

Appendix D

SUMMARY NOTES OF INTERVIEW- COUNCILLOR PETER ATKINSON AND VERINA WENHAM (INVESTIGATING OFFICER) IN RESPECT OF CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINT

1. The interview was opened by the Investigating Officer ("IO") setting out the format of the meeting.
2. The IO explained that the Monitoring Officer at Blaby District Council had appointed her to carry out an investigation in respect of a complaint about the alleged conduct of Councillor Paul Taylor of Sapcote Parish Council. The complaint related to alleged behaviour during and after the parish council meeting on 6 December 2024. Councillor Atkinson had been identified as a potential witness to the behaviour complained of.
3. Councillor Atkinson confirmed that he was aware of the complaint and that he was happy to be interviewed as a witness in the investigation.
4. 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 Councillor Atkinson 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 the Subject member and the Complainant for comments.
5. The final report could be in the public domain and therefore the details of the interview would be made public. Councillor Atkinson noted this.
6. Councillor Atkinson said that he had been a parish councillor on Sapcote Parish Council (the Council) since 2020 and had lived in the village for 15 years. He is the sub postmaster at the village post office and said that it was good to be involved in parish life.
7. The IO asked Councillor Atkinson about his recollections of the Council meeting. Councillor Atkinson said that there had been an exchange between Councillor Taylor, who was subject to the complaint and Councillor Badland, who was the complainant, on the local "Sapcote News" Facebook page prior to the Council meeting on 5 December 2024. Councillor Atkinson said that Councillor Badland had asked Councillor Taylor to moderate his language as he referred to a white van that he had seen in the village which was he said was being driven by "foreigners". Councillor Badland asked Councillor Taylor not to use the term foreigners.
8. Councillor Atkinson said that he was present for the whole of the parish council meeting on 6 December 2024 as he has had unlocked the building prior to the start of the meeting. He said that he was present during the section of the meeting that Ryan Keane, the local PCSO addressed the Council about recent alleged criminal activities in the area.

9. Councillor Atkinson said that during this address to the meeting that Councillor Taylor add the opportunity to “have a go” at Councillor Badland about her comments on “Sapcote News”.
10. Councillor Atkinson said that he recalled that what Councillor Taylor said was inappropriate, that he said that he has a right to his own opinions, and he can say what he likes on “Sapcote News”. Councillor Atkinson said that he could not recall any further detail of the exchange during the meeting.
11. Councillor Atkinson said that at the end of the meeting after the public had left, Councillor Taylor also left the building. However, Councillor Atkinson, Councillor Badland, Councillor Requena and the Parish Clerk remained in the building for another 15 or 20 minutes.
12. Councillor Atkinson said that they then left the building. He was with Councillor Badland and he said that Councillor Requena and the Parish Clerk left the building after he and Councillor Badland, as the Parish Clerk was locking up the building.
13. Councillor Atkinson said that he and Councillor Badland were walking towards her car in the car park to the Pavillion. It was dark at this time. Councillor Requena and the Parish Clerk were a few minutes behind them.
14. Councillor Atkinson said that Councillor Taylor was sitting in his van in the car park when he and Councillor Badland got to the car park. He said that Councillor Taylor got out of his van and that he started shouting at Councillor Badland and waving his finger in her face. Councillor Taylor then said to Councillor Badland “don’t talk about my family”. Councillor Atkinson said that Councillor Taylor was pointing at her (Councillor Badland) and that he was “right in her face”.
15. Councillor Atkinson said that councillor Taylor is a “big man and that he was saying things about Councillor Badland’s husband and that he should not be saying things about his (Councillor Taylor’s) family.
16. Councillor Atkinson said that Councillor Taylor “marched towards” Councillor Badland and was shouting at her. Councillor Atkinson said that at this point he interjected and said to Councillor Taylor that he should not speak to Councillor Badland like that and that her husband was entitled to support her.
17. Councillor Atkinson said that Councillor Taylor did not respond to him and that he kept “going on at” Councillor Badland, telling her not to come near him, and ... “I’m warning you, keep your nose out of my business” and “don’t say anything about my family”. Councillor Atkinson said that after the exchange, which lasted a few minutes, Councillor Taylor got back into his van and drove away.

18. Councillor Atkinson said that Councillor Badland was clearly shaken by the exchange and that she said to him that she was gals he was there.
19. Councillor Atkinson said that Councillor Badland did try to respond to Councillor Taylor but that he did not listen to her.
20. Councillor Atkinson said that he texted Councillor Badland later that evening after the meeting to see how she was, as he was concerned about her after the exchange with Councillor Taylor
21. Councillor Atkinson said that all of this arose out of postings on Facebook.
22. Councillor Atkinson said that Councillor Taylor used Facebook continually in his personal capacity for self-promotion and that he used it for his business. Councillor Atkinson said that Councillor Taylors Facebook posts were in his personal capacity, but that everyone in the area knows that he is a councillor.
23. The IO asked if there was anything further Councillor Atkinson wanted to add and there was not. The IO concluded the interview by confirming that the next steps would be for her to send a summary of the interview to Councillor Atkinson to approve.

24. End of interview 18.40