

Resignation from Downham Market Town Council

I am writing to you today formally, and with much regret, to say that I have reached the point where I can no longer serve as a Councillor on Downham Market Town Council and therefore tender my resignation to take effect on midnight, February 15th 2022. I do not take this step lightly, impulsively or without much heart searching but it is a decision I am comfortable with

I have been a Councillor for seven years, serving and representing the people of Downham Market, firstly at Borough and latterly Parish levels. It was my pleasure and privilege to do so, I have tried throughout that time. to support the leadership teams I have worked with, most recently the former Clerk to Downham Market Town Council

However, the last two years have become mired by extensive, unproven fake and equally outrageous accusations levelled against the Clerk and other Councillors, myself included, and the inappropriate behaviour by some Councillors currently serving on this Council towards the former Clerk.

Primarily these accusations have been made by one Councillor through a combination of Council based e mails, heavy use of social media and direct messaging Public meetings were called, and held, with the express purpose of undermining the Clerk and Council all of which were led by different individual Councillor's but which promoted and misrepresented information relating to the Council, to the community, These meetings were used , in part to devalue the name of the Clerk the Council whilst promoting certain agendas which were largely dictated by him.

Latterly in the Council chamber I have witnessed Councillors support his line of conduct, and newer councillors who have replaced those who resigned, do nothing but bring the debate back to the market, and its management. This alongside a rump of individuals who do not want change and are extremely willing to listen to the siren call of "good governance"

in effect they are agreeing to a return to poor governance and lack of transparent effective decision making, sadly these two groups now predominate the working practices of this Council

Downham Market Town Council should reflect on the fact that at the 2019 election it had a vibrant balanced Council, almost equal representation of men and women, with a range of ages from twenty-two to over eighty, working

and non working members, it was a unique situation for Norfolk, that promised much under the positive leadership of the then Clerk and the two Mayors that have been in place since the election

Two years and **sixteen, yes sixteen** resignations later the majority of whom have been female, we have as I noted, become a Council made up entirely of men, who have divided into two factions squabbling over process and failing to represent the people of the town that elected them. to put the town first, not the fact they are either market traders with their own personal agenda or others for whom the correct wording of the business agendas seems to be their rationale in the chamber and elsewhere

That the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk under its various leaders, and through the behaviours of various local Borough Councillors have had a role in this is of course a matter for future reflection

I also note that our MP the Minister for Women and Equalities seems to support an approach that favours one group, who are largely market traders, at the expense of the more serious issues of how the current Downham Market Town Council has failed and the role of women in local government and the issues they face as exemplified by the mass resignation of women Councillors over the preceding two years

I did not become a Councillor to be spat at, verbally abused in public, abused on social media on a regular basis, or harassed in my own home, I have no doubt there are those outside the Council who, because of the toxic atmosphere largely created by one Councillor, think this is appropriate behaviour and will continue to support him and who likewise feel that to treat an elected representative as I have been treated is appropriate It is of course not.

In conclusion when my personal experience is coupled with the unambiguous evidence before me of a Council lacking in transparent effective governance and riven with fractionalism and self interest, led by man who fails in his role of Councillor, well this means that I can no longer serve this community at this time, as a Councillor with the pride and passion I once had.

On a purely personal note, I find this both devastating and upsetting I wish I could believe that things would or could be better with the new direction the Council will be taking under the determined leadership he has influenced and promotes and that will replace me and others going forwards, sadly all the

evidence points to further and systematic failings occurring and thereby failing the community we and it are meant to serve