

14 October 2015

Deputy Monitoring Officer - Jeff Hughes

East Herts Council

Council Offices

Wallfields

Pegs Lane

Hertford

SG13 8EQ

Cllr Dr Anthony D Baxter



Dear Mr Hughes thanks for your time on the phone last week discussing the case of a Councillor (Mr Ian Hunt) on the Much Hadham Parish Council who in my opinion behaved very badly at a our last Parish Council meeting on the 6th October 2015. Since that meeting I have received three letter of complaint from fellow Councillors, two from members of the public present at the Parish Council Meeting and from the Clerk to the Parish Council John Ingham.

Having discussed the matter with our Clerk and yourself it seems the most appropriate course of action is to have the actions of Councillor Hunt investigated under a potential breach of the Code of Conduct.

Please accept this letter as my complaint as the sheet in the complaints form is not big enough.

On the 6th October we had a Parish Council meeting held in the Green Tye Mission Hall. To be concise, one of the Parish Councillors Ian Hunt made a series of allegations and offensive remarks to members of the pubic, Parish Councillors and the Clerk. The background as to why he came to make these statements is included in my Chairmans statement (appendix 1). You can also take my statement as a letter of complaint.

Following the meeting I received letters of complaint about Cllr Hunts conduct from three fellow councillors, Cllr Mrs Selina Bannerman (Vice Chairman) [REDACTED] Cllr Mr Richard Key [REDACTED] and Cllr Mr Michael Keogh [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Their statements are attached appendixes 2,3 and 4 respectively. I also received letters of complaint from two members of the public, Mr John Carey [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and Mr Blaise Morris [REDACTED] Their statements are attached appendixes 5 and 6 respectively. Finally I received a complaint from our Clerk, Mr John Ingham, [REDACTED] Attachment included appendix 7.

I have attached two more e-mails (appendix 8 and 9) which have some additional relevant content.

In summary from the events at the PC meeting I am asking the Monitoring officer to investigate whether Cllr Hun [REDACTED] broke Code of Conduct rules in the following cases:

- 1) Falsely alleging that the Pavilion Committee had spent tax payers money without due process
- 2) Falsely alleging that the Clerk had not fulfilled his duties adequately
- 3) Bullying the Clerk
- 4) Being disrespectful to Chairman, fellow PC's, the Clerk and members of the audience

I have spoken to Carina Helmn (Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils, [REDACTED] and she has advised me that the allegations of disrespect and bullying towards the Clerk should also be managed as a disciplinary matter within the Parish Council and she is providing assistance on that.

I have in my possession several hundred e-mails which are related to these matters in correspondence and can give these and any other information you require on request.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Cllr Dr Anthony D Baxter

Much Hadham Parish Council

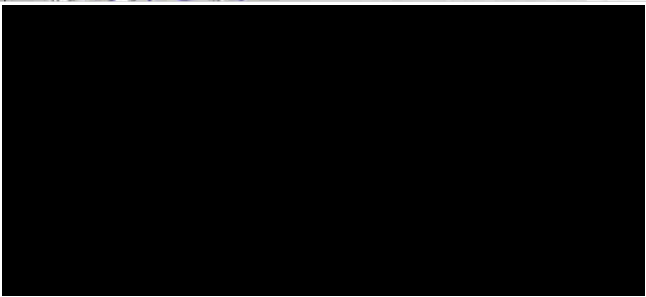


EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMPLAINT FORM : CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS

A. Your details

1. Please provide us with your name and contact details. Anonymous complaints will only be considered if there is independent evidence to substantiate the complaint.

Title:	DR
First name:	ANTHONY
Last name:	BAXTER
Address:	
Contact telephone:	
Email address:	
Signature:	
Date of complaint:	13/ October / 2015

Your address and contact details will not usually be released unless necessary or to deal with your complaint.

The following people may see this form:

- Monitoring Officer of the Council
- Standards Committee members
- Council's Independent Person(s)
- The subject member(s)
- the Parish Clerk (if applicable)

If you have serious concerns about your name and a summary, or details of your complaint being released, please complete **Section C** of this Form and also discuss your reasons or concerns with the Council's Monitoring Officer.

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Please tell us which complainant type best describes you:

- ☐ A member of the public
- ☒ An elected or co-opted Member of the Council
- ☐ An independent member of a Standards Committee
- ☐ A Member of Parliament
- ☐ A Monitoring Officer
- ☐ Other council employee, contractor or agent of the Council
- ☐ Other ()

2. Equality Monitoring Form - please fill in the attached form.

B. Making your complaint

3. Please provide us with the name of the Member(s) you believe have breached the Council's Code of Conduct:

Title	First name	Last name
MR	IAN	HUNT

4. Please explain in this section (or on separate sheet(s)) what the Member is alleged to have done that you believe breaches the Code of Conduct. If you are complaining about more than one Member you should clearly explain what each individual person has done, with dates / witnesses to substantiate the alleged breach.

