

SUMMARY NOTES OF INTERVIEW BETWEEN ELINOR GRIMSLEY (“EG”) AND VERINA WENHAM – INVESTIGATING OFFICER

Date: 21 March 2025 10.00 hours

The Investigating Officer (“IO”) opened the interview by introducing herself and that she had been appointed by the Monitoring Officer at Blaby District Council (“the Council”) to investigate a complaint in respect of an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct by Councillor Paul Taylor of Sapcote Parish Council (“Subject Member”).

The IO asked EG if she was aware of the complaint, and she confirmed that she was aware of the basis of the complaint. The IO went on to set out the detail of the complaint against Councillor Taylor in that it was alleged that Councillor Taylor’s behaviour towards Councillor Badland, the Complainant during and after the Sapcote Parish Council meeting on 6 December 2024 was in breach of the Code of Conduct.

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 to EG for her 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 both Councillor Badland and Councillor Taylor. The final report could be in the public domain and therefore the details of the interview could be made public. EG noted this position.

The IO explained that as EG was in attendance at the Parish Council meeting her evidence would be an important part of the investigation.

EG said that she started working for Sapcote Parish Council in 2023 as an administrative assistant and that she then became the Assistant Parish Clerk, then Acting Parish Clerk. She became the Parish Clerk on a permanent basis on 17 March 2025.

EG said that she was present for the whole of the meeting on 6 December 2024. She said that she opened and closed the building, The Pavillion, for the meeting.

The IO asked EG about the meeting on 6 December 2024 and specifically about the alleged interaction between Councillor Badland and Councillor Taylor during the update being provided to the meeting by Mr Ryan Keane the local PCSO (RK).

EG said that RK attended a parish council meeting once a year to provide local crime statistics to the parish council. She said that these would be reported in the minutes and that she would then circulate the minutes.

The IO asked EG if the update from RK was an agenda item. EG said that it was not. She said that it was not council business but that it was an update on local policing that she would report on the Sapcote Parish Council page, and she would also place on local community page "Sapcote News" as it was widely used in the community.

EG said that RK was communicating the statistics for the parish and the local area to the meeting, when Councillor Taylor interrupted and said..." what about the white van that has been driving around suspiciously. I've posted about it on Facebook have you seen it or are you aware". EG said that Councillor Taylor's tone was abrupt, but that was quite normal.

EG said that RK responded that he was not aware of this. EG said that at that point Councillor Badland spoke and asked RK whether Facebook was monitored by the Police, and she asked would the Police have seen this post or should Councillor Taylor have reported it to the Police.

EG said that at that point Councillor Taylor said to Councillor Badland that "I'm not speaking to you; you keep your nose out of my business. I'm not talking to you". EG said that Councillor Taylor's tone was abrupt and that when he spoke to Councillor Badland, he was pointing his finger at her. EG said that Councillor Taylor was clearly addressing Councillor Badland

EG said that she had some hearing impairment however she could clearly hear Councillor Taylor.

EG said that then Councillor Badland tried to defend herself and to diffuse the situation by saying that she was not referring to the Facebook interaction, but that she was just asking if the Police monitored Facebook and should it be raised with the Police.

EG then said that she considered that Councillor Taylor had "retasked" his description of the drivers of the van that he had posted on Facebook.

EG said that she thought Councillor Taylor was now insinuating that as he knows so many people in the area that he knows if people are local or not, and it appeared that he was referring to them as local or not as opposed to being "foreign" which is what he posted on Facebook. EG said that she thought he was trying to "disguise" what he was saying about where the people in the van were from.

EG said at that point Councillor Badland said, "let's just stop" and she apologised to RK as the discussion had been confrontational.

EG said that Councillor Badland had been calm and collected throughout the interaction and was using a calm tone of voice. EG said that she thought Councillor Badland was trying to diffuse the escalating confrontation. EG said that after this and for the rest of the meeting she was withdrawn and quiet.

EG confirmed that the meeting finished at 21.06 hours. She said it was dark outside. She said that Councillor Taylor left a couple of minutes later and that he did not stay to put away the tables and chairs. EG said that she and other councillors including

Councillors Badland, Requena and Atkinson stayed behind and closed down the meeting. EG said that they all left the building at around 21.20 or 21.25.

EG said that she did not witness anything in the car park after the meeting as she was locking the door of the building. She said she was not aware anything had happened until Councillor Badland said, "did you just see that, I can't believe it has happened". EG said that Councillor Badland was physically shaken, upset and distressed.

The IO concluded the interview by setting out the next steps and that she would send a draft summary note of the interview for EG to approve.

End of interview 10.50