp, 14<sup>th</sup> December, 12:01
- [Email 12] To Phill Allsopp, 15<sup>th</sup> December, 08:38
- [Email 13] To Joe Cullen from Parish Clerk (Sabrina Doherty), 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020, 16:32
- [Email 14] To Phill Allsopp, 4<sup>th</sup> March, 08:33
- [Email 15] To Willington Parish Clerk (Deb Townsend), 26<sup>th</sup> November 2019, 21:20
- [Email 16] To Willington Parish Clerk (Deb Townsend), 24<sup>th</sup> November 2019, 13:35

[EMAIL 01]

Attachment  
4/7

(7)

From: Joe Cullen [REDACTED]  
Subject: FW: FW: FW: Draft Committees and Representations Lists  
Date: 24 May 2019 at 11:52:07  
To: Phillip Allsopp [REDACTED]  
Cc: <john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk>  
john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk, Councillor John Phillips  
john.phillips@willingtonpc.org.uk, CAROLINE  
[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>  
[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>  
[REDACTED] Ian Walters  
ian.walters@willingtonpc.org.uk,  
<paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk>  
paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk, Andy (old) andy@andymac  
willington.co.uk, <claire.carter@willingtonpc.org.uk>  
claire.carter@willingtonpc.org.uk

LAC/78

At the Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> May, you never put your name forward for the Staffing Committee, if you had of done so I would have objected, as the Chair you cannot be a member of the Staffing Committee as this would be in direct conflict with our own grievance policy in which the Chair acts as arbiter should a member of Staff, [ Clerk or Admin assistant], put in a complaint against a councillor, so you should not be involved in any way with the Staffing Committee as long as you are the Chair. Where did the idea that the Chair is automatically on the Staffing Committee come from, has it ever been discussed at Full Parish, or is someone making it up as they go along.

Also was the appointment of Claire Allen agreed by full council, and is it minuted?, I would like to see the minutes. Any contracts for employees will need to be agreed by Full Council, not by the Staffing Committee. No member of the Staffing Committee may purchase any equipment without the approval of the Full Council.

Your interpretation of sensitive information and my interpretation are perhaps not the same, probably very much in the same way as your view of racist discriminatory comments and mine are different. I stand up against them whilst your continued silence suggests you condone them.

I would also add that you appear to believe your recent appointment as Chair of the Parish Council has elevated you to some kind of ' Super Councillor ' status, so can I just take this opportunity to bring you back to earth and remind you the Chair has no executive powers. Cllr J Cullen

[REDACTED]

**From:** Phillip Allsopp [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 24 May 2019 08:15  
**To:** Joe Cullen  
**Subject:** Re: FW: Draft Committees and Representations Lists

Good morning,

For clarity the sensitive information was with regards to Beckie completing her probation period and us as a Staffing Committee arranging a meeting with her to formally review her time with us. Also we discussed offering a position to Claire Allen as the Administration assistant.

The Staffing Committee has been set up to agree these matters and then make a proposal to the rest of the elected Parish Council. Beckie is a valued member of our Council and I'm sure that you'll agree with me that she's doing an excellent job, Beckie is an employee of our Council but not an elected member.

Regards

Councillor Allsopp

| On Thu, 23 May 2019 at 14:57, Joe Cullen <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Good Afternoon,

In my email I asked you not to reply, but seeing you have chosen to do so, then I feel I must respond, in your email, you stated and I quote, " For future correspondence can you review the ~~content~~ before forwarding on., it is a pity that Councillor Phillips never reviewed his email before sending it, you know the one I mean, calling "councillors scumbags and drug dealers and sending them back to Liverpool".

Did you contact Councillor Phillips and ask him to review his emails before he sent them, or did you agree with his email, I would be interested to hear you opinion on that email, but seeing as you are one of the clique, I do not think that you wish to share it.

Also can you quantify what the sensitive information is that is in my email, as far as I am concerned, no information is sensitive from any other parish councillor, as any decisions made have to go to the full parish council and I will make sure that they have all of the facts. Councillor J Cullen

**From:** Phillip Allsopp [mailto:~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX@XXXXXX~~]  
**Sent:** 23 May 2019 08:38  
**To:** Joe Cullen  
**Subject:** Re: FW: Draft Committees and Representations Lists

Councillor Cullen,

Thanks for the swift reply.

Councillor Allsopp

On Thu, 23 May 2019 at 08:06, Joe Cullen <[REDACTED]> wrote:

I sent the email to the clerk and it was no mistake, I asked for information regarding the Staffing Committee, there is no sensitive information in my email, and don't reply to this email.

**From:** Phillip Allsopp [mailto:[REDACTED]]  
**Sent:** 23 May 2019 07:58  
**To:** Joe Cullen  
**Subject:** Re: FW: Draft Committees and Representations Lists

Morning Councillor J Cullen,

I'm sure that it was a mistake but you forwarded the emails below to Rebecca our Clerk yesterday. These emails were potentially sensitive and information for the Staffing committee. For future correspondence can you review the content before forwarding on.

Thanking you in anticipation

Regards

Councillor Allsopp

On Wed, 22 May 2019 at 10:20, Joe Cullen <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Good Morning Rebecca,

As a member of the Staffing Committee, could I please have a copy of the Staffing Committee policy statement, and the date that it was ratified by the full parish council. Regards Cllr J Cullen

**From:** Phillip Allsopp [mailto:[REDACTED]]  
**Sent:** 21 May 2019 10:12  
**To:** [john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk)  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: FW: Draft Committees and Representations Lists

Morning John,

I think now is the time that we bring Clair Allen onto our payroll as agreed by the full PC. I'm happy to meet with Beckie to review her probation period, is there a relevant form to complete?

With regards to Beckie and Clair, are you arranging them to meet?

Are you going to sort out the new contracts?

Are you going to purchase Office 365?



Regards

[REDACTED]

Phill

[ On Mon, 20 May 2019 at 23:12, <[john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk)> wrote:

Phill (as Chair of WPC), Ross and Cllr Joe Cullen,

[REDACTED]

To bring you up to speed on staffing matters, current, what has been actioned already and approved by full PC previously. I realise that Cllr Joe Cullen and Phill will be aware of most of this, but a recap will assist Ross.

The staffing committee (of 3) was formed due to the legalities and sensitive nature of employment law and that confidential employee matters should be dealt with by a dedicated group and not public consumption. This also includes other Councillors on a need to know basis only.

Justina (prior Clerk) finished in August 2018.

Jacqui came on as our locum clerk in September 2018.

The staffing committee put adverts out via DALC, SALC for experienced permanent Clerks.

We received some experienced/qualified applicants which were brought forward for interview in October.

2 members of the committee and the chair interviewed 4 candidates and offered a position to a qualified Clerk.

However, this person went incommunicado and never replied to the offer letter.

Rather than fishing in the same pool, it was decided to look elsewhere, and ideally local, to develop our own Clerk. In November/December adverts were placed on Indeed/ Facebook etc targeting local people with transferable experience.

A large number of applications were received and we shortlisted and telephone screened 5 candidates who were local and had relevant experience. I replied directly to candidates who were unsuitable but it appears that the candidates who were on a secondary potential list were not contacted.

2 members of the staffing committee, and the chair, interviewed the candidates and we felt we had 2 really strong candidates, with 1 just taking the lead due to relevant transferrable skills.

The proposal was made to full Council that we offer the trainee Clerk position to Beckie

House and that Jacqui would assist with training her to be full qualified Clerk in due course.

It was also proposed and agreed that we should develop an admin position to assist the Clerk with workload, the village with neighbourhood development plans etc.

It also helped to de-risk the dependency on 1 Clerk if we had a qualified understudy.

It was therefore proposed and accepted that the 2<sup>nd</sup> candidate, Clair Allen, would be offered the admin role, but with the plan to train to qualified Clerk status. However, the starting date for this would be delayed until Beckie was trained and we were no longer dependent upon our locum Clerk. Paying for 3 clerks at the same time would be a unnecessary expense.

As we now know, Jacqui is finishing as locum and Rebecca is taking on the Clerk and RFO (responsible financial officer) duties. Her workload is already starting to build, so now is the point to look at bringing the understudy on board.

I have kept in contact with Clair Allen and she is keen to start asap.

Beckie is keen to bring her onboard asap as well.

So, if we are in agreement, now is the time to move forward with part 2 of the approved plan and organise a meeting with Beckie and Clair. We will then need to organise an employment contract and work out job descriptions for the 2 roles. I would expect the 2

of them to have a major part in this planning.

Other personnel matters:

1. Beckie needs to be signed off her probationary period (due now). This involves improved pay terms and other factors. It should normally include a review of performance and any concerns Beckie may have. This doesn't need to involve everyone, it could be just the Chair that does it or I can arrange to meet her to complete it myself.
2. As previously approved by full PC, Beckie needed a WPC laptop. We approved £750 but after liaising with Beckie on her needs and with a bit of research I got a very good one (that she is very happy with) off eBay for £399. I have bought this and will be submitting the expense claim.
3. Again, as previously agreed, Beckie will need an Office software package. I have researched and propose Office 365 multi-licence which will allow Beckie, Clair and 3 other people (Councillors who may need or NDP etc)

Any other comments, queries or proposals appreciated.