It is also important that you provide all the evidence you wish to have taken into account. For example:

- You should be specific, wherever possible, about exactly what you are alleging the Member said or did. For instance, instead of writing that the Member insulted you, you should state what it was they said or did to insult you.
- You should provide the dates of the alleged incidents wherever possible. If you cannot provide exact dates it is important to give a general timeframe.

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

- You should confirm whether there are any witnesses to the alleged conduct and provide their names and contact details if possible.
- You should provide any relevant background information or other relevant documentary evidence to support your allegation(s).

Please provide us with the details of your complaint. Continue on a separate sheet if there is not enough space on this form.

Please see separate attachments.

(Continue on separate sheet(s), as necessary)

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

C. Confidentiality of complainant and the complaint details

Only complete this next section if you are requesting that your identity is kept confidential

5. In the interests of fairness and in compliance with the rules of natural justice, we believe Members who are complained about have a right to know who has made the complaint and the substance of the allegation(s) made against him / her. We are, therefore, unlikely to withhold your personal details or the details of your complaint unless you have good reasons to believe that you have justifiable grounds, for example:
- to believe you may be victimised or harassed by the Member(s) against whom you are submitting a written complaint (or by a person associated with the same); or
 - may receive less favourable treatment from the Council because of the seniority of the Member against whom you are submitting a written complaint in terms of any existing Council service provision or any tender / contract that you may have or are about to submit to the Council.

Please note that requests for confidentiality or requests for suppression of the personal and complaint details will not automatically be granted. The Assessment Sub-Committee will consider the request alongside the substance of your complaint and the Monitoring Officer will then contact you with the decision. If your request for confidentiality is not granted, we will usually allow you the opportunity, if you so wish, of withdrawing your complaint.

However, it is important to understand that - in exceptional circumstances, where the matter complained about is very serious - we may proceed with an investigation (or other action) and may have no choice but to disclose your personal and complaint details, because of the allegation(s) made, even if you have expressly asked us not to.

Please provide us with details of why you believe we should withhold your name and/or the details of your complaint:

(Continue on separate sheet(s), as necessary)

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

D. Remedy sought

7. Please indicate the remedy or remedies you are looking for or hoping to achieve by submitting this complaint.

I would expect Cllr Hunt to be severely reprimanded about his conduct towards fellow councillors, the clerk and members of the public and made to apologise to those people he has offended.

(Continue on separate sheet(s), as necessary)

E. Additional information

8. Complaints must be submitted in writing. This includes fax and electronic submissions. Frivolous, vexatious and politically motivated tit-for-tat complaints are likely to be rejected.
9. In line with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, we can make reasonable adjustments to assist you if you have a disability that prevents you from making your complaint in writing. We can also help if English is not your first language.
10. If you need any support in completing this form, please contact the Monitoring Officer as soon as possible.

Monitoring Officer Contact details:

The Monitoring Officer – Simon Drinkwater
East Herts Council
Wallfields
Pegs Lane
Hertford
SG13 8EQ

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Monitoring Form – Local Assessments of Complaints Standards Committee - Assessment Sub Committee

Working towards equal opportunities

East Hertfordshire District Council is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity in both employment and service provision. We seek to ensure that no person receives less favorable treatment on the grounds of gender, race, or ethnic origins, marital status, disability, age, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, religion, trade union involvement or political belief or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

White

White British
White Irish
Any other White
background

☒

Mixed

White and Black
Caribbean
White and Black
African
Any other mixed
background

☐

Asian

Indian
Pakistani
Bangladeshi
Any other Asian
background

☐

Black

Caribbean
African
Any other Black
background

☐

**Chinese
or other
ethnic
group**
Chinese
Other

☐

*Categories used are those utilised by
the Office of Population Censuses and
Surveys

Do you have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on your ability that you wish to declare under the Disability Discrimination Act?

Yes

☐

No

☒

Appendix 1.

Chairman's Statement

09/10/15

On the 6th October, I was in my study preparing for the upcoming PC meeting. At around 6.00pm, (1.5 hours before the scheduled start of the PC meeting - held at 7.30pm at Green Tye Mission Hall) I received a call from Cllr Ian Hunt who told me "I am calling you out of courtesy to inform you that I will be proposing a motion to disband the Pavilion Committee and I am going to read out a prepared speech to explain why". I was very surprised so I asked why. Cllr Hunt said that as the Pav Comm had not been properly instituted and constituted it didn't actually exist. As it didn't exist, spending tax payers money without any terms of reference or a valid constitution, or held meetings or circulated minutes which he had heard was a widespread concern amongst villagers with therefore illegal. I told Cllr Hunt that he was talking rubbish, the Pav Comm was a lawfully constituted Sub-committee of the Parish Council with full delegated authority, that had been agreed on that basis to operate the newly refurbished Pavilion. That decision had been voted on (unanimously) by the PC and the proposal had been blessed by the Clerk. I said that as it happened, we wanted to make this position more clear and that now the Pavilion had been open for 5 weeks now since the 31st August (Fete Day) and now we understood better the operating situation we were now in a position to do so. I told Cllr Hunt that In fact, John Carey who is the Vice Chair of the Pav Comm was going to turn up at the PC meeting this evening with all the agendas and minutes of the 4 Pav Comm meetings held and with a Constitution that had been agreed at the time (in June 2015) and to propose that we were now going to expand the Constitution and operating rules asap. Furthermore, I told Cllr Hunt that tax payers money was not being spent but donations from the buy a brick campaign and other sources.

