

Present

Councillor R Hudson
M Rigby

Councillor J N Smith

Independent Person

Mr K Bartlem

Parish Council Representative

Mrs J Crampton

SHP.8

CHAIRMAN

THE DECISION:

That Councillor Hudson be elected Chairman for duration of the meeting.

(Councillor Hudson in the Chair)

SHP.9

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.10 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.10

ALLEGATION ABOUT A PARISH COUNCILLOR

The subject of the decision:

The Monitoring Officer presented a report about allegations that a Parish Councillor failed to comply with the provisions of the Parish Council's Code of Member Conduct.

Alternative options considered:

None.

The reason for the decision:

Having considered the Monitoring Officer's report, the accompanying documents and the representations of the parties, the Panel's findings were as follows:-

1. The Panel considered the allegations in the context of what it felt had been a contentious item on the agenda of the Parish Council meeting on 20 June 2013 and the significant and boisterous involvement of the public in the meeting.
2. In respect of the actual allegations, the Panel was satisfied that the Parish Councillor had raised his voice in the meeting and had been robust in getting his point of view across. It did not, however, think that he had shown a lack of respect as envisaged by the Code of Conduct.
3. The Panel did not think that any of the Parish Councillor's actions amounted to intimidation as envisaged by the Code.
4. The Panel did not think that the Parish Councillor questioned the authority of the Chairman sufficient to breach the Code.
5. In respect of the discussion at the meeting of 20 June 2013 of whether the Parish Councillor had voted twice at a public meeting in November 2012, the Panel felt that, whilst it was unfortunate that the Parish Councillor had chosen to pursue the issue at the June meeting, the question of how he had voted at the earlier meeting was not relevant to the current complaint. Whether he had told the truth about voting at the earlier meeting was not, in the context of how it was raised, (as a way of drawing attention to how the earlier meeting was conducted) a matter for the Code of Conduct.
6. Whether the Parish Councillor had a "hidden agenda" or had "colluded" with members of the public was not a matter for the Code of Conduct.

THE DECISION:

That:-

- (1) there had not been a breach of the Code of Conduct;
- (2) the Parish Council be notified of the Panel's findings and that the Parish Council be advised that it may wish to consider its arrangements for public participation in Parish Council meetings.

The meeting closed at 12.10pm.

Chairman of the Panel