

## **SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW – COUNCILLOR LAURA BADLAND (Complainant) AND VERINA WENHAM (INVESTIGATING OFFICER)**

Date 29 January 2025 – 3.45 pm

1. The interview was opened by the Investigating Officer (“IO”) setting out the format of the meeting. The IO explained that the Monitoring Officer at Blaby District Council had appointed her to carry out the investigation.
2. The IO set out the format of the interview. The interview was not being recorded but she would take notes of the interview and would send them to Cllr Badland to comment upon and approve. The investigation was confidential at this stage, however, the draft report produced at the end of the investigation would be circulated to her and Cllr Taylor for comments. The final report could be in the public domain and therefore the details of the interview could be made public. Cllr Badland noted this position.
3. The IO confirmed that the purpose of the interview was to give the Cllr Badland as the Complainant the opportunity to provide any further information in respect of her complaint about Cllr Paul Taylor’s behaviour towards her in posting comments about her on a local community group called “Sapcote News” on 28 November 2024 and his subsequent alleged behaviour towards her during and after the Sapcote Parish Council meeting on 4 December 2024.
4. Cllr Badland said that she had been a parish councillor on Sapcote Parish Council since June 2023. She said that before she became a councillor that she was aware that Cllr Taylor had a reputation for being blunt and at times difficult, but that when she became a parish councillor she wanted to give, in her words Cllr Taylor “the benefit of the doubt” and she said that she tried to be courteous and professional towards him and she tried to listen to his concerns.
5. Cllr Badland said that the situation with Cllr Taylor has deteriorated since she became a councillor.
6. Cllr Badland referred to the post by Cllr Taylor on “Sapcote News” on 28 November 2024. She said that Cllr Taylor’s post said that he had seen a white van in the area acting suspiciously. She said that Cllr Taylor commented that the people in the van looked “foreign”.

7. Cllr Badland said that she posted asking Cllr Taylor to adapt his language. She said that this was a catalyst. She said that after she posted her comments that she was “blocked” from “Sapcote News” and that after she was blocked she was made aware, by other people, that other negative comments posted had been posted about her, but that as she is blocked she does not have access to them. Cllr Badland said that the Chairman of the Parish Council may be able to provide copies of the subsequent posts.
8. Cllr Badland explained that the “Sapcote News” page was a community page and was often used by the parish council to post items.
9. The IO asked Cllr Badland about the Parish Council meeting on 5 December 2024, and specifically about the attendance of Ryan Keane the PCSO (“RK”).
10. Cllr Badland said that RK had not attended a parish council meeting for a long time but that he was always invited to attend and report. Cllr Badland said that his report was not a standing item on the parish council agenda.
11. Cllr Badland said that RK did attend meeting on 5 December 2024, and he was reporting on the main crimes in the area and what the parish council could do by way of messages to support its local community. Cllr Badland said that RK also provided a staffing update, as there were some capacity issues within the community safety team.
12. Cllr Badland said that as RK was addressing the meeting about the local crimes that Cllr Taylor turned towards her and said that he had posted about seeing a white van in the area but that he had been “called out”. Cllr Badland said that this was aimed at her but that she did not respond at this point as she did not want to make an issue of it.
13. Cllr Badland said that RK asked another question and then Cllr Taylor said to her that she had “called him out” about the posting about the white van and she said that he then said to her that ...” you need to keep out of my business”. Cllr Badland said that Cllr Taylor turned towards the participants in the room and explained how you can tell someone is “foreign” just by looking at them.

