

Statement from Ruyton X1 Towns Parish Council 3rd October 2023

This statement is in response to a communication, received by the clerk, which was sent anonymously. As such, the Council's normal complaint procedure cannot be followed.

Taking now the points raised in the anonymous letter:

1. Firstly, informal meetings of councillors prior to the meeting on 5th September

The Parish Clerk has sought clarification from SALC and NALC and they have confirmed that;

- Should a parish council wish to hold discussions or pre-meetings on complex matters, the facts of which need to be understood, there is legally no reason why such meetings cannot be held
- Where any such meetings are held, there is no legal requirement for such meetings to be disclosed or made available to the public

2. Secondly, regarding Councillors with possible pecuniary interest voting in their own interest;

- Two of our councillors work as Agricultural Contractors within the parish area. Our Parish Clerk had sought legal advice from SALC and Shropshire Council Legal Dept on this before the meeting. SALC & SC Legal Dept stated that the councillors would not be construed as having a pecuniary interest in the matter, however due to the fact their road usage and nature of vehicle they might have an Other Registerable Interest. The correct process was followed for this with the Councillors seeking dispensation at the start of the meeting. The council voted on this with neither councillor voting on their own dispensation request.

3. Thirdly the anonymous correspondent raised concerns that the meeting was conducted improperly and the public were not being given enough opportunity to speak;

- During the meeting, there was robust discussion both during the public session and council session. Prior to the public session, in accordance with Standing Orders, the public were informed that the session would be 15 minutes and each speaker would be allowed three minutes to make their point. Due to the number of people present who might want to speak they were asked respectfully to be concise and not to repeat points a previous speaker had made. In accordance with Standing Orders the Chair extended the public

session to accommodate all those who wished to speak. Councillor Coldwell timed each speaker to allow the allotted time.

- There was some disruption later during the council's discussions from people who wished to speak again. They were reminded that the time for public participation had formally ended although they were welcome to remain to observe the meeting. This allows councillors to transact the business of the meeting.

4. The communication also made allegations against Councillor Eyles who was the Acting Chair of the meeting.

- Any complaints about the conduct of an individual Councillor is a matter for the Monitoring Officer at Shropshire Council, and should be addressed to them directly.
- Anyone wishing to make a complaint about the Parish Council will find the full complaints procedure on the Parish Council website.