Cllr Hunt was still dismissive of the sorts of controls and procedures that had been put in place and repeated that in his opinion the Pav Comm was not fit for purpose and he was still going to propose its disbandment. I said "Ian, you are a procedures man, you understand how to write these documents why don't you help the Pav Comm write the updated Constitution, Terms of Reference and other documents - you would be a hero rather than looking like someone who has got it in for the Pav Comm. Cllr Hunt said he didn't understand why the Pav Comm hadn't done it themselves after all he had done the same thing single handed for the Neighbourhood Plan committees. I again said the PC has never had this sort of written documentation to regulate sub committees - no one had that experience, why don't you help them - you would look like a supportive colleague and it would do you some good because as you might have gathered he (Cllr Hunt) was the most unpopular person on the PC and if he tried to disband the Pav Comm in the way he was suggesting he would be the most hated man in the village. Would he, do me a favour as Chairman and help the Pav Comm? He said that on the contrary many, the majority, of people in the Village supported what he was proposing to do, and whilst he would think about my proposal he would not commit to it. I said, "Ian, if you go ahead with your proposal I will not be responsible for the consequences" knowing as I did that such a proposal was tantamount to putting a match to a tinderbox given the emotions surrounding what the Pav Comm members felt was a succession of injustices, innuendo, accusations, obstructiveness and downright rudeness from certain members of the village, mainly associated with the Sports Association. The antipathy between the Pav Comm and the SA is a long running saga and a suppurating sore which I can go into separately. The matter was left as it was, I was not certain Cllr Hunt would agree with my request but I hoped that I had used persuasive argument for him to desist.

A thought occurred to me at that point, why hadn't Cllr Hunt raised his concerns with me before? He had voted to support the setting up of a Pav Comm in June as a sub-committee of the PC with delegated authority and he had not mentioned the subject once since then. If he had genuine concerns why hadn't he raised the subject either in council or with me separately - because he definitely hadn't. Why had he left it to the 11th hour to raise the subject and not given me any notice of his intentions?

I then phoned John Ingham, our Clerk, and informed him of the discussion I had just had with Cllr Hunt. John said Cllr Hunt could not propose to disband the Pav Comm as it was not on the agenda and he would need 7 days (?) notice to propose an emergency motion which of course he hadn't. I was hugely relieved and figured that my proposal for Cllr Hunt to help the Pav Comm would be a suitable compromise to him as whilst he could not disband the Pav Comm he could at least have a hand in making it even more procedurally accountable which appeared to be his main concern.

I then phoned the Vice Chair Selina Bannerman and informed her of both conversations and my thoughts on the situation. I asked the VC to call John Carey to make sure he articulated clearly that meetings had been properly convened, agendas circulated, minutes taken, actions approved etc and that the Pav Comm was keen to expand their documentation more tightly - all of which was going to be covered but I wanted to make sure that this message was understood by all.

I went to the Green Tye Mission Hall with a bit of a sense of trepidation – what was Cllr Hunt going to do?

The meeting started fine, introductions including welcoming a new councillor Penny Taylor and agreeing her new portfolio roles, apologies, previous minutes (a couple of minor corrections identified by Cllr Hunt), all went as per usual and then on to Residents Comments. I said at this point (in fact I Had meant to mention this in my first address but forgot) that as we had a full agenda and two of my fellow Cllrs had told me that they needed to be home by 10.30, we should aim to finish the meeting at 10.00am. I said that Residents comments in the standing orders were limited to 20 mins in total with 3 mins per person (I confess I do not always follow this rule and have always given residents all the time they want to raise issues that are important to them within reason) for good timekeeping reasons.

The first question was from Ms Alex Farmer who asked 'can you tell us how much more tax payers money over the builders costs and the separate architects fees is going to be spent on the Pavilion. I understand that items have not been approved have been purchased for example a TV and a coffee maker' Cllr Bannerman said that the Pav Comm had not used any Tax payers money but donations which had been given from the public. Ms Farmer continued this line of questioning and added that there was a lack of a properly constituted committee with terms of reference and that tax payers monies had been spent without the authority of the PC.

One might reasonably assume that Mrs Farmer and Cllr Hunt were singing from the same rehearsed hymn sheet. John Carey confirmed he had bought the TV out of his pocket and it was pointed out that the coffee maker was bought by the lady planning to supply refreshments from the pavilion.

