

Present

Councillor Mrs B S Fortune
B Griffiths

Councillor J N Smith

Independent Person

Mr K Bartlem

Parish Council Representative

Mr E Dennison

SHP.1

CHAIRMAN

THE DECISION:

That Councillor B Griffiths be elected Chairman for duration of the meeting.

(Councillor B Griffiths in the Chair)

SHP.2

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT

THE DECISION:

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during consideration of the items of business at minute no SHP.3 on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as the Panel was satisfied that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

SHP.3

COMPLAINT ABOUT DISTRICT COUNCIL MEMBER

Thirsk Ward

The subject of the decision:

The Monitoring Officer presented a report into allegations that a Member of Hambleton District Council had failed to comply with the provisions of the District Council's Code of Conduct by making disrespectful remarks.

Alternative options considered:

None.

The reason for the decision:

Having considered the Monitoring Officer's report the Panel decided that the Councillor was implicitly acting in a capacity as a District Councillor. Although not using a Council designation, the Councillor's comments could be seen by a reasonable member of the public as a Councillor commenting on another Council. In addition, the apology had been sent via the Councillor's District Council e-mail address.

The comment about a foreign criminal case was not relevant to the Code of Conduct.

However, the comment about a political organisation and another Council did treat those bodies with a lack of respect because they implied a lack of capability. The comments also brought the Councillor's office, although not the full District Council, into disrepute because they fell below the standards that a reasonable member of the public would expect of a Councillor.

The Panel noted the contrition of the Councillor, that the relevant Twitter account had been closed down and a full written apology had been given to the complainant.

THE DECISION:

That:-

- (1) the Councillor had breached the Code of Conduct; and
- (2) in the light of the actions already taken by the Councillor, no further action was required.

The meeting closed at 11.10 am.

Chairman of the Panel