Regards

John

**From:** The Clerk <[clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk)>

**Sent:** 15 May 2019 20:26

**To:** [tim.bartram@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:tim.bartram@willingtonpc.org.uk); [caroline.blankshy@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:caroline.blankshy@willingtonpc.org.uk); [rosslyn.carey@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:rosslyn.carey@willingtonpc.org.uk); [claire.carter@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:claire.carter@willingtonpc.org.uk); Paul Cullen <[paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk)>; Joseph Cullen <[joseph.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:joseph.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk)>; Phillip Allsopp <[phillip.allsopp@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:phillip.allsopp@willingtonpc.org.uk)>; John Phillips <[john.phillips@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:john.phillips@willingtonpc.org.uk)>; Ian Walters <[ian.walters@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:ian.walters@willingtonpc.org.uk)>; John Houghton <[john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk)>; Andy Mac <[andy.macpherson@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:andy.macpherson@willingtonpc.org.uk)>

**Subject:** Draft Committees and Representations Lists

Dear Councillor,

many thanks in advance for your support in checking over the attached document. Please consider the following:

- I have not allocated Chair or Vice-Chair on these lists as some changes may occur
- I have highlighted two sections that require your attention - we will need to circle back around to these allocations during the meeting in June.

If you identify any mistakes, please let me know as quickly as possible.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Best Regards  
Beckie

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[EMAIL 02]

8

From: Joe Cullen [redacted]  
Subject: FW: The Chair is not a member of the staffing committee  
Date: 28 May 2019 at 08:34:11  
To: Phillip Allsopp [redacted]  
Cc: <john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk>  
john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk, Ian Walters  
ian.walters@willingtonpc.org.uk, Councillor John Phillips  
john.phillips@willingtonpc.org.uk,  
<claire.carter@willingtonpc.org.uk>  
claire.carter@willingtonpc.org.uk, CAROLINE  
[redacted] <[redacted]@tiscali.co.uk>  
[redacted]  
[redacted] <paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk>  
paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk, Andy (old) andy@andymac-  
willington.co.uk

Could you please cc everyone into future emails as this is not a secret society and what we are discussing is not sensitive information.

This is the last email from Councillor Allsopp he did not answer any of my questions.

1. Where did the idea that the Chair is automatically on the Staffing Committee come from?
2. Was the appointment of Claire Allen agreed by full council?
3. And is it minuted?, I would like to see the minutes.
4. Do you condone the racist discriminatory comments, scum bags and drug dealers made by Councillor Phillips?
5. Did you ask Councillor Phillips to review scum bags and drug dealers email before sending it?
6. Did you ask Councillor Phillips to review his email calling Councillor P Cullen a Cowardly wimp, before sending it?
7. Did you ask Councillor Walters to review his email to myself calling me a Shit Stirrer before sending it?
8. You say you would like some input into the recruitment process, this is not going to happen because as you say, you misunderstood, that you are NOT a member of the staffing committee
9. You say as far as I am aware, which suggests to me that you do not know, so I suggest that you contact the Clerk yourself and ask for a copy of the previous minutes, and let me know what the correct answer is. Cllr J Cullen

From: Phillip Allsopp [redacted]  
Sent: 24 May 2019 16:24  
To: Joe Cullen  
Subject: Re: FW: FW: FW: Draft Committees and Representations Lists

Good Afternoon,  
I apologise for the misunderstanding, I'm not a member of the Staffing Committee but

as The Chairman I would like some input to the recruitment process.

As far as I'm aware the appointment of an Administration Clerk was discussed at the full PC. I don't have access to previous minutes so I suggest that you contact Beckie who should be able to help.

Councillor Allsopp

[ On Fri, 24 May 2019 at 11:52, Joe Cullen <[REDACTED]> wrote:

[REDACTED]

At the Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> May, you never put your name forward for the Staffing Committee, if you had of done so I would have objected, as the Chair you cannot be a member of the Staffing Committee as this would be in direct conflict with our own grievance policy in which the Chair acts as arbiter should a member of Staff, [ Clerk or Admin assistant], put in a complaint against a councillor, so you should not be involved in any way with the Staffing Committee as long as you are the Chair. Where did the idea that the Chair is automatically on the Staffing Committee come from, has it ever been discussed at Full Parish, or is someone making it up as they go along.

Also was the appointment of Claire Allen agreed by full council, and is it minuted?, I would like to see the minutes. Any contracts for employees will need to be agreed by Full Council, not by the Staffing Committee. No member of the Staffing Committee may purchase any equipment without the approval of the Full Council.

Your interpretation of sensitive information and my interpretation are perhaps not the same, probably very much in the same way as your view of racist discriminatory comments and mine are different. I stand up against them whilst your continued



silence suggests you condone them.

I would also add that you appear to believe your recent appointment as Chair of the Parish Council has elevated you to some kind of ' Super Councillor' status, so can I just take this opportunity to bring you back to earth and remind you the Chair has no executive powers. Cllr J Cullen

**From:** Phillip Allsopp [mailto: ]  
**Sent:** 24 May 2019 08:15  
**To:** Joe Cullen  
**Subject:** Re: FW: Draft Committees and Representations Lists

Good morning,

For clarity the sensitive information was with regards to Beckie completing her probation period and us as a Staffing Committee arranging a meeting with her to formally review her time with us. Also we discussed offering a position to Claire Allen as the Administration assistant.

The Staffing Committee has been set up to agree these matters and then make a proposal to the rest of the elected Parish Council. Beckie is a valued member of our Council and I'm sure that you'll agree with me that she's doing an excellent job, Beckie is an employee of our Council but not an elected member.

Regards

Councillor Allsopp

[ On Thu, 23 May 2019 at 14:57, Joe Cullen <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Good Afternoon,

In my email I asked you not to reply, but seeing you have chosen to do so, then I feel I must respond, in your email, you stated and I quote, " For future correspondence can you review the content before forwarding on.. it is a pity that Councillor Phillips never reviewed his email before sending it, you know the one I mean, calling "councillors scumbags and drug dealers and sending them back to Liverpool" . [REDACTED]

Did you contact Councillor Phillips and ask him to review his emails before he sent them, or did you agree with his email, I would be interested to hear you opinion on that email, but seeing as you are one of the clique, I do not think that you wish to share it.

Also can you quantify what the sensitive information is that is in my email, as far as I am concerned, no information is sensitive from any other parish councillor, as any decisions made have to go to the full parish council and I will make sure that they have all of the facts. Councillor J Cullen

**From:** Phillip Allsopp [mailto: [REDACTED]]  
**Sent:** 23 May 2019 08:38  
**To:** Joe Cullen  
**Subject:** Re: FW: Draft Committees and Representations Lists

Councillor Cullen [REDACTED]

Thanks for the swift reply.

Councillor Allsopp

[On Thu, 23 May 2019 at 08:06, Joe Cullen < [REDACTED] > wrote:

I sent the email to the clerk and it was no mistake, I asked for information regarding the Staffing Committee, there is no sensitive information in my email, and don't reply to this email.

**From:** Phillip Allsopp [mailto: [REDACTED]]  
**Sent:** 23 May 2019 07:58  
**To:** Joe Cullen



**Subject:** Re: FW: Draft Committees and Representations Lists

Morning Councillor J Cullen,

I'm sure that it was a mistake but you forwarded the emails below to Rebecca our Clerk yesterday. These emails were potentially sensitive and information for the Staffing committee. For future correspondence can you review the content before forwarding on.

Thanking you in anticipation

Regards

Councillor Alisopp

| On Wed, 22 May 2019 at 10:20, Joe Cullen <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Good Morning Rebecca,

As a member of the Staffing Committee, could I please have a copy of the Staffing Committee policy statement, and the date that it was ratified

[ On Mon, 20 May 2019 at 23:12, <[john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk)> wrote

Phill (as Chair of WPC), Ross and Cllr Joe Cullen,

To bring you up to speed on staffing matters, current, what has been actioned already and approved by full PC previously. I realise that Cllr Joe Cullen and Phill will be aware of most of this, but a recap will assist Ross.

The staffing committee (of 3) was formed due to the legalities and sensitive nature of employment law and that confidential employee matters should be dealt with by a dedicated group and not public consumption. This also includes other Councillors on a need to know basis only.

Justina (prior Clerk) finished in August 2018.

Jacqui came on as our locum clerk in September 2018.

The staffing committee put adverts out via DALC, SALC for experienced permanent Clerks.

We received some experienced/qualified applicants which were brought forward for interview in October.

2 members of the committee and the chair interviewed 4 candidates and offered a position to a qualified Clerk.

However, this person went incommunicado and never replied to the offer letter.

Rather than fishing in the same pool, it was decided to look elsewhere, and ideally local, to develop our own Clerk. In November/December adverts were placed on Indeed/Facebook etc targeting local people with transferable experience.

A large number of applications were received and we shortlisted and telephone screened 5 candidates who were local and had relevant experience. I replied directly to candidates who were unsuitable but it appears that the candidates who were on a secondary potential list were not contacted.

2 members of the staffing committee, and the chair, interviewed the candidates and we felt we had 2 really strong candidates, with 1 just taking the lead due to relevant transferrable skills.

The proposal was made to full Council that we offer the trainee Clerk position to Beckie House and that Jacqui would assist with training her to be full qualified

Clerk in due course.

It was also proposed and agreed that we should develop an admin position to assist the Clerk with workload, the village with neighbourhood development plans etc.

It also helped to de-risk the dependency on 1 Clerk if we had a qualified understudy.

It was therefore proposed and accepted that the 2<sup>nd</sup> candidate, Clair Allen, would be offered the admin role, but with the plan to train to qualified Clerk status. However, the starting date for this would be delayed until Beckie was trained and we were no longer dependent upon our locum Clerk. Paying for 3 clerks at the same time would be a unnecessary expense.

As we now know, Jacqui is finishing as locum and Rebecca is taking on the Clerk and RFO (responsible financial officer) duties. Her workload is already starting to build, so now is the point to look at bringing the understudy on board.

I have kept in contact with Clair Allen and she is keen to start asap.

Beckie is keen to bring her onboard asap as well.



So, if we are in agreement, now is the time to move forward with part 2 of the approved plan and organise a meeting with Beckie and Clair. We will then need to organise an employment contract and work out job descriptions for the 2 roles. I would expect the 2 of them to have a major part in this planning.

Other personnel matters:

1. Beckie needs to be signed off her probationary period (due now). This involves improved pay terms and other factors. It should normally include a review of performance and any concerns Beckie may have. This doesn't need to involve everyone, it could be just the Chair that does it or I can arrange to meet her to complete it myself.
2. As previously approved by full PC, Beckie needed a WPC laptop. We approved £750 but after liaising with Beckie on her needs and with a bit of research I got a very good one (that she is very happy with) off eBay for £399. I have bought this and will be submitting the expense claim.
3. Again, as previously agreed, Beckie will need an Office software package. I have researched and propose Office 365 multi-licence which will allow Beckie, Clair and 3 other people (Councillors who may need or NDP etc)

Any other comments, queries or proposals appreciated.

Regards

John

**From:** The Clerk <[clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk)>  
**Sent:** 15 May 2019 20:26  
**To:** [tim.bartram@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:tim.bartram@willingtonpc.org.uk); [caroline.blanksby@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:caroline.blanksby@willingtonpc.org.uk);  
[rosslyn.casey@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:rosslyn.casey@willingtonpc.org.uk); [claire.carter@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:claire.carter@willingtonpc.org.uk); Paul Cullen  
<[Paul.Cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:Paul.Cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk)>; Joseph Cullen <[Joseph.Cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:Joseph.Cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk)>; Phillip Allsopp  
<[Phillip.Allsopp@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:Phillip.Allsopp@willingtonpc.org.uk)>; John Phillips  
<[john.phillips@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:john.phillips@willingtonpc.org.uk)>; Ian Walters  
<[ian.walters@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:ian.walters@willingtonpc.org.uk)>; John Houghton  
<[john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk)>; Andy Mac  
<[andy.macpherson@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:andy.macpherson@willingtonpc.org.uk)>  
**Subject:** Draft Committees and Representations Lists

Dear Councillor,

many thanks in advance for your support in checking over the attached document. Please consider the following:

- I have not allocated Chair or Vice-Chair on these lists as some changes may occur
- I have highlighted two sections that require your attention - we will need to circle back around to these allocations during the meeting in June.

If you identify any mistakes, please let me know as quickly as possible.

Best Regards  
Beckie

[ EMAIL 03 ]

9

From: Joe Cullen [mailto: [REDACTED]]  
Subject: FW: Immediate resignation  
Date: 5 Jun 2019 at 08:11:32  
To: CAROLINE [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk,  
<john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk>  
john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk,  
<ian.walters@willingtonpc.org.uk>  
ian.walters@willingtonpc.org.uk, <andy@andymac-willington.co.uk>  
<andy@andymac-willington.co.uk>  
<claire.carter@willingtonpc.org.uk>  
claire.carter@willingtonpc.org.uk, Phillip Allsopp  
[REDACTED]

This email is for information only

From: Joe Cullen [mailto: [REDACTED]]  
Sent: 04 June 2019 13:38  
To: [REDACTED]  
Subject: FW: Immediate resignation

When are all councillors going to know that the Clerk has resigned, just a simple email to say that Rebecca has resigned nothing more needed at this point, who is going to have access to the Clerks email account, I suggest that Councillor Casey should be the one who has access to it.

Also could Councillor Houghton confirm or deny showing the resignation email to Councillor Allsopp on his mobile at the RAC last night I actually seen you show him a message on your mobile, if this Parish Council is going to work then now is the time to start being honest. Cllr J Cullen

From: Joe Cullen [mailto: [REDACTED]]  
Sent: 04 June 2019 10:57  
To: 'Parish Clerk'  
Subject: RE: Immediate resignation

Good Morning Rebecca,

I am sorry you have made such a decision, I would hope that after you have slept on it you will change your mind, as I have stated all along you are trying to learn a trade, and you have to put up with all this rubbish, if you pack in then they have won, and if we let them win, then anarchy will prevail.

Below is a paragraph from my complaint to the Monitoring Officer, please read it, it is self explanatory, and then I urge you to reconsider your position.

This email is a personal email between you and I so please do not share it with anyone I fully

support you in whatever decision you come to, but I hope it is the right one. Best Regards Joe Cullen

Finally the 2 people I feel most sorry for in this episode are Rebecca House, a young woman who is starting out on a career as a parish clerk, and she ends up with all this rubbish, and the other person who I feel sorry for is my wife, she pleaded with me not to stand for re-election, because in her words she said you know Houghton, Phillips and Walters don't like you, it will just be the same old aggravation all over again, so why do you want to go through with it all again, and my answer was, if I don't stand for re-election then they have won.

---

**From:** Parish Clerk [mailto:clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk]  
**Sent:** 03 June 2019 19:29  
**To:** john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk; [redacted]; rosslyn.casey@willingtonpc.org.uk  
**Subject:** Immediate resignation [redacted]

Dear all,

It is with great sadness I offer my immediate resignation from the parish council.

The below email is the reason.

I have worked for 20 years in positions of responsibility and have never been made to feel so threatened or intimidated.

I will not be continuing to work with the parish with immediate effect. I will hand over all laptops etc with immediate effect.

Please be aware that the accounts internal audit will take place on 6<sup>th</sup> June with Brian Wood,

[REDACTED]

who you will need to contact – after this the AGAR will need submitting by 1<sup>st</sup> July, and all parish accounts will need to be posted by 10<sup>th</sup> July for the public scrutiny.

I will submit my expenses – but someone else will have to do the agenda.

Apologies, but this is totally unacceptable. I will be sending this and any subsequent threatening email directly to the police.

Beckie

The Clerk at Willington Parish Council

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 03 June 2019 19:17  
**To:** [clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk)  
**Subject:** Scum bag John Phillips

A parish councillor in Derbyshire sent a shocking email to his Liverpool-born colleague telling him that a bus would be taking 'all sorts of scum bags and drug dealers back to Liverpool.'

The email was sent by Councillor John Philips, who sits on the parish council of Willington - a village in South Derbyshire. [REDACTED]

In an email, seen by the ECHO, Cllr Philips wrote: "Hi Paul, I've had a call from the Mega Bus, they're happy to take all sorts of scum bags and drug dealers back to Liverpool tomorrow - if you know any please let them know, I'll pay - this is a public service broadcast."

Well he let us all know now sack him or face what this city can do when you piss us off xx

[EMAIL 04]

9a

From: Joe Cullen [redacted]  
 Subject: RE: Agenda June PC Meeting  
 Date: 6 Jun 2019 at 17:17:26  
 To: P Allsopp [redacted]  
 Cc: <paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk>  
 paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk, [redacted]  
 [redacted], CAROLINE [redacted]  
 [redacted]  
 <John.Houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk  
 John.Houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk, Andy (old)  
 andy@andymac-willington.co.uk, Claire Carter  
 claire.carter@willingtonpc.org.uk, Ian Walters  
 ian.walters@willingtonpc.org.uk

1. Discriminatory email by Cllr Phillips [ none exempt] Cllr J Cullen

Hi,  
 I asked for the above item to be put on the agenda, but cannot see it,  
 Because J Phillips has resigned matters not, I still want the item to be discussed at the meeting, I  
 need to ask questions, as to why nobody publicly condemned him for his vile and discriminatory  
 remarks, if he had been challenged for his remarks by shall we call it the clique, then maybe, no  
 not maybe we would still have a clerk today, as I have stated previously, the person I feel sorry  
 for is Rebecca.  
 Questions need to be asked, and I want to ask them, why did Cllr Houghton, state this is not a  
 pissing contest in reply to Cllr P Cullen's email, yet never commented on the scumbags and drug  
 dealers email, also when I asked for thoughts, I had an immediate reply from Cllr Walters, who is  
 a great friend of Cllr Phillips, calling me a shit stirrer , I want to ask him why he thought I was a  
 shit stirrer, when all my request was for, your thoughts on the scumbags and drug dealers email.  
 These questions need answering. Cllr J Cullen

From: P Allsopp [mailto:[redacted]]  
 Sent: 06 June 2019 10:42  
 To: tim.bartram@willingtonpc.org.uk; 'Claire Carter'; john.houghton; Cllr Walters; andy@andymac-willington.co.uk; andrew.mcpherson@south-derbys.gov.uk; Cllr Cullen; 'Joe (old)'; 'Ros Casey'; 'Caroline Blanksby'  
 Subject: Agenda June PC Meeting

Dear Councillors,

Attached is the Agenda for the June PC meeting plus the draft minutes from last months meeting.  
 As you're aware unfortunately our Clerk resigned this week. I've attached a document of our  
 options for continuing until a new Clerk is appointed. DALC have a Locum Clerk available  
 should we decide that option.

Regards

Phillip Allsopp

[EMAIL 05]

96

From: Joe Cullen [REDACTED]  
Subject: RE: Compliance Officer Meeting  
Date: 8 Jun 2019 at 07:31:19  
To: P Allsopp [REDACTED]  
Cc: <paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk>  
paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk, Ros Casey  
rosslyn.casey@willingtonpc.org.uk, Caroline Blanksby  
caroline.blanksby@willingtonpc.org.uk, John Houghton  
john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk, Claire Carter  
claire.carter@willingtonpc.org.uk, Ian Walters  
ian.walters@willingtonpc.org.uk, Andy (old) andy@andyimac:  
willington.co.uk, <tim.bartram@willingtonpc.org.uk>  
tim.bartram@willingtonpc.org.uk, <[REDACTED]>  
[REDACTED] CAROLINE [REDACTED]

Cllr Allsopp,

I'll make this very easy for you, will you confirm or deny that you had a meeting with the Compliance Officer at Swad this week.

