

Resignation from the Council

It is with regret that we the undersigned are tendering our resignations as Councillors, This was an extremely difficult decision, as we were chosen to represent the electorate of Downham Market and have at all times done this to the best of our ability, conducting ourselves with integrity and dignity.

The continued and incessant bullying of the Town Clerk by Councillors orchestrated by Councillor Lawson, is not acceptable. The Clerk is a loyal, hard working and valued employee of the Council, and whilst we did everything in our power to protect her from this harassment, due to the inadequate legislation relating to conduct of Town Councillors we were unable to do more and have failed in our duty of care to her.

Therefore, we will not stand by and collude with the scurrilous behaviour of those Councillors, whose ongoing misogynistic, racist, homophobic, and generally bigoted discriminatory behaviour has been directed not only at the Clerk and her staff, but also at fellow Councillors and at members of the public whom they purport to serve.

Whilst they claim to have the best interests of the Town at heart, their motives are to self-serve and return the Council to its previously unlawful and non-transparent ways that we have fought so hard to make legal and transparent. They have systematically removed any diversity from the Council through their conduct and treatment of others and have sought to damage the reputation of anyone who disagreed with them, by pedalling their lies and misinformation, none of which have been proven despite our having asked them on numerous occasions to provide evidence to support their allegations.

These Councillors are frustrating the business of Council and cannot even be bothered to read the standing orders, understand their mandate, or vote on agenda items, we cannot stand by and watch them show such contempt for the electorate whom they are supposed to represent, undo the good work of the past few years, and damage the reputation of the Council with its residents, peers, and higher authorities.

Over the past two years the Council has lost some excellent dedicated Councillors due to the behaviour of Cllr Lawson and the other Councillors.

A Code of Conduct complaint regarding Cllr Lawson was filed with the BCKLWN monitoring officer in October of 2020. Two years later we are still waiting the outcome of this despite his conduct having been judged serious enough to warrant a standards committee hearing. We hope that the standards committee agrees that such behaviour is not acceptable and has no place in local politics or in our community.

Our concerns have been raised with our Local MP the Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss (Minister for Women & Equalities) the Police, and BCKLWN but so far, they have shown little or no support for the members of the electorate who have been subjected to this bullying and harassing behaviour.

Following our resignation, the Council will consist almost entirely of retired men over 50 who do not originate from Downham or its hinterlands. These individuals are not representative of the demographic of Downham nor do they have a willingness to represent anyone who differs from themselves.

Whilst resigning is the conscionable thing to do, we are concerned that the resulting reduction in the diversity, knowledge and experience of the council will have a detrimental impact on its ability to meet the needs of the electorate. We can only hope that the remaining councillors and those who replace us show themselves to be good quality, ethical councillors who abide by the legislation, standing orders and code of conduct and demonstrate good legal governance.

Whilst we shall no longer be on the Council, we will continue to monitor the progress and behaviour of the council with interest and will make ourselves available to support the residents of the town.