The second question was from a Mrs Weatherall who persistently said that she felt that she had been misled over the buy a brick campaign, that she had spent £50 buying 5 nominated bricks for her family and she thought they were paying for the actual fabric of the pavilion and not to pay for the toilet cleaner! and certainly not for a TV for children. Vice Chair Bannerman tried to answer the questions and pointed out that the monies raised from the buy a brick campaign and other donations was in part to be used to furnish the Pavilion for the opening on Fete day, and to enable the Pavilion to be fully functional for its stated purpose which was to provide facilities to enable sporting events to be better supported and encouraged. The statement was repeated 5 times as I recall despite all reasonable efforts to answer the question. It seemed at no answer would satisfy the Parishioner and in retrospect I should have called a halt to the line of questioning earlier than I did.

Councillor Bannerman as a result of this goading stood up, walked over to Mrs Weatherall and handed £50 in notes saying "if you feel that you have been misled please have your money back".

Mrs Weatherall was clearly unhappy and walked to the front of the room and handed me the money back saying she did not want to receive it. Mrs Weatherall and a colleague then left the meeting. Cllr Bannerman handed me a note saying she was going to apologise to the meeting following this. I said wait until the end of the meeting and I will also apologise on behalf of the PC.

As we progressed down the agenda we came to the Pavilion Committee item. Mr John Carey (VC Pavilion Committee) stood up and read from his notes about what had been achieved with the Pavilion, that meetings had been held and he produced the various agendas and minutes of the meeting. He said that he now wanted to update the constitution and terms of reference and intended to do so by the date of the November meeting.

At this point, I asked Cllr Hunt if he would be willing to help the Pav Comm in this endeavour as he has the acknowledged experience and qualities to do so.

Cllr Hunt said that he would do this but before he did he wanted to make a few points and outline the conditions upon which his help would be secured. He then read a speech from a prepared document and repeated the allegations that he had said to me earlier. I have to say it was the most vituperative and insulting speech I have ever heard. Given the earlier fractiousness it was exceptionally foolhardy in my opinion to read out his speech and was guaranteed to cause massive discord. The contents of the speech have been covered eloquently elsewhere. It was particularly presumptive of Cllr Hunt to take it upon itself to apologise to the meeting for the conduct of the PC without reference to the Chairman.

Cllr Hunt specifically accused the Clerk of not handling the financial governance of the Pavilion Committee properly.

Cllr Hunt's speech was applauded by the group of Sports Association members (about 5) who were in attendance.

I made a verbal statement of my own which was to the effect that the Pavilion Committee of which I was Chairman had done nothing wrong, but that we were working to update the paperwork and would be grateful for Cllr Hunt's input and that it was not beyond the wit of man for us all to work together to deliver an excellent facility for use by all villagers and that we should all go home and look in the mirror and ask ourselves if what we were doing was in the best interests of the Parish. There was a round of applause following this.

Cllr Hunt later on in the meeting made some comments about training courses he had been on and that we couldn't as PC's just wing it at meetings. "It was a dereliction of duty for Councillors not to go on courses and we were letting the Parish down if we didn't". Several of my colleagues were horrified at this sanctimonious tirade of self-righteousness and said they couldn't all commit to regularly attend courses because of work and family commitments.

At the end of what was a bruising and damaging meeting where I felt the Cllr Hunt had caused enormous disruption and set us back as a PC a long way in terms of our perception within the community from his baseless inaccuracies which he gave the perception to the residents as being absolute fact.

I was appalled at the lack of collective council responsibility and respect shown to the meeting as a whole by Cllr Hunt.

John Ingham asked Cllr Hunt for a copy of his notes to help write the minutes which Cllr Hunt customarily does and Cllr Hunt flatly refused.

I decided to wait a couple of days to hear what my colleagues thought about Cllr Hunt's performance and it wasn't long before I was made aware that the whole village was under the impression the Pavilion Committee had been acting recklessly with public funds and I knew that serious damage had been done to the reputation of the Parish Council and to me as Chairman.

Several of my colleagues wrote (without any prompting at all from me) to me complaining about Cllr Hunt's conduct, I also received two written complaints from members of the public and one from the Clerk. I have also had sight of two e-mails from other members of the public who have expressed great disquiet at Cllr Hunt's conduct and motives.

I am very surprised that after 6 days since the PC meeting and being in receipt of all the complaint letters Cllr Hunt cannot find it within his heart able to apologise for the hurt and distress he has caused.

I took advice from East Herts District Council legal department (Jeff Hughes) and have decided that the best and most appropriate path is for the PC to report Cllr Hunts action as a potential breach of the Code of Conduct rules for Parish Councillors.

Following the PC meeting on Tuesday, John Carey asked Cllr Hunt to help him with the upgrading of the constitution and terms of reference as we agreed at the PC meeting. Cllr Hunt and Mr Carey exchanged nearly 30 e-mails during the day (I was copied in on all of them and have records should anyone want to see them) with Cllr Hunt insisting on various preconditions before he would volunteer his assistance. I was pretty sure that Cllr Hunt was procrastinating for reasons I cannot fathom and was not going to help Mr Carey with an action I am sure we all agree is important to be carried out quickly yet thoroughly. I took the decision to rescind the request to ask for Cllr Hunts help and wrote the Constitution and terms of Reference myself (ably assisted it must be said by the excellent pro-forma document that Cllr Hunt wrote for the NP Committee). These have been circulated to the Pav Comm for their review and once they have been commented on they will go back to the PC (including Cllr Hunt) for their comments and hopefully adoption at the November meeting.