A simple Yes or No will suffice, as long as it is an honest Yes or No, please do not compound your mistake by giving a dishonest answer, or what little integrity/credibility that you have now, will disappear altogether. Cllr J Cullen

-----Original Message-----

From: [tim.bartram@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:tim.bartram@willingtonpc.org.uk)  
[mailto:[tim.bartram@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:tim.bartram@willingtonpc.org.uk)]  
Sent: 08 June 2019 01:34  
To: [paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk)  
Cc: [paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk); P Allsopp; Joe (old); Ros Casey; Caroline Blanksby; John Houghton; Claire Carter; Ian Walters; Andy (old)  
Subject: RE: Compliance Officer Meeting

Hi All

I didn't know, but being new onto the Council I do feel that truth and honesty should be at the core of everything we do.

This I feel, is the very least the people of Willington can hope to get from us.

Thanks

Tim.



-----Original Message-----

From: "paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk" <paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk>

Sent: Fri, 7 Jun, 2019 at 5:12 pm

To: "paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk" <paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk>

Cc: "paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk" <paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk>, "P  
Allsopp" <[REDACTED]>, "Joe (old)" <[REDACTED]>

"Ros Casey" <rosslyn.casey@willingtonpc.org.uk>, "Caroline Blanksby"  
<caroline.blanksby@willingtonpc.org.uk>, "John Houghton"

<john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk>, "Claire Carter"

<claire.carter@willingtonpc.org.uk>, "Ian Walters"

<ian.walters@willingtonpc.org.uk>, "Andy (old)" <andy@andymac-  
willington.co.uk>

Subject: RE: Compliance Officer Meeting

Hi All

Apologies, I forgot to ask. Did anyone else know about this meeting?

Regards

Paul

-----Original Message-----

From: "[paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk)"

Sent: Friday, 7 June, 2019 4:40pm

To: "P Allsopp"

Cc: "Paul Cullen"

, "Joe (old)" , "Tim Bartram" , "Ros Casey" , "Caroline Blanksby" , "John Houghton" , "Claire Carter" , "Ian Walters" , "Andy (old)"

Subject: Compliance Officer Meeting

Phil

Could you just clarify the purpose and outcome of your meeting with SDDC's Compliance Officer on Wednesday of this week and why you attended this meeting without seeking the approval of the Full Council?

Regards

Paul

U

U

[ EMAIL 06 ]

10

From: Joe Cullen [mailto: [REDACTED]]  
Subject: RE: Compliance Officer Meeting  
Date: 11 Jun 2019 at 07:31:47  
To: P Allsopp [mailto: [REDACTED]]  
Cc: <[mailto:paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk]>  
[mailto:paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk], Ros Casey  
[mailto:rosslyn.casey@willingtonpc.org.uk], Caroline Blanksby  
[mailto:caroline.blanksby@willingtonpc.org.uk], John Houghton  
[mailto:john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk], Claire Carter  
[mailto:claire.carter@willingtonpc.org.uk], Ian Walters  
[mailto:ian.walters@willingtonpc.org.uk], Andy (old) [mailto:andy@andymac  
willington.co.uk], <[mailto:tim.bartram@willingtonpc.org.uk]>  
[mailto:tim.bartram@willingtonpc.org.uk], [mailto: [REDACTED]]>  
[mailto: [REDACTED]]> CAROLINE [mailto: [REDACTED]]>, Joe  
Cullen [mailto: [REDACTED]]> [mailto: [REDACTED]]>  
[mailto: [REDACTED]]>

Cllr Allsopp,

Seeing as you have not done me the courtesy of a reply to my email below, I would think that councillors will draw their own conclusions, but not answering my question, speaks volumes, but to me personally it says you are a man of no integrity and no credibility, so how can anyone ever trust you again. See you tonight. Cllr J Cullen

-----Original Message-----

From: Joe Cullen [mailto: [REDACTED]]  
Sent: 08 June 2019 07:31  
To: 'P Allsopp'  
Cc: 'paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk'; 'Ros Casey'; 'Caroline Blanksby'; 'John Houghton'; 'Claire Carter'; 'Ian Walters'; 'Andy (old)';  
'tim.bartram@willingtonpc.org.uk'; [mailto: [REDACTED]]; CAROLINE  
[mailto: [REDACTED]]  
Subject: RE: Compliance Officer Meeting

Cllr Allsopp,

I'll make this very easy for you, will you confirm or deny that you had a meeting with the Compliance Officer at Swad this week.  
A simple Yes or No will suffice, as long as it is an honest, Yes or No, please do not compound your mistake by giving a dishonest answer, or what little

integrity/credibility that you have now, will disappear altogether. Cllr J Cullen

-----Original Message-----

From: [tim.bartram@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:tim.bartram@willingtonpc.org.uk)

[mailto:[tim.bartram@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:tim.bartram@willingtonpc.org.uk)]

Sent: 08 June 2010 01:34

To: [paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk)

Cc: [paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk); P Allsopp; Joe (old); Ros Casey; Caroline Blanksby; John Houghton; Claire Carter; Ian Walters; Andy (old)

Subject: RE: Compliance Officer Meeting

Hi All

I didn't know, but being new onto the Council I do feel that truth and honesty should be at the core of everything we do.

This I feel, is the very least the people of Willington can hope to get from us.

Thanks

Tim.

-----Original Message-----

From: "[paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk)"

Sent: Friday, 7 June, 2019 4:40pm

To: "P Allsopp"

~~.....~~  
Cc: "Paul Cullen"

, "Joe (old)", "Tim Bartram", "Ros Casey", "Caroline Blanksby", "John Houghton", "Claire Carter", "Ian Walters", "Andy (old)"

Subject: Compliance Officer Meeting

Phil

Could you just clarify the purpose and outcome of your meeting with SDDC's Compliance Officer on Wednesday of this week and why you attended this meeting without seeking the approval of the Full Council?

Regards

Paul

-----Original Message-----

From: "paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk" <paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk>

Sent: Fri, 7 Jun, 2019 at 5:12 pm

To: "paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk" <paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk>

Cc: "paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk" <paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk>, "P Allsopp" <[REDACTED]>, "Joe (old)" <[REDACTED]>, "Ros Casey" <rosslyn.casey@willingtonpc.org.uk>, "Caroline Blanksby" <caroline.blanksby@willingtonpc.org.uk>, "John Houghton" <john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk>, "Claire Carter" <claire.carter@willingtonpc.org.uk>, "Ian Walters" <ian.walters@willingtonpc.org.uk>, "Andy (old)" <andy@andymac-willington.co.uk>

Subject: RE: Compliance Officer Meeting

Hi All

Apologies, I forgot to ask. Did anyone else know about this meeting?

Regards

Paul

[EMAIL 07]

11

From: <john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk>  
john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk  
Subject: RE: Immediate resignation  
Date: 4 Jun 2019 at 23:07:54  
To: Joe Cullen [REDACTED] Phillip Allsopp  
[REDACTED]  
Cc: [REDACTED]  
<rosslyn.casey@willingtonpc.org.uk>  
rosslyn.casey@willingtonpc.org.uk

Cllr J Cullen, Ros and Phill (as Chair of WPC),

Thank you for your input today Cllr Cullen, firstly I would like to thank you for your comment below about working together for the benefit of the village. I was not aware that "we do not get on", but I can assure you that I will join you in acting in the best interest of the Village.

You will notice that I have copied our Chair, Phill Allsopp, into this email. I have given this a lot of thought but I believe I should be following the correct policy.

I refer to my prior email regarding the plan to start Claire Allen, why I copied the Chair in, how you agreed that the staffing committee didn't have executive powers to recruit and how the chair is the only person who can sign employment contracts etc. You also believe that all communication should be shared with full openness and honesty for all, which is a little contradictory to your request.

It is for those very same reasons why I can 100% confirm that I showed the Chair the email resignation during the RAC meeting. The Chair is ultimately responsible and the staffing committee is there to assist with support functions. I have attached a copy of our approved Staff Committee Terms of Reference which clearly lists our rather limited range of responsibilities and authority.

I do hope that despite this minor disagreement on protocol, we can continue to work together in the best interest of the Village.

With regards to the point below regarding Claire Allen, I agree with you that this is not the time to be bringing in an admin assistant without a trained Clerk in place. There is little to nothing that she could do to assist. In hindsight, we would have been in a better position now if we had brought Claire Allen in a month ago. However, we cannot turn back time.

You are also correct, that we have a number of priorities and action to take and our Chair has been working diligently on these today.



Phill has spent a large part of today on the phone with DALC discussing our options moving forward.

It has been confirmed that we cannot operate if we do not have a Clerk in place.

A Locum Clerk, Debbie, has been identified by DALC as a very credible and experienced Locum Clerk who has experience of similar situations.

This evening, she confirmed to the Chair that she can rearrange her current commitments and fulfil the requirements of WPC for next week's meeting and in an interim locum capacity until required.

She will be able to attend on Tuesday and prepare the Agenda in advance, Beckie has however already completed the majority of this and has placed all relevant items in a folder for us.

We will get the key to distribute agendas on the notice boards in sufficient time.

With regards to authority to appoint the Locum without full PC approval.

We have to have a Clerk, so there are 4 options:

1. We check if the staffing committee has delegated authority to appoint a Clerk. Having reviewed the attached, I do not see how we have authority.
2. We list as the 1<sup>st</sup> agenda item on Tuesday the appointment of a locum Clerk, this is then voted on by full council before the WPC meeting commences in full.
3. We call an extra-ordinary Council meeting for Monday (earliest possible date), we still advertise the PC meeting on Tuesday and prepare for it. A decision is taken by full council on whether we appoint a locum Clerk.
4. The Chair makes an executive decision, which according to DALC is within his authority, to appoint the Locum Clerk as we cannot operate without one.

In the spirit of working in the best interest of the Village, my personal recommendation would be to put it to the full Council on Tuesday, prior to the main agenda items.