14. Cllr Badland said that she did not engage with Cllr Taylor on this, as he was clearly very angry, and she decided that he would not be receptive to her discussing this with him at this time.
15. The IO asked Cllr Badland how this incident made her feel. Cllr Badland said that she felt embarrassed and that she apologised to RK for Cllr Taylor's response.
16. Cllr Badland said that she felt threatened and intimidated, but she was trying to diffuse the situation. She said that Cllr Taylor's body language was aggressive and that although he was seated, he was pointing his finger towards her as he was talking to her.
17. Cllr Badland then explained that the meeting room was laid out in a "U" shape and that she was sitting closest to RK. She said that Cllr Taylor was sitting on the other side of the room to her.
18. Cllr Badland said that she then asked RK whether the parish council should encourage residents to report any issues they have direct to the Police and not just post something on "Sapcote News". She said that at this point Cllr Taylor shouted at her from across the room that did she know how hard it was to get hold of a police officer. Cllr Badland said that she was making a general point that concerns should be raised with the Police as well as on Facebook. She said that she was making a general point and did not refer specifically to the "white van" incident.
19. Cllr Badland said that there were members of the public present at the meeting who witnessed this behaviour.
20. The IO referred Cllr Badland to the element of her complaint about Cllr Taylor's alleged behaviour after the Parish Council meeting on 5 December 2024.
21. Cllr Badland said that to get to the car park from the meeting room at the Pavillion, that you have to walk down a path and then you have to walk

through a gap in a fence to get to the car park. She said that there was only one streetlamp.

22. Cllr Badland said that she left the meeting with the Vice Chairman, Cllr Peter Atkinson, and that the Chairman and the Parish Clerk were behind them initially, although they had stopped, so Cllr Badland continued walking to the car park with Cllr Atkinson.

23. Cllr Badland said that Cllr Taylor came out of his car and that he came "charging towards her" waving his hands and pointing at her. She said that his behaviour was very personal and overwhelming and scary. Cllr Badland said that Cllr Taylor was blocking her route to her car and that the only option for her was to turn around and go back into the Pavilion, however she said she could not as the Clerk was now locking the door. She said that she felt that she had no escape route.

24. Cllr Badland said that Cllr Taylor almost came out of nowhere, it was so fast. She said that Cllr Taylor got out of his van made direct eye contact with her and came straight "at her".

25. Cllr Badland said that she tried to diffuse the situation and that she kept saying to Cllr Taylor ..." I'm not engaging with this". She said that Cllr Taylor kept shouting at her "I'm warning you" "I'm warning you" "stay out of my business" "stay out of my business". She said that Cllr Taylor became agitated and that he told her to "stop commenting on Facebook" "stop commenting on Facebook".

26. Cllr Badland said that in an "act of madness" that she then responded to Cllr Taylor "freedom of speech" at which Cllr Taylor seemed taken aback. Cllr Badland said that she then said to Cllr Taylor "that enough Paul" and at that point Cllr Taylor stepped back and she could get to her car and the situation ended. Cllr Badland said that Cllr Taylor then left the car park.

27. Cllr Badland added that there were members of the public in the car park, who she said, saw a silhouette of Cllr Taylor come out of his car and that these two members of the public were distressed and decided not to leave the car park in case they had to intervene.

28. Cllr Badland said that when she arrived home that she just burst into tears. She said that she found the situation terrifying and that Cllr Taylor was so aggressive that, in that moment, she was scared about what could happen.
29. Cllr Badland said that the incident has had an impact on her private life. She said that she is scared that she might bump into Cllr Taylor in the village and that she is too scared to go to the local shop. She said that it was always on her mind that Cllr Taylor may appear.
30. Cllr Badland said that she had had no contact with Cllr Taylor until the parish council meeting in January 2025. She also said that she felt it was concerning that Cllr Taylor felt that it was appropriate to confront her after the council meeting at around 9.30 at night.
31. Cllr Badland said that since the incident that she has installed CCTV cameras her home after the erratic and unpredictable behaviour of Cllr Taylor.
32. Cllr Badland said that she was supported by her other council colleagues and that she had considered resigning, due to concerns about the safety of her family.
33. The IO concluded the interview by setting out the next steps and that she would send the draft summary note of the interview to Cllr Badland to approve.

End of Interview - 5pm