

STANDARDS HEARING SUB COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 August 2020 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Ball (Chairman)
Cllr. Raikes (Vice Chairman)
Cllr. Grint

Also Present: Subject Member
Complainant
Parish Clerk
Monitoring Officer
Independent Person
Investigating Officer
Senior Solicitor
Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

There were none.

2. Declarations of Interest

No additional declarations of interest were made.

3. Member Complaint 20.005

The Chairman moved and it was

Resolved: That under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public were excluded from the meeting when considering the report, on the grounds that likely disclosure of exempt information was involved as defined by Schedule 12A, paragraph 1 (information relating to any individual).

The Monitoring Officer presented the report which detailed the investigation into an alleged breach of the Dunton Green Parish Council Code of Conduct by a Member of that Council. He explained that the Complaint related to allegedly delivering leaflets to the Complainant and selected others. The allegation was that the Member had claimed to be delivering the leaflets on behalf of Sevenoaks District Council. The leaflets in question related to the collection of household waste and fly-tipping, threatening residents with prosecution. The Monitoring Officer set out that investigation had confirmed that the leaflets were not genuine Sevenoaks District Council documents.

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The Monitoring Officer set out the provisions which could have been breached and explained the sanctions that could be applied if the Hearing found a breach of the Code.

The Investigating Officer summarised his involvement in the investigation and that he had carried out interviews with all of those involved, and explained his views.

The hearing heard from the subject Member who explained what had happened as detailed within the confidential report.

Members took the opportunity to ask questions of the parties involved.

In response to questions the Investigating Officer explained that, although it was an offence not to present waste correctly, the Council had set procedures for dealing with the situations as they arose and letters would not be delivered to the public for them to distribute.

The Independent person explained that the Subject Member had contacted him during the investigation process. He explained that as the Independent Person it was important to consider what a reasonable person would think of the evidence provided.

The Chairman used his discretion to allow the Complainant to address the Hearing. In response to the Complainant the Investigating Officer advised that he had looked very carefully into the origins of the document which had been delivered to residents and was satisfied that the leaflet had not been produced by Sevenoaks District Council.

The Subject Member advised that he had not created the leaflets and that he had always been a proactive Member of the Parish Council and had been keeping an eye on the local area for any issues during lockdown.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and advised that following the close of the meeting the panel would meet and notify the parties of the outcome by a formal decision notice.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.50 PM

CHAIRMAN