Failing that, it would fall to the Chair to make the executive decision to appoint, or to cancel the entire meeting.

Our role as staffing committee is limited at this stage:

We can request and complete exit interviews with Beckie, although the Chair can also complete this.

We have to assess whether we have put an employee at risk which has caused her to resign.

We have to ensure that she is paid in full and that all WPC equipment is returned. We have to initiate the process to recruit a replacement Clerk, create adverts, screen candidates, interview and make recommendation to full Council.

The other points you raise:

- Yes, it appears that we are unable to convince Beckie to remain, so an official announcement to Full PC needs to be made. This should be a message from the Chair. I would hope this could be done early Wednesday morning (it's getting a bit late now).
- If appointed, the Locum Clerk will take responsibility for the emails. I will speak to the email hosts in the interim to have an "out of office" email placed on the account.

I also believe that WPC needs to make an official statement regarding the recent press releases and also the local social media requests for information. Without full approval from the full Council though, I would expect it is only the Chair who could take this kind of action. I would suggest that after we have announced the resignation, we could have a discussion with all councillors about how we handle this.

Kind Regards

John

**From:** Joe Cullen <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 04 June 2019 16:10  
**To:** [john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk)  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: Immediate resignation

Hi,

Don't do anything regarding Claire Allen the to be new admin officer without notifying myself and Cllr R Casey, for discussion, and do not include Cllr Allsopp into the emails, either CC or BCC, as it will all come out in the wash if you do, it's no secret that we do not get on, but that's life, we need to work together, for the good of the parish.

Can we decide who is doing the agenda for next week's meeting, I would have hoped it would be Rebecca but she never replied to my email, it needs to go on the notice board by Thursday, and I don't believe it should be Cllr Allsopp because he makes too many mistakes, I suggest that we send agenda requests to Cllr R Casey, and she can draw it up, and I will put them on the notice boards. Failing that I will do the agenda myself, if people email me what they want on. Regards Cllr J Cullen

---

**From:** Parish Clerk [mailto:clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk]

**Sent:** 03 June 2019 19:29

**To:** john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk; [redacted] rosslyn.casey@willingtonpc.org.uk

**Subject:** Immediate resignation

Dear all,

It is with great sadness I offer my immediate resignation from the parish council.

The below email is the reason.

I have worked for 20 years in positions of responsibility and have never been made to feel so threatened or intimidated.

I will not be continuing to work with the parish with immediate effect. I will hand over all laptops etc with immediate effect.

Please be aware that the accounts internal audit will take place on 6<sup>th</sup> June with Brian Wood, who you will need to contact – after this the AGAR will need submitting by 1<sup>st</sup> July, and all parish accounts will need to be posted by 10<sup>th</sup> July for the public scrutiny.

I will submit my expenses – but someone else will have to do the agenda.

Apologies, but this is totally unacceptable. I will be sending this and any subsequent threatening email directly to the police.

Beckie

The Clerk at Willington Parish Council

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 03 June 2019 19:17  
**To:** [clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk)  
**Subject:** Scum bag John Phillips [REDACTED]

A parish councillor in Derbyshire sent a shocking email to his Liverpool-born colleague telling him that a bus would be taking 'all sorts of scum bags and drug dealers back to Liverpool.'

The email was sent by Councillor John Philips, who sits on the parish council of Willington - a village in South Derbyshire.

In an email, seen by the ECHO, Cllr Philips wrote: "Hi Paul, I've had a call from the Mega Bus, they're happy to take all sorts of scum bags and drug dealers back to Liverpool tomorrow - if you know any please let them know, I'll pay - this is a public service broadcast."

Well he let us all know now sack him or face what this city can do when you piss us off xx

Sent from my iPhone

W

STAFF CO...ENCE.docx  
20.4 KB

[EMAIL 08]

From: Joe Cullen [REDACTED]  
Subject: Chair of Carnival Committee  
Date: 25 Oct 2019 at 10:43:43  
To: [REDACTED]  
Cc: john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk,  
paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk, Tim  
Bartram [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Phillip Allsopp  
[REDACTED]  
ian.walters@willingtonpc.org.uk,  
claire.carter@willingtonpc.org.uk,  
andy@andymac-willington.co.uk, Mark  
Bartram [REDACTED]

Hi Caroline,

I heard you were elected Chair of the Carnival Committee congratulations, even better when I heard who your adversary was, once people see through his facade, there was only one winner, the decision was a no brainer, they will always choose champagne over plonk. Now you just have to watch your back. Cheers Joe

[EMAIL Q9]

From: Joe Cullen [REDACTED]  
Subject: FW: Code of Conduct Complaint against Cllr Walters  
Date: 19 Oct 2019 at 15:28:14  
To: <[REDACTED]>  
<caroline648@live.co.uk> [REDACTED] m Bartram  
<[REDACTED]> paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk>  
paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk, Willington PC Clerk  
Clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk; Phillip Allsopp  
<[REDACTED]>  
<john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk>  
john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk,  
<claire.carter@willingtonpc.org.uk>  
claire.carter@willingtonpc.org.uk, Mark Bartram  
<[REDACTED]> ian.walters@willingtonpc.org.uk>  
ian.walters@willingtonpc.org.uk <andy@andymac-  
willington.co.uk> andy@andymac-willington.co.uk

Afternoon,

Below is the reply from Ardip Kaur to my email, you will see that she says she can meet with whoever she sees appropriate, what a cop out, in my email I told her that I was amazed that she didn't interview all parties, you can see her very abrupt reply, she can discuss it with whoever she deems

it necessary.

She does not address any of the matters that I raised in my email, and yet she states " Should any of the complainants wish to contact me with regard to the outcome of their complaints, they are able to do so" this statement could not be further from the truth.

Nowhere in any correspondence that I have had with her, does she state that she does not think that the incident did not take place, so on that assumption, I can only believe that she thinks the incident did in fact take place, but she says he was not acting as a parish councillor, how that can be, only she knows.

So if he was not acting as a parish councillor, I can only presume that he was acting as a member of the public, who showed aggressive and thuggish behaviour towards a fellow parish councillor, so should we not be supporting Cllr Casey against this sort of behaviour by a member of the public.

She also told Mr Casey that she had met and discussed the matter with Cllr

Walters, and the complaint does not fall within the remit of the Code of Conduct, again unbelievable, she said he should have contacted the police, well since the incident took place Mr Casey has had to contact the police on occasion, when he has been verbally abused by a member of the accused family while out walking his dog..

I feel Mr Casey comes out of this with great dignity and restraint, especially after being totally ignored by WPC.

So we have a situation where close friends who are/where members of WPC, are

both reported to SDDC and both deemed to have not infringed the Code of Conduct, I refer to his great friend Phillips, the author of the scumbags and drug dealers post, we complained about him, and the Monitoring Officer did nothing about that either.

So to sum up it seems that you can be an aggressive and cowardly bully towards women, and as long as you are not a parish councillor it is quite acceptable.

I need to decide where I am going to take this next, I'm just glad it wasn't my wife. Regards Cllr J Cullen

-----Original Message-----

From: Ardip Kaur [<mailto:Ardip.Kaur@southderbyshire.gov.uk>]

Sent: 15 October 2019 12:48

To: 'Joe Cullen'

Subject: RE: Code of Conduct Complaint against Cllr Walters

Dear Cllr Cullen

Should any of the complainant's wish to contact me with regard to the outcome of their complaints, they are able to do so.

As the Monitoring Officer determining Code of Conduct complaints, I am able to discuss/meet with whoever I deem appropriate in order to make a determination. In this instance I felt it necessary to meet with Cllr Walters as I already had information from other parties.

I can confirm you were also sent a letter, a copy of which I attach in the event you did not receive it in the post.

If you wish to make a Freedom of Information request, please submit your query to the following email; [FOI@southderbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:FOI@southderbyshire.gov.uk).



Regards

Ardip Kaur (Solicitor)  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer  
T: 01283 595715

-----Original Message-----

From: Joe Cullen <[REDACTED]>  
Sent: 13 October 2019 17:39  
To: Ardip Kaur <[Ardip.Kaur@southderbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:Ardip.Kaur@southderbyshire.gov.uk)>  
Subject: FW: Code of Conduct Complaint against Cllr Walters

To Ardip Kaur Monitoring Officer SDDC  
From Cllr J Cullen  
Code of Conduct complaint against Cllr Walters.

Afternoon,

Yesterday I had a phone call from the aggrieved husband of Cllr R

Casey regarding his complaint against the cowardly and aggressive behaviour

towards his wife Cllr R Casey, outside the council meeting room on Tuesday 14th May, he also sent me a copy of the letter you sent to him. He asked me, how you could justify your decision, unfortunately I could not answer him, because your decision is not justifiable.

I am amazed that you say you have met and discussed the complaint, with Cllr

Walters, but have not taken the trouble to meet with Cllrs Casey, Blanksby and P Cullen to discuss the incident with them.

I can only wonder, if you thought it was not a Code of Conduct complaint, why you met with him, given that you DID meet with him, you must have thought it WAS a Code of Conduct complaint, then you being the judge and jury you should surely have met with the Councillors who complained against him, because you are only hearing one side of the story, I find this to be offensive towards Cllr Casey.

On 15th August 2019 you sent me a letter[which is enclosed] stating that "I am in the course of making enquiries into the matters raised and shall advise further once I am receipt of this information" that was 8 weeks ago, and in 8 weeks you seen fit to meet with only one person, and he was the

person, that the complaints where against.

Also enclosed is the email sent to me which originally got me involved in this, it still worries me when I read this email.

In letters to other parish councillors you state that " Councillor Walters is not deemed to have been acting in his official capacity as a member of Willington Parish Council" you don't state that this incident never happened so I can only take it that you believe that the incident did actually happen, but it is not within your scope to deal with it, You say that he was not acting as a parish councillor, If Councillors Walters and Casey, had NOT been Willington Parish Councillors, they would not have been in the car park of the building were the meeting took place, on the 14th May 2019, so arguable Cllr Walters was acting as a Willington Parish Councillor.

If it was not a Code of Conduct Complaint.

Then WHY did you interview him?.

Seeing as you DID interview him, WHY did you not interview the complainants?, if you deemed he was not acting as a parish councillor, Was

that because you could not justify his disgusting and thuggish behaviour towards a woman councillor, and you wanted to wash your hands of it, because you did not want to find that the complaint was proved, by the complainants that you never interviewed.

I put in a complaint about this incident as the letter you sent me on 16th August states, you have not replied to my complaint since I had that letter, so could you please advise me instead of me hearing it second hand. As a Public Body, Under Freedom of Information 2000, could I please have a copy of all correspondence, that you have received regarding this complaint, that includes all emails, letters, transcripts of meeting and telephone transcripts, by all Willington Parish Councillors, whether involved in the complaint or otherwise supporting Councillor Walters. I look forward to your reply. Regards Cllr J Cullen

---

To view South Derbyshire District Council Privacy Notices please visit <https://www.southderbyshire.gov.uk/privacy>

The views expressed in this email are personal and may not necessarily reflect those of South Derbyshire District Council, unless explicitly stated otherwise. This email, and any files transmitted with it, are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error, please notify me immediately. If you are not the intended recipient of this email, you should not copy it for any purpose, or disclose its contents to any other person. Senders and recipients of email should be aware that under the Data Protection Act 2018 and Freedom of Information Act 2000, the contents may have to be disclosed. This message and attached files have been virus scanned. Attachments are opened at your own risk, we recommend that you check all emails with an appropriate virus scanner.



[EMAIL 10]

From Joe Cullen [REDACTED]  
 Subject FW: Chairmans update  
 Date 11 Nov 2019 at 15:52:44  
 To Phillip Allsopp [REDACTED]  
 <john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk>  
 john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk,  
 <claire.carter@willingtonpc.org.uk>  
 claire.carter@willingtonpc.org.uk,  
 <mark.bartram@willingtonpc.org.uk>  
 mark.bartram@willingtonpc.org.uk,  
 <ian.walters@willingtonpc.org.uk>  
 ian.walters@willingtonpc.org.uk <andy@andymac-  
 willington.co.uk> andy@andymac-willington.co.uk,  
 <paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk>  
 paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk, <caroline848@live.co.uk>  
 [REDACTED] Tim Bartram [REDACTED]  
 [REDACTED] danny.rose@iscall.co.uk [REDACTED] Willington  
 PC Clerk Clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk

Afternoon,

I object very strongly to the Chairman's Update in the recent newsletter, regarding Axis 50 he states that WPC have spent a lot of time on this, this, could not be further from the truth regarding himself and 5 other Willington Parish Councillors.

He states that it has been necessary to employ a planning consultant to assist us in presenting our objections to the proposals, and this part of it is true, what he fails to say is that he voted against employing a planning consultant, and there were only 5 Parish Councillors who voted to employ a planning consultant, they were Councillors C Blanksby, T Bartram, R Casey, P Cullen and myself.

So Why is he trying to mislead the people of Willington, when everyone who was at the meeting, and there were quite a lot all know, that he is not being honest in his report, just trying to make himself look good, but it does not work like that when people know the truth, Everyone knows the way he voted and those people who were not at the meeting and are interested in Axis 50 have been informed by me and others the way the voting went.

Finally he states that the objection has to be carefully compiled and properly presented, does he not realise, that is why we [all 5 of us councillors named above ] voted to employ a planning consultant, so it could be presented properly.

And for blatantly misleading the people of Willington I believe that he should resign. Cllr J Cullen

#### Chairman's Update.

These newsletters seem to come around all too quickly, even though they are only every other month. But then, if life is busy time seems to fly past and the Parish Council has had much to consider over the last couple of months.

Axis 50 has taken a lot of our time and it has been necessary to employ a planning consultant to assist us in presenting our objections to the proposals. We can all agree that the proposed development will have major implications for the village, but these have to be carefully compiled and properly presented. We now have to await their consideration by South Derbyshire DC.

On a more positive note the Ivy Close planning application has been withdrawn though no doubt it will be resubmitted in the future.

The "meet the Councillor" surgery that took place on September 7th, was deemed a success by all who attended. The question now must be should we continue to have another one? We would like your views on their community value and any changes that you might like to make in their format.

Overgrown vegetation obstructing pavements and walkways remains an ongoing subject of concern around the village. We ask you, once again, to ensure that your hedges etc are cut back to allow people to walk by in safety.

Discussions with Woodgrow on replacing the tree in the station garden will result in their supplying a replacement before the end of the year, allowing us to proceed with the development of Christmas lights as first intended.

Once again I must thank the Scouts for providing their annual firework display on the Twyford Road Playing Fields and remind all those of you who are planning your own firework celebrations to follow the guidelines and stay safe.

I hope you have noticed that the WI have done another litter pick around the village. A big thank you for helping to keep the village looking cared for and welcoming to visitors.

Finally I would like to remind you that Parish Council meetings take place on the second Tuesday of the month and there is an open invitation for you to attend, and keep us on our toes with your questions. The next meeting will be at 7.00 pm on Tuesday November 12<sup>th</sup> at the Old School on Castleway, with the final meeting of the year being held on December 10<sup>th</sup>.

With two more meetings to go before the end of the year it doesn't early to think of Christmas, but seeing as I won't get another chance I would like to wish you all a Happy Christmas and all the best for the New Year.

[EMAIL 11]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Joe Cullen** <[REDACTED]>  
Date: Sat, 14 Dec 2019 at 12:01  
Subject: WPC video on Youtube  
To: Phillip Allsopp <[REDACTED]>

To the Chairman WPC.

Morning.

I watched the video on Youtube, you are a star for all the wrong reasons, not being able to control the meeting and abandoning it, look forward to the next episode. Cllr J Cullen



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Mr. Allans  
Chairman

The statement regarding Axis 50 is a \_\_\_\_\_  
complete untruth it has taken none of our time  
and he even voted against employing a planning  
consultant to assist us in presenting our  
objections to the proposals{

---

[EMAIL 12]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Joe Cullen <[REDACTED]>  
Date: Sun, 15 Dec 2019 at 08:38  
Subject: FW: WPC video on YouTubeXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
To: Phillip Allsopp <[REDACTED]>

To the Chairman WPC.

Morning,

I went down to The Sun for a beer yesterday afternoon, we were discussing the WPC meeting, so we put the video on, after watching it the general consensus was that you could not run a pxxs up in a brewery, but I thought that was harsh on you., and I told them that I thought that you could.

The problem is that as the Chairman of WPC you are not running a pxxs up in a brewery, you are supposed to control the WPC meetings, and I had to agree with the people, that you are totally incapable of doing that.

People were asking, Why? is he asking her advice all of the time. as Chairman, is he not supposed to know what is going on, I tried to defend you, by telling them that was the Locum's job to advise you, because of what we are paying her she should be the fountain on knowledge, but that did not go down to well as she did not give you the right advice, which would have been to not close the meeting. So at the end of the day, I could not defend, the indefensible, I had to agree with them, that you were/are totally out of your dept.

They are all looking forward to seeing the next meeting. Cllr J Cullen



[EMAIL 13]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Willington PC Clerk** <Clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk>

Date: Tue, 11 Feb 2020 at 16:32

Subject: RE: Summons to attend the meeting of the Parish Council to be held on 11 February 2020

To: Joe Cullen <[REDACTED]>

Hi Joe

Thanks for your recognition but unfortunately I'm the one here left to sort it out. I hope that we can do this amicably as I do not wish for a repeat of what I have seen on previous videos and if that occurs then I shall have no choice but to tender my resignation as I do not wish to be associated with or subjected to such disgraceful behaviour. I would remind you that the Council has a duty to me as an employee to protect me from such situations. If it cannot then I cannot continue in the role.

Addressing your points, if, as you say, the meeting did not start until after that whole section was over then the change in attendee list is required as those Cllrs were not present at the beginning of the meeting. According to your representations this would then make the minutes accurate. You don't have to agree to the apologies being submitted – I was just trying to offer a conciliatory approach on that front since they were there and then felt that they had to leave. But, if you maintain that the meeting had not started, then they cannot be logged as attending since they left before John took the Chair and 'started the meeting'.

If you want to still refer to all of that occurring then you must also agree that the meeting had started (otherwise why would it be noted at all?) and so all of that needs to stay in, since it did happen.

I am extremely concerned that you would seemingly wish to try to use the minutes to 'show up' the Chairman and, I have to say, having watched the video online, that the meeting was clearly declared open by the Chairman prior to him reading the statement. I would therefore maintain that the minutes are accurate, however I would suggest that there was a procedural deficiency in that yourself and Paul should not have taken part in the vote on removing you both from the meeting.

I understand that you would object to a statement being read out which directly relates to Pauls' actions (although he was not named in that statement), however, there is no reason why a statement cannot be read out by the Chairman, or the Clerk if so directed. To raise a point of order was incorrect. No decision making was to be had and this is normal practice to do where there are procedural issues (or perhaps pertinent information) that need to be addressed before commencement of the agenda business.

The continued refusal to accept the authority of the Chairman (whatever you may think of him personally) serves only to bring the Council into disrepute and also the office of Councillor and Chairman.

The position of Chairman is one of authority and to be respected as such since that person for their term of office is the 'First Citizen' of the parish. As such they are expected to attend ceremonial duties such as opening the village fete or welcoming foreign dignitaries etc and this does not require prior approval from Council. It is simply expected. He therefore needs

an outlet to report this activity back to Council and this is what 'Chairman's Announcements' is for, or perhaps to welcome a new Clerk. Again, prior notification of content is not required as it is not decision making ground – purely informational. I have confirmed this with DAIC today, too. It is not for anyone to 'have a pop' and I would strongly object to anyone doing this at Council meetings at any point in proceedings.