ADB091015



Appendix 2

Tony Baxter [REDACTED]

Private and confidential

3 messages

Selina Bannerman [REDACTED]

Wed, Oct 7, 2015 at 10:11 PM

To: Tony Baxter [REDACTED] John Ingham [REDACTED]

Cc: "<ianhunt@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk>" <ianhunt@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk>, Jan Liversage <janliversage@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk>, Justin Godfrey <justingodfrey@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk>, Alex Young [REDACTED] Mike Keogh <mikekeogh@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk>, Richard Key [REDACTED] Penny Taylor [REDACTED]

Without prejudice

Dear Chairman

Last night the actions of Cllr Hunt were deeply upsetting and offensive. His behaviour has since he joined the PC become more and more dictatorial and bullying in terms of making out that of we don't act or behave in a manner he sees fit or a style that he approves of, that we are not doing our job properly or worse.

The actions of Cllr Hunt in attacking the work of the Pavilion Committee last night and undermining its integrity in a public meeting brought the Council into disrepute and should be classed as disorderly conduct unbecoming of a Councillor. What he said should have been mentioned out of meeting to either you as Chairman of the Committee or myself as a member. Members should not be seen to be "airing their dirty washing in public". Not only did he wash his laundry but he accused the members of the Pavilion committee of misconduct at best and gave a speech when asked if he would help to write the constitution to this satisfaction, which was slanderous, insulting, inaccurate and totally unfair. His written diatribe was pre prepared and he was working from one sheet to another so one could assume he had doctored his original comments somehow.

Regardless, what he read out was a list of items that he accused the the PavCom of not having done, including accounting etc, he started by saying that as far as he was concerned it didn't even exist. He made sure that the entire room left with the view that the whole thing was mismanaged and had no accounting for expenses. This in turn has now led to the question of integrity of all those members of the Pavilion Committee- myself, Mike Keogh, John Carey, Annica Farley and Richard Key. Its all highly insulting.

He said that we had acted without any authority, clarity, purpose, aim, constitution, etc etc and has not made his notes available. The public will have been left with the notion from his speech that we are possibly all corrupt. It was unprofessional, inaccurate and disgraceful. I stated once he had finished that i thought it was highly offensive. I stated also that we on the Pavcom should be taken in good faith and that we were highly visible and accountable and that just because its not in his preferred format doesn't make it invisible.

As you know that I have paid for everything out of my pocket and claimed it back for the pavilion, with receipts - whilst we wait months for a bank account. This enabled us

to provide the pavilion for rent straight away because i was able to make CC purchases. Now because of that i now feel open to more critics from Cllr Hunt and refuse to have anything further to do with helping operate the pavilion. This can only hurt the Parish. What Cllr Hunt did last night was accuse a group of hard working and devoted parishioners and Councillors of misconduct .

Additionally, by threatening before the meeting to propose to disband the Committee to no-ones benefit, it became immediately apparent he was creating more harm than good. How would that help anyone? How would that benefit the Parish ?It just put everyone on edge and especially with the over use of the word ' illegal' as if we were intentionally par-taking in some criminal act. He used the word illegal more than once .

I believe he committed slander against me/the Pavcom and I am taking legal advice . Why would we want to put ourselves through the unpleasantness of those accusations and that which have been fuelled in the audience for nothing other than the potential to be accused of behaving illegally . I have no issue with tick boxing and I understand why it's there but not at the detriment of actually utilising the facility .AT this rate the Clerk and the Pavcom will all resign rather than work with him as its so unpleasant. We dont get paid and take a huge amount of time energy and our own money to be part of the Parish Council . I did not do this job to be accused of acting illegally and being treated so badly.

By Cllr Hunt's actions last night I have withdrawn all my efforts to assist in the Village Hall as I don't want to be accused of any wrong doing with any builder that I may or may not know.I dont trust him at all . He assumes the worse in situations and people judging by his comments. Since he joined the PC he has arrived any notion of team work and instead facilitated an environment of negative, critical and passive aggressive, bullying behaviour . All he has done is hurt the parish by throwing susicion on us and relaying that to the public and reducing any voluntary efforts on our part to assist and make an effort for the parish . Its now a miserable stressful atmosphere and i would frankly rather be with my family. The real shame is that the 95% of people who are living what we do are not at meetings. The same people come to complain about their same issues and He is now facilitating this.

Additionally Chairman, i recall Cllr Hunt's last email regarding the £1200 that was assigned to the goals and shed and alleged that we had as a Pc acted illegally . I also understand that Penny Taylor repeated this to you leading me to believe that Hunt has been spreading these false allegations around the village and at the very least to a new Councillor who hadn't even taken her seat by then. He doesn't ask us or the Clerk for clarification he just sends emails of accusations.

