



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COUNCILLORS DECISION NOTICE: TO DISPOSE OF COMPLAINT BY MEANS OF INFORMAL RESOLUTION

Complaint Concerning Parish Councillor W. Crossley

Background

I have received a complaint from East Staffordshire Borough Councillor Gary Raybould concerning the behaviour of Tutbury Parish Councillor William Crossley. The alleged behaviour took place at a meeting of Tutbury Parish Council held via Zoom on 21st September 2020. It is alleged that Cllr Crossley made comments about officers of East Staffordshire Borough Councillors, inviting inferences about the way in which ESBC officers were enforcing powers under Coronavirus legislation. In his complaint Cllr Raybould says that his wife is German and that because of this he is particularly concerned about Cllr Crossley's remarks.

I have spoken to Cllr Crossley and he has emailed me additional comments in response to the complaint. It is Cllr Crossley's belief that he inadvertently used the term "swastikas" in place of armbands and he says that he immediately apologised.

I have been able to view the incident which give rise to the complaint. Cllr Crossley refers to Borough Council officers with "swastikas on their badges"; and he gesticulates towards the left hand side of his body and his upper left arm as he says this. Contrary to Cllr Crossley's recollection, he made no apology until another Parish Councillor intervened a little while later, at which point Cllr Crossley did make an immediate apology for his remarks.

Decision

In consultation with the Independent Person I have determined that Cllr Crossley would benefit from refresher training on the Code of Conduct and the standards of behaviour expected of a Parish Councillor. I am happy to work with the Chairman of the Parish council to identify a suitable training provider and course or courses.

Summary of reasons for decision

Cllr Crossley's remarks were ill-judged and indicate a lack of respect for Borough Council officers. The remarks also invite a negative view of the work of Borough Council officers and the manner in which those officers discharge their professional duties. I give Cllr Crossley credit for apologising during the course of the meeting but I have also taken into account Cllr Crossley's failure to recognise the inappropriate nature of his remarks until this was pointed out by another Parish Councillor. By making these remarks Cllr Crossley has fallen short of the standards of conduct required of Parish Councillors, not least the obligation to provide leadership.

Notice of decision

This decision notice will be sent to the Complainants; to the Members against whom the allegations were made; and to the Parish Clerk. The decision will also be reported to the next meeting of the Council's Standards Committee.

Appeal of decision

There is no right of appeal for the Complainant or for the Councillor against a decision of the Monitoring Officer.

If someone feels that the Council has failed to deal with a Complaint properly, they may make a complaint through the Council's ordinary complaints process. This process would not re-consider the original complaint but would consider the way in which the complaint had been handled.

Terms of reference and Complaints Procedures

The Terms of Reference of the Standards Committee and its Complaints Procedures are available on the Council's website (www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk) and from the Monitoring Officer.

Additional Help

If you need additional support in relation to this decision notice or future contact with us, please let us know as soon as possible. If you have difficulty reading this decision notice we can make reasonable adjustments to assist you, in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

We can also help if English is not your first language.

Signed: Angela Wakefield

Date: 5th November 2020

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