I do not know what has gone on outside of Council business that has caused this upset but I would advocate for its expression at Council meetings to be discontinued immediately. The Chairman's interpretation of Standing Orders and decisions upon such is final and to continue to argue after a decision has been made is not acceptable behaviour for an elected member.

The reputation of the Parish Council is in tatters because of this drama and upset and needs all of us to work together to restore it. This involves everyone co-operating and respecting each other, despite personal differences, and not encouraging our friends and families to attend and be disruptive from the public gallery. Should such persons attend and become disruptive I would expect their associated Cllr to intervene and tell them to stop.

Kind regards

Sabrina

Sabrina Doherty

Parish Clerk

Willington Parish Council

DISCLAIMER

This email and any attachments are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual to whom it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient be advised that you have received this email in error and that any use, dissemination, forwarding, printing or copying of this email is strictly prohibited. If you have received this email in error please contact **The Clerk at Willington Parish Council** [clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk)

Senders and recipients of email should be aware that, under current legislation, the contents may be monitored and will be retained. The contents of the email may have to be disclosed in response to a request

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

**From:** Joe Cullen

**Sent:** 11 February 2020 10:05

**To:** 'Willington PC Clerk'

**Subject:** RE: Summons to attend the meeting of the Parish Council to be held on 11 February 2020

Morning,

First of all let me say that none of this was your doing, and it should have been sorted out long before you took up your position as Clerk, but how could the Locum get things so badly wrong when she had a Dictaphone at the meeting of the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2019, I believe that she wanted to show Cllr P Cullen and myself in a negative way and leave us open to ridicule, for the benefit of the Chairman.

I do not agree with what you have suggested as that would be a complete fabrication of the truth, in fact a downright lie, to say that the 3 cllrs gave apologies, and alter the attendees, as though they were never there, the Chairman needs to take responsibility for his actions, as a chairman he should have known better than to make proposals and have votes when the meeting had not started, so the minutes need changing, so that they address what actually happened.

This is also a reason that I disagree with your proposal to add Chairman's Announcements to the agenda it will give the Chairman a pulpit to have a pop at whomever he so chooses, so if this goes ahead I would hope that I am afforded the same opportunity. Regards Cllr J Cullen

**From:** Willington PC Clerk [mailto:Clerk@willingtonPC.org.uk]

**Sent:** 09 February 2020 22:45

**To:** Joe Cullen

**Subject:** RE: Summons to attend the meeting of the Parish Council to be held on 11 February 2020

Hi Councillor Cullen

Thanks for your email. I've had something similar from Paul today too and I've recommended to him that he go with your approach of just removing the entire section and then I suggest amending the attendees with the 3 cllrs who left being put in as having given apologies. I think that would be the simplest way to deal with it rather than trying to add in additional wording.

If you two could agree a way forward prior to the meeting it would be helpful to make things smoother and its just a simple proposal and vote then.

Thanks

Sabrina

Sabrina Doherty

Parish Clerk

Willington Parish Council

DISCLAIMER.

This email and any attachments are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual to whom it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient be advised that you have received this email in error and that any use, dissemination, forwarding, printing or copying of this email is strictly prohibited. If you have received this email in error please contact **The Clerk at Willington Parish Council** [clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk)

Senders and recipients of email should be aware that, under current legislation, the contents may be monitored and will be retained. The contents of the email may have to be disclosed in response to a request

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

**From:** Joe Cullen

**Sent:** 09 February 2020 14:57

**To:** 'Willington PC Clerk'

**Subject:** FW: Summons to attend the meeting of the Parish Council to be held on 11 February 2020

Hi again,

Forgot to say in my last email, were it states "A proposal was made to close the meeting" this was wrong because the meeting had not started. Regards Cllr J Cullen

**From:** Joe Cullen [mailto:[joecullen@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:joecullen@willingtonpc.org.uk)]

**Sent:** 09 February 2020 14:05

**To:** 'Willington PC Clerk'

**Subject:** RE: Summons to attend the meeting of the Parish Council to be held on 11 February 2020

Hi Afternoon,

Below is a copy of the minutes for the EO meeting 19<sup>th</sup> Dec 2019,

Everything that you see below should not be in the minutes as the meeting had not started, just listened to my recording and the Locum clearly tells Cllr P Cullen the meeting has not started, no proposals or voting can take place if the meeting has not started so everything in RED below is clearly wrong, and should not be in the minutes. Regards Cllr J Cullen

At the start of the Meeting, the Chairman read out a pre-prepared statement in regard to the use of video recording equipment (Attached at Annexe A to the Minutes).

There were three items of recording equipment which the Chair considered were inappropriately positioned due to them not taking in the whole of the proceedings of the Meeting. These were in the control of Cllrs J. Cullen and P. Cullen. Cllrs P. and J. Cullen were asked to reposition the equipment but refused.

A proposal was made that both Cllr J. and P. Cullen be excluded from the Meeting. This was seconded and a recorded vote was requested.

**RESOLVED** that Cllrs P. and J. Cullen be excluded from the Meeting.

Cllrs Allsopp, Carter, Houghton, Macpherson and Walters voted in favour of this proposal.

Cllrs L. Bartram, Blanksby, Casey, J. Cullen, P. Cullen voted against this proposal.

Cllr M. Bartram abstained.

The Chairman used his casting vote to vote in favour of this proposal.

Cllrs P. and J. Cullen refused to leave the Meeting or move the recording equipment.

A proposal was made to close the Meeting

**RESOLVED** that the Meeting remain open and business be considered.

**From:** Willington PC Clerk [<mailto:Clerk@willingtonPC.org.uk>]

**Sent:** 05 February 2020 23:43

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** FW: Summons to attend the meeting of the Parish Council to be held on 11 February 2020

Hi Cllr Cullen

Apologies, I sent this to your Willington PC email but it appears to be down so sending it to you here instead.

Best wishes

Sabrina

Sabrina Doherty

Parish Clerk

Willington Parish Council

**DISCLAIMER**

This email and any attachments are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual to whom it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, be advised that you have received this email in error and that any use, dissemination, forwarding, printing or copying of this email is strictly prohibited. If you have received this email in error please contact The Clerk at Willington Parish Council [clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk)



Senders and recipients of email should be aware that, under current legislation, the contents may be monitored and will be retained. The contents of the email may have to be disclosed in response to a request.

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

**From:** Willington PC Clerk

**Sent:** 05 February 2020 23:40

**To:** Phillip Allsopp; john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk; joe.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk; Mark Bartram; tim.bartram@willingtonpc.org.uk; rosslyn.casey@willingtonpc.org.uk; andrew.macpherson; caroline.blanksby@willingtonpc.org.uk; claire.carter@willingtonpc.org.uk; paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk; ian.walters@willingtonpc.org.uk

**Subject:** Summons to attend the meeting of the Parish Council to be held on 11 February 2020

Dear Councillors

Please find attached your summons and additional papers for the next meeting of the parish council.

Kind regards

Sabrina

Sabrina Doherty

Parish Clerk

Willington Parish Council

DISCLAIMER

This email and any attachments are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual to whom it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient be advised that you have received this email in error and that any use, dissemination, forwarding, printing or copying of this email is strictly prohibited. If you have received this email in error please contact **The Clerk at Willington Parish Council** [clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk)

Senders and recipients of email should be aware that, under current legislation, the contents may be monitored and will be retained. The contents of the email may have to be disclosed in response to a request.

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

[EMAIL 14]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Joe Cullen** [REDACTED]  
Date: Wed, 4 Mar 2020 at 08:33  
Subject: FW: Agenda items  
To: [REDACTED]

Agenda items for 10th March

**Video recording at Parish Council meetings**

Despite several Councillors doing nothing wrong. The Chairman, ably supported by a number of Councillors conspired to have two, (not three) Councillors removed from a meeting despite the fact they were carrying out a lawful activity. Council should seek a full and unreserved apology from the Chairman

**The role of the Chair**

The Chairman has persistently acted beyond his level of responsibility and appears to believe he has 'super councillor' status

**The Chairman's Announcement as read at the meeting held on 19th December**

There are inconsistencies in what the Chair actually read out and the Chairs Announcement sent through to Councillors

**The minutes of the meeting held on 19th December**

The minutes must be a true reflection of proceedings and not simply an opportunity for Councillors to falsely agree the content of what isn't true

**The conduct of the Chair at WPC meeting held on 10th December 2019.**

The wholly inappropriate behaviour of the Chair including but not exclusively surrounding his proposals to suspend and subsequently close the meeting.

**The conduct of the Chair and the Parish Clerk at the WPC meeting held on 19th December 2019.**

It appears that once again the Chair, ably supported by the Parish Clerk, has taken it upon themselves to act in an inappropriate manner and have had private discussions with SDDC and Derbyshire Police without consulting Full Council, or at least not all members of the Council, several of whom are deliberately kept in the dark by the Chair and Parish Clerk.

**Consideration for a public apology to be issued following the comments attributed to a former Willington Parish Councillor.** - I have asked for his to be included on numerous occasions and much to my dismay you have consistently challenged my rationale. It is really important that as a public body we accept that mistakes were made by a former Councillor and should therefore make a public apology. 'Willington Parish Council would like to apologise for the offensive derogatory comments made by a former Councillor in which he expressed personal views about the people of Liverpool. The views he expressed are in no way reflective of the views of Willington Parish Council and are solely attributed to the individual'. This item ties directly in with the Whistle Blowing Policy above.