There was another email to me suggestions that i was inadequate by my approach to planning issues. He has also stated last night that if Cllrs don't take the courses he has that we are doing a great disservice and failing in our duty to the parishioners. I resent this idea that one has to go on courses to be able to do the job . I have no objection to anyone going on them but its rude and insulting to say in public that if we dont we are letting down the electors. When i was elected no one voted for me because i was or was not , going on courses. He is a passive aggressive bully and its not someone i wish to continue to work with. He gives the impression that he has no respect for our Clerk given the public grilling and the letters about him. Truly disgraceful .

Yours,

Selina Bannerman
Vice Chair

Tony Baxter [REDACTED] Wed, Oct 7, 2015 at 11:24 PM
To: Selina Bannerman [REDACTED]
Cc: John Ingham [REDACTED] "<ianhunt@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk>"
<ianhunt@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk>, Jan Liversage <janliversage@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk>,
Justin Godfrev <iustingodfrev@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk>, Alex Young
[REDACTED] Mike Keogh <mikekeogh@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk>, Richard Key
[REDACTED] Penny Taylor [REDACTED]

Dear Cllr Bannerman,

Thank you for your e-mail. You have made some very serious points and I need to consider them and take advice on procedure as to how to deal with them.

I will respond as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Baxter

Dr A D Baxter
Chairman
MHPC
[Quoted text hidden]

Tony Baxter [REDACTED] Wed, Oct 7, 2015 at 11:34 PM
To: john [REDACTED]
FYI
[Quoted text hidden]

Appendix 3

Anthony Baxter

From: Anthony Baxter
Sent: 08 October 2015 15:28
To: 'Richard Key'; John Ingham [REDACTED]
'ianhunt@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk'
Cc: Selina Bannerman; Mike Keogh; John Ingham; JANET LIVERSAGE; Justin Godfrey;
'Alexander Julian Young'; Penelope taylor
Subject: RE: Complaint re Ian Hunt

Dear Cllr Key,

I have received your e-mail which I will forward to the Clerk as you have made a formal complaint about a fellow Parish Councillor.

In fairness, and following protocol, I am also copying Cllr Hunt himself so he can see the nature of the complaint.

I am in communication with the Clerk about next steps following this and Cllr Bannerman's letter and will inform you of what is going on as soon as I have anything concrete.

Yours sincerely

Tony Baxter

Dr Anthony D. Baxter

Chairman MHPC

Cell: [REDACTED]

eMail [REDACTED]

Web: www.cyprotex.com

From: Richard Key [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 October 2015 14:10
To: Anthony Baxter [REDACTED]
Cc: Selina Bannerman [REDACTED]; Mike Keogh
<mikekeogh@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk>; John Ingham [REDACTED] JANET LIVERSAGE
[REDACTED] Justin Godfrey [REDACTED] 'Alexander Julian Young'
[REDACTED] Penelope taylor [REDACTED]
Subject: Complaint re Ian Hunt

Dear Chairman,

Without Prejudice.

I would like to register the content of this email as a formal complaint.

I wholly support all of the content of the email that Cllr Bannerman sent you with regard to the conduct of Cllr Ian Hunt.

I find his conduct insulting both to fellow councillors and certain members of the public, indeed I believe that he may have slandered a member of the public who has done no more than pour huge amounts of time and his own money into help making the Pavilion project the fantastic success it is. This is a disgrace.

I do not want Cllr Hunt to 'apologise' on my behalf at public meetings, he is not the chairman and I was not consulted.

Furthermore, I do not wish to see the clerk treated by Cllr Hunt in a disrespectful and belligerent manner, I have the utmost respect for John and the way he has been treated, made me feel ashamed to live in this village and to be a member of the Parish Council.

I also feel that these issues make it difficult, if not impossible for me to work with Cllr Hunt in the future.

I must congratulate you on the way you handled, what was, a very difficult meeting.

Kind Regards

Cllr Richard Key

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Appendix 4

Anthony Baxter

From: Anthony Baxter
Sent: 08 October 2015 16:50
To: Selina Bannerman; JANET LIVERSAGE; Justin Godfrey; Penelope Taylor; 'Richard Key'; alexyoung@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk; 'ianhunt@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk'; John Ingham [REDACTED]
Cc: Mike Keogh
Subject: FW: Complaint

Dear Colleagues,

Please find attached a Formal Complaint I received from Cllr Keogh earlier concerning Cllr Hunt and the PC meeting of the 6th October 2015.

I will let you know the outcome of any progress on the outcome of this and the other complaints as soon as I can.

Tony Baxter

Dr Anthony D. Baxter

Chairman MHPC

Cell: [REDACTED]

eMail: [REDACTED]

Web: www.cyprotex.com

From: Michael [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 October 2015 16:23
To: Anthony Baxter [REDACTED]
Subject: Complaint

[REDACTED]
8th Oct 2015

Chairman Anthony Baxter
Much Hadham Parish Council

WITHOUT PREJUDICE

Dear Chairman

Regretfully, I am writing to formally complain about the actions and behaviours of Councillor Ian Hunt, which have caused me to question my own position on the Parish Council and Pavilion Committee.

