



ST. CLEER PARISH COUNCIL Chairman Mrs Sue Harbord

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STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIR

I append below an extract of a statement I made at the recent Annual Parish Meeting on 23rd May, 2018. To be honest, I was not particularly happy to be making such a report, and that remains the case.

“Unfortunately, in the last six months there has been a fairly public campaign about the workings of the Parish Council by a very small minority of councillors. This is regrettable as it breaches the code of conduct and is currently under external investigation.

I feel it is essential that the Parishioners of this village know that the smooth and effective operation of your Parish Council is being hindered by the creation of a hostile working environment for both the employees and the diligent hard-working majority of the Council. This is being effectively challenged.

The time has come that the diversionary and divisive tactics of one or two to cease. The Council will work in accordance with the code of Practice, Standing Orders and the Officer Member Protocol to facilitate this.

As your Chair, I will do my utmost to work to improve St Cleer Parish Council. So that the Council can once again perform its duties of serving the electorate. The objective of most of your Councillors, is to serve the Parish, providing the services and facilities it needs, with respect, kindness and integrity.”

A complaint was made to the Cornwall County Council’s Monitoring Officer in this regard, specifically that:

- I breached Confidentiality in a ‘premeditated and malicious’ way and ‘delivered a personal attack’;
- I misused the time of the Officer (meaning the Clerk) by requiring that this was to ‘record and publish’ the same comment

In spite of providing Cornwall CC with an audio of the above it has been determined that “I can find no evidence to substantiate the alleged breaches” and as a result **“I have been unable to find a breach of the Code of Conduct I am rejecting the complaint”**.

You are more than welcome to make your own view – I understand the interest is at minute 2.42

https://soundcloud.com/user-736308777/annual-parish-meeting-23-may-18?utm_source=soundcloud&utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=facebook

Cornwall CC have made the following points:

- “A councillor is within their rights to have their own opinions and to express these”

- “Cllr Harbord has not specified which Councillor her comments are directed at”
- “Cllr Harbord is making a generalised comment and has not specified what or who it is in respect of, she is just making her opinion and views hears, which she is entitled to do”

Speaking your own truth, with respect, kindness and integrity, is my understanding of the base of democracy which as a Parish Councillor I value very highly.

I did indicate in my speech that a referral had been made to Cornwall Council Council’s Monitoring Officer about a ‘hostile working environment’.

For some this has been particularly acute and distressing. Not least because at times it has felt rather relentless.

I was duly re-elected by my peers on the 23rd May to continue in my role as Chair.

Further there was a vote of confidence in the Clerk held at the same meeting which was overwhelmingly supported.

We have learned today that the outcome of the external investigation mentioned above was found against Councillor Kevin Johnson and a consequence applied.

I would direct you to Cornwall’s Reports on such decisions, which will be put on their Website in due course, we have no influence on the timing of this or otherwise:

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/councillors-and-democracy/standards-committee-information/code-of-conduct-complaints/>

It is my sincerest wish that we can now get on with the task in hand, of improving the health and well being of the Parish without time consuming diversion and division.

Thank you

Sue Harbord
Chair