**Legal Protection for Parish Councillors** - To have in place, guidance or a policy/procedure that clearly outlines the legal protection afforded to Parish Councillors. Councillors also need to understand their rights when facing inappropriate and abusive behaviour from both elected members and members of the public and the subsequent expenditure when defending impending complaints/legal action.

Your response below doesn't cover the serious issue I am raising.

**Data Protection and Confidentiality** - Information being withheld from Councillors. (with the exception of the Chair), when there is no justifiable reason to do so and no Standing Order or GDPR regulation supports such denial.

**Personnel/Staff related performance issues contained within the Clerk's Report submitted to Full Council at the Extraordinary Meeting held on 24th September 2019 and additional performance related issues** - Exempt item due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted under The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Section 1. It is NOT appropriate to discuss this item with the Clerk who is a member of Staff and the public present as this is a personnel/staff performance related issue specifically related to The Clerk.

[ EMAIL 15 ]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 26 November 2019 21:20  
**To:** [Willington PC Clerk](mailto:Willington PC Clerk)  
**Cc:** [Phillip Allsopp: rosslyn.casey@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:Phillip Allsopp: rosslyn.casey@willingtonpc.org.uk);  
[caroline.blanksby@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:caroline.blanksby@willingtonpc.org.uk); [john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk)  
**Subject:** Re: INTERVIEWS - CLERK (INFO) [REDACTED]

Evening

I cannot

believe that the organisation of the Locum is that bad that 21 hours before the interviews we do not know the venue. regards J Cullen

On 26 Nov 2019 13:28, Willington PC Clerk <[Clerk@willingtonPC.org.uk](mailto:Clerk@willingtonPC.org.uk)> wrote:

Good afternoon

Apologies for the late email but I have got to change the venue for the interviews tomorrow evening.

The times will remain the same.

I will confirm the new venue asap – hopefully later today, so would be grateful if you would keep an eye out for my email. Both candidates have been contacted

Once again, apologies for any inconvenience.

Regards

Deb

Debra Townsend

Locum Clerk

Willington Parish Council

DISCLAIMER

This email and any attachments are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual to whom it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient be advised that you have received this email in error and that any use, dissemination, forwarding, printing or copying of this email is strictly prohibited. If you have received this email in error please contact **The Clerk at Willington Parish Council** [clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk)

Senders and recipients of email should be aware that under relevant legislation, the contents may be monitored and will be retained. The contents of the email may have to be disclosed in response to a request. Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

[EMAIL 16]

**From:** Joe Cullen

**Sent:** 24 November 2019 13:35

**To:** 'Willington PC Clerk'

**Cc:** 'Phillip Allsopp'; john.houghton@willingtonpc.org.uk; andy@andy-mac-willington.co.uk;

claire.carter@willingtonpc.org.uk; jan.walters@willingtonpc.org.uk;

mark.bartram@willingtonpc.org.uk; paul.cullen@willingtonpc.org.uk;

██████████; 'Tim Bartram'; ██████████

**Subject:** FW: water supply arrangements

Afternoon. I'm copying all Councillors into this, so you do not need to do anything that would require me to report you for GDPR irregularities

I met up with the guy from SSW on Tuesday 19th November at 10-00am on TRPF.

His first comment to me was, did I know what it was about. I told him it was obviously about WPC not paying for water. I told him that the Locum had received an email from him, and I had asked could I see the email, this was at the PC meeting on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> November, after reading the email a short discussion took place, were the vice chairman, Houghton, made a statement that a few years back the developer for the homes by the allotments, had asked WPC could they use the water supply from the allotments, until they had their water supply connected up, he said that they offered to pay for the water, but WPC declined, saying that they did not pay for the water, so they could use it, but they would not charge them. [ That is on record ]

I told him the Locum asked for someone to volunteer to meet up with him and that was why I was there, because I had access to both TRPF and WBC.

He said that he had already been up to the allotments and seen where the builders had tapped into the water supply, but he asked why would WPC tell someone that they could use their water supply knowing that they were not paying for it in the first place, he said that this would have been a good opportunity for WPC to notify SSW about their water supplies, and start paying for them. He said that if they would have charged the developer for the water then they would have been in serious trouble.

So with him already knowing about the allotments, I never had to go up there with him, I just showed him what we had at TRPF and WBC, what he was looking for was where the supply was coming from, the supply to TRPF comes from behind the Sun Hall which years ago used to be Wharton's grocery shop and the supply to the bowls club comes from a connection on the drive leading to the bowls club.

I asked what the implications were and he said the SSW could only back charge 6 years, he said that all 3 locations would be having water meters fitted, they would also have to do some work on the supply to the allotments, regarding capping the supply that Peveril Homes tapped into, he said that it wanted capping off to SSW standards.

The stop tap to TRPF by the Sun Hall takeaway was seized so they would replace that when they put a new water meter in, there is a connection below the floor level at the bowls club which they will remove this will also be done when they put a new meter in.

He said that letting the builder tap into the supply by the allotments was the most serious thing that WPC had done, purely because of the amount of water, that they would need to use for their concrete, but it would be someone else's decision if there was to be any prosecutions. { Since speaking to him I looked it up on the SSW website and they imposed a fine of £4,000.00p on a builder that tapped into SSW supply with a stand pipe.} not exactly the same situation as WPC's, but you could say that WPC's was worse because not only were they stealing water, but they openly encouraged a third party to steal water, because they must have told Peveril Homes, the reason that they were not charging them for it, otherwise it would not make any sense for them not charging them.

Since this came up at the meeting I have looked into it, and on the agenda on Tuesday 10 March 2015

[32] Items of correspondence for attention

Persimmon request to use water supply from allotment for new site (At their cost) {Persimmon should read Peveril.}

As the vice chairman, Houghton stated, at the PC meeting on Tuesday 12th Nov 2019, this was discussed when they were building Peacehaven, this was actually on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2015, and, I personally objected to them allowing the builder to use water which was not ours to give, I also stated that I believed that WPC should inform SSW about not paying for any water, this all fell on deaf ears, but I thought that this would be in the minutes.

So I looked for the minutes for the meeting of Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2015, and guess what [ yes you've guessed correctly] there are no minutes, on the website for Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2015

but at the meeting on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April.

ITEM

1801 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 10TH MARCH 2015

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10th March 2015 were approved and signed by the Chairman subject to the deletion of the last sentence in item 1952 Land Swop on by-way which relates to matters taking place after the meeting.

So the minutes of the meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> March although they are not on the website, they were approved by the Chairman, who was the same person, who informed us at the meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> March that WPC did not pay for any water from SSW. So we should not charge the builder.

I have also spoken to some people whom I will not name, one was on the PC 40 years ago and he informed me that he knew WPC were not paying for water, another was on it in the late 80's and he knew.

The website will only allow me to go back as far as 2008, so the present councillors who were also, parish councillors before 2008 I cannot check on, without going up to Matlock and

having a look at the WPC records in the archives, but it's a fairly good bet that over the years lots of councillors have known and turned a blind eye.

I hold my hand up and state that I knew from March 2015, as did other people, it is also not rocket science to see that WPC get electric bills for TRPF and WBC but I have never seen a water bill. so as far as I am concerned WPC have been obtaining water illegally for 40/50 years, and there is only one word for that in my opinion and that is corrupt, no one individual councillor is to blame, but past and present councillors who knew should hang their heads in shame, as should WPC in general.

At the meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2019, I have it on record that the vice chairman, Houghton, stated that he knew about this from the time of the Peacehaven development, he also implicated me, saying I was at the PC meeting, and I said that I was, so because of this, I have delved into this and it does not make good reading for WPC.

As the vice chairman of the PC, Cllr Houghton is also Chairman of the Finance Committee and I would suggest that his position in both of these rolls now becomes untenable, because, and I'll put it bluntly as the guy from SSW did WPC were stealing water, and he knew about it. And as Chairman of Finance should have brought it to the attention of the Parish Council, long before now.

But collectively WPC are at fault, for the way that they have run certain aspects of their accounts for years.

How that fits in with WPC's NDP I don't know, can a council that has been so dishonest, about their water supply, for decades really expect people to take them seriously, regarding the Neighbourhood Development Plan. I also believe that the vice chairman and myself should stand down from the interview panel. How can we interview people? when our own integrity and credibility has been found to be wanting.

I also think that anyone involved in this dishonesty, should not hold the office of Vice Chairman, or Chairman of ANY committees.

Regards Cllr J Cullen

**From:** Willington PC Clerk [<mailto:Clerk@willingtonPC.org.uk>]  
**Sent:** 14 November 2019 09:33  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: water supply arrangements

Morning Cllr Cullen

Please see email regarding the water supply arrangements. I would be grateful if you could contact Chris to make any arrangements.

Many thanks for agreeing to do this.

Regards

Deb

Debra Townsend

Locum Clerk

Willington Parish Council

**DISCLAIMER**

This email and any attachments are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual to whom it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient be advised that you have received this email in error and that any use, dissemination, forwarding, printing or copying of this email is strictly prohibited. If you have received this email in error please contact **The Clerk at Willington Parish Council** [clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk)

Senders and recipients of email should be aware that, under current legislation, the contents may be monitored and will be retained. The contents of the email may have to be disclosed in response to a request.



Sent from Mail for Windows 10



**From:**  
**Sent:** 05 November 2019 13:38  
**To:** 'clerk@willingtonpc.org.uk'  
**Subject:** water supply arrangements  
**Importance:** High

Hi.

Can you arrange to meet up and discuss water supply arrangements and water regulation inspections at –

- Willington Cemetery / Allotments
  
- Willington Sports Ground
  
- Willington Bowls Club

As soon as possible please.

Thank you.

#####  
#####

Attention:

The information contained in this message and or attachments is intended only for the person or entity to which it is addressed and may contain confidential and/or privileged material. Any review, retransmission,