During the Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday 6th October, Cllr Hunt delivered a 'speech' setting out his perceived misgivings and criticisms about the conduct of the Pavilion Committee. Whilst Cllr Hunt is entitled to his opinions, I do not think that this was the appropriate forum to air these views, which would have left members of the Parish in attendance questioning the integrity of the Pavilion Committee. Given

what the Pavilion Committee has achieved and the hard work of its members, I feel that such public condemnation was unfair and misjudged.

During the same meeting, Cllr Hunt made the grand gesture of apologising for the behaviour of Cllr Bannerman (for an incident during residents questions). It was not his place to do so. Whilst an apology was needed, it should have come from the Chair, or (more appropriately) Cllr Bannerman, who had indicated to me her intention to apologise during the meeting, before Cllr Hunt took it upon himself.

Again at the meeting, Cllr Hunt made comment that in his opinion Councillors who do not attend training courses are in 'dereliction of duty'. I felt that this was deliberately directed towards myself and certain other members of the Parish Council, who with busy work/family/PC commitments cannot afford the time. Whilst I applaud those who attend the courses, I do not wish to be made to feel inadequate for not doing so and I felt Cllr Hunt's comment to be unfair.

During the August Parish Council meeting, I was accused by Cllr Hunt of an 'ambush' because I had asked for £1200 to be approved for goals and a shed, in order to get kids football started on the recreational field. I have subsequently seen a communication from Cllr Hunt suggesting that the manner of the request was 'illegal'. I am relatively new to the Parish Council and I am learning the processes/procedures and if the request in question was not in proper form, it was made with unquestionable good intention. In such a scenario, I would expect the support and coaching from fellow Councillors and not to be jumped on and flogged.

Finally, I would like to see our Clerk, John Ingham, treated with more respect by Cllr Hunt.

I am sorry to be writing these words, as Cllr Hunt has much to offer the Parish. However, unless he realises that everyone is trying to do their best and that sometimes things are not perfect, I will find him difficult to work with going forward.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Michael Keogh

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Anthony Baxter

From: Anthony Baxter
Sent: 09 October 2015 11:18
To: selinabannerman [REDACTED] Mike Keogh;
alexyoung@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk; Justin Godfrey; JANET LIVERSAGE;
'Richard Key'; Penelope taylor; 'ianhunt@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk'; John
Ingham [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Pavilion Committee
Attachments: Cllr Hunt.docx
Importance: High

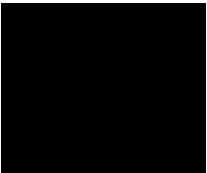
Dear Colleagues,

Please find attached a complaint concerning Cllr Hunt from the Parish Council meeting on 6th Oct 2015 by a resident, Mr John Carey.

The e-mail letter was received by me and the Vice Chair on the 8th Oct at 11.14 and Mr Carey has just given me his permission for circulation to you.

Tony Baxter

Dr Anthony D. Baxter
Chief Executive Officer



Tel [REDACTED]
Fax [REDACTED]
Cell [REDACTED]
eMail: [REDACTED]
Web [REDACTED]

From: john [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 October 2015 11:14
To: Anthony Baxter [REDACTED] selinabannerman [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Pavilion Committee
Importance: High

Chair/Vice Chair

Please find attached a formal complaint regarding Cllr Hunt.

Regards

John Carey

John Carey



8th October 2015

Chairman
Much Hadham Parish Council

Dear Sir

Re: Formal Complaint – Councillor Hunt

It is with regret that I find myself in position as a parishioner to have to write a formal complaint about the ongoing behaviour of one of your Councillors.

At the Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 6th October 2015, after some false accusations were made from the floor in Residents Comments, Councillor Hunt followed these up with a pre-prepared 'speech', a sanitised copy of which I have now received from him.

In this one way commentary, he proceeded to accuse the whole of the Pavilion Committee and the Clerk to the Parish Council of dishonesty, misappropriation of tax payers funds, illegal activity (allowing a café) and apologised on behalf of his own colleagues who form part of that committee (along with myself and three other parishioners) to the public for this wrong doing. All of this is not just slightly wrong, it is completely incorrect.

All of these points were made with no knowledge of the actual situation, nor were any of the member of the Pavilion Committee (that I am aware of) consulted on the detail. Cllr Hunt claims he is speaking on behalf of the majority. He has failed to substantiate that claim.

The accusations were both slanderous and wholly inaccurate – not just to the public voluntary members of the committee but to his own fellow councillors and its long serving clerk! For example, all the financial information is available, if it were asked for, it would be presented. Terms of reference were agreed in the June Parish Council meeting, as was the reporting line – he failed to mention any concerns at that point and has failed to ask for ANY information up until his monologue.

I have been in email communication with Cllr Hunt since the meeting to try to help him understand how misinformed his words and actions are. Not only has he watered down the words he used at the meeting, he has continued to stand by his falsehoods despite me offering to explain and bluntly

telling him that his facts are wrong. He has also made further disparaging and personal remarks to me. Not once has he said thank you for helping deliver a functioning pavilion for the community.

