

Our Ref: JF OCT 13/2020
Please Ask For: Mr Jim Fieldsend
E-mail: jim.fieldsend@bolsover.gov.uk
Direct Line: 01246 242472
Date: 31st May 2022

The Arc
High Street
Clowne
Derbyshire
S43 4JY

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Councillor Allison Beckett

By email to [REDACTED]

Mrs J.Fieldsend
Solicitor to the Council
and Monitoring Officer

Dear Councillor Beckett,

Allegation of breach of Code of Conduct MC OCT – 13/2020

Tibshelf Parish Council

I write in respect of the complaint against you in your role as a Tibshelf Parish Councillor and further to me sending you a copy of the Investigating Officers report on 6th May 2022.

I attach a further copy of the report. You will recall that there were several allegations however the investigating officer has concentrated on just one of the complaints. I have set out below the details of the complaint and the investigation officer's findings.

Dishonesty regarding a 3rd Party – September 2020.

Allegation: At the September meeting of Tibshelf Parish Council, during a discussion around the Tibshelf Neighbourhood Plan, you introduced a statement which she claimed to have been made by the Headteacher of Tibshelf Infant School, Mrs Zoe Andrews. A member of the public observing this contacted the Headteacher immediately after the meeting. Mrs Andrews was angry and alleged that you had fabricated the statement.

Mrs Andrews telephoned the complainant to advise that you had admitted to the lie and, furthermore, had promised to voice a retraction at the following Council meeting. Mrs Andrews said she wanted to be sure that other councillors were aware so she could be reassured that the retraction would indeed be aired and duly minuted at the October 2020 meeting. To date no retraction or apology has been made at any meeting of Tibshelf Parish Council.

Details of the investigating officer's findings are contained in the attached report. In summary he has concluded that there is evidence of a breach of the Parish Council's Code of Conduct as there is evidence of dishonesty which is one of the Nolan principles of public life.

Proposed Action

There are two courses of action available to me. Either I can seek to resolve this by way of an agreed resolution. Alternatively I can refer the matter to a formal hearing before members of Bolsover District Council's Standard Committee who will consider whether there has been a breach and decide on appropriate sanctions. Sanctions include asking the Parish Council to censure or reprimand you, recommending that the Parish Council remove you from committees or sub-committees, recommending that you be excluded from the Parish Council premises other than to attend Council meetings.

Despite the seriousness of the breach of the Code of Conduct, the Independent Person and I consider that it can be addressed without a hearing provided you would be prepared to make on the record:

- a retraction of the dishonest statements; and □
an apology to:
 - Mrs Zoe Andrews for attributing untrue statements to her; and ○
Other members of the Parish Council for misleading them

If this form of resolution is rejected then regretfully a Standard's Committee hearing will need to be held.

I am prepared to allow you until 24th June 2022 to respond to this letter. If you have failed to respond by that date I will assume that you do not wish to retract your statement or make an apology

Finally please note that the complainants are aware of the investigation officer's findings.

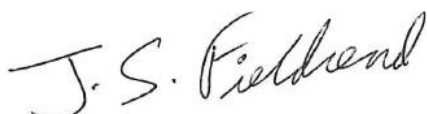
If you feel that I have failed to deal with this complaint properly, then the next step would be to make a complaint in writing to the Local Governance Ombudsman. The Ombudsman can be contacted as follows:

Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman Advice Team
P O Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH

Phone: 0300 061 0614, Text 'call back': 0762 481 1595

Electronically on the website: www.lgo.org.uk/making-a-complaint

Yours sincerely



Jim Fieldsend
Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer