

MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF WELBOURN PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 3th MAY 2017 IN WELBOURN VILLAGE HALL AT 7.50 PM

PRESENT

Mr. Mr John Lucas (JL)

Chairman

Councillors: Mr John Storer (RS), Mr Stephen Spedding (SSg) , Mrs Katie Stark (KS), Mr Robert Cross (MC). Mr Robert Gibson(BG)

Mr Malcolm McBeath

Parish Clerk

05.01.00	<u>SITUATION</u> This was a closed session called at very short notice to decide how to respond to a complaint by a parishioner about alleged actions by the clerk. It had been timed late in the day to give as many members as possible the opportunity to attend. There had been a series of emails on the subject and the situation had become confused so the chairman wanted a resolution.	<u>ACTION</u>
05.02.00 05.02.01	<u>ACCEPTANCE OF REASONS FOR ABSENCE</u> Mr Short and Mrs Lunn were on holiday. Miss Huntsman had a prior engagement.	
05.03.00	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u> JL reminded members that he had been involved in the email exchanges but since the complaint was against the clerk he had no direct interest.	
05.04.00	<u>COMPLAINTS POLICY</u> Council examined the existing complaints policy and noted the specific reference to vexatious complaints which permitted the council to choose to ignore such persons. The requirement to address all complaints through the clerk was recognised.	
05.05.00 05.05.01 05.05.02 05.05.03	<u>DISCUSSION</u> It transpired that, due to the frequency, length and complexity of the emails in this matter and the practice of some softwares of concatenating threads, members had not be able to follow the story properly. Copies of each letter in the series were examined. The substance of the initial complaint was that the clerk had actively made public the planning notice about a proposed bungalow to the rear of no 2 Little Lane and that he had actively sought to encourage opposition to it. When it had been pointed out that it was the clerk’s job to make public notices public, the issue became the chairman’s refusal to continue the conversation. It was noted, however, that the plaintiffs had initially been informed of the need to submit all their points to the clerk and that the chairman had advised that he would not respond to further mails. The plaintiffs had persistently ignored this advice and had continued to harass the chairman. The clerk similarly had observed the Complaints Policy by not responding to indirect mails. The clerk denied the allegation of canvassing against the application and demonstrated his observations to Council in support of the design. He pointed out that the plaintiff was only offering unsubstantiated hearsay	

05.05.04	evidence about the alleged canvassing. The issue was then whether to set aside the Complaints policy and respond directly.	<u>ACTION</u>
05.06.00	<u>DECISION</u>	
05.06.01	Members agreed that proper professional advice was appropriate and that a totally independent panel should be convened to examine the allegations and recommend action.	clerk
05.06.02	It was agreed that KS would respond formally to this effect on the council's behalf to the plaintiff's final demand.	KS
05.07.00	The chairman closed the meeting at 2055.	