I am not sure how the process from here on works, but I for one will not lift a finger to help the Parish Council or the pavilion whilst he remains in office.

I would also request that someone from the Pavilion Committee be allowed to 'set the record straight' as soon as possible in as public a way as possible to counter the damage done by Cllr Hunts one way onslaught and the other misinformed and incorrect allegations from the floor.

All the Pavilion Committee have done is raise funds, kit out the facility for hire and taken the initial bookings (whilst acting as caretaker for free) – the committee has always stated that the building should be self funding and we believe this is achievable with some marketing of its availability.

Yours

John Carey

Appendix 6

Anthony Baxter

From: Anthony Baxter
Sent: 09 October 2015 11:10
To: selinabannerma [REDACTED] JANET LIVERSAGE; Justin Godfrey; 'Richard Key'; Mike Keogh; alexyoung@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk; 'ianhunt@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk'; John Ingham [REDACTED]
Subject: Complaint 6 October 2015

Dear Colleagues,

Please find attached two e-mail letters of complaint concerning Cllr Hunt from the Parish Council meeting on 6th October 2015 from a resident, Mr Morris.

The letters were addressed to me on the 7th October at 14.17 and 8th October at 10.01am. I did not forward them on to you immediately as I had to check with EHDC and the protocol is that I had to write to Mr Morris to secure his permission for the letter to be circulated. Mr Morris has just given me that permission.

Tony Baxter

Dr Anthony D. Baxter
Chairman MHPC
Cell: [REDACTED]
eMail [REDACTED]
Web: www.cyprotex.com

From: Morris, Blaise [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 October 2015 10:01
To: Anthony Baxter [REDACTED]; John Ingham [REDACTED]
Subject: (2) Complaint 6 October 2015

Dear Chairman

Please be advised I am personally taking legal advice on this whole matter at my expense:

There are two specific issues which concern me greatly as a member of the public, former VC of the PC and a resident of 44 years:

- 1 The conduct of your colleague Cllr Hunt toward his peers, specific members of the public and especially toward a long serving, much respected and professional employee of the Parish
- 2 The harmful damage to our community's reputation, harmony and well-being

Many in the village within 24 hrs are talking about Cllr Hunt's "speech" and I would politely suggest he has damaged your own personal reputation and has potentially called into question your ability to govern the PC.

Cllr Hunt has single handed put into the minds of the public that Cllr Mrs Bannerman has done something wrong in her fundraising activities for the Pavilion. He has offered no substantiated evidence yet he apologised to the public in public on behalf of the Parish Council giving the illusion that Cllr Mrs Bannerman is de facto guilty.

Cllr Hunt I suggest slandered a member of the public (Mr John Carey) whose only offence it would appear is to give huge amounts of his own time and money in establishing the new Pavilion as a venue for which the Community can be justly proud.

This unacceptable behaviour by Cllr Hunt is wholly inappropriate and unacceptable. It is I believe causing serious friction in the village. If Cllr Hunt is allowed in my opinion to conduct himself in making unfounded allegations and bullying in public I believe the Police should be notified. This behaviour is going to create such division and disharmony that it may take years for matters to heal.

I do not know what powers are available to you as Chairman but if something is not done I should like to ask if an EGM can be called forthwith so the Parish Council might discuss damage limitation to their authority and reputation..

Please be assured that at every opportunity I will reassure Parishioners that the PC Chairman has matters in hand, Cllr Mrs Bannerman is not dishonest or incompetent and that our Clerk is thoroughly professional and has not misappropriated any funds.

Yours ever

Blaise Morris

From: Morris, Blaise
Sent: 07 October 2015 14:17
To: Tony [REDACTED] John Ingham [REDACTED]
Subject: Complaint 6 October 2015
Importance: High

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Dr Tony Baxter
Chairman,
MHPC
[REDACTED]

Dear Chairman

I cannot be alone in my astonishment at the behaviour of Cllr Ian Hunt last night. He made a public address lasting nearly 5 minutes. The content and attitude of his ad hoc “speech” without notes broke nearly every Code and Protocol for being a Parish Councillor in his condemnation of the Pavilion subcommittee.

His verbal attack on some of his Parish colleagues and those public volunteers co-opted onto the Pavilion subcommittee lacked any appreciation for the situation, common courtesy or respect and was arguably slanderous at one point toward one villager who has given generously with time and money toward the project over many months.

I especially found Cllr Hunt’s interrogation and the suggestion of financial incompetence toward our very loyal and industrious Parish Clerk John Ingham, whom he must know cannot defend himself publicly, to be an outrageous abuse of process, yet he still persisted to bully him. It was embarrassing.

Cllr Hunt received loud applause from four or five members of the public sitting near me when he finished speaking. Some of them were also complicit in deliberately goading and successfully baiting another Parish Councillor, Mrs Bannerman earlier in the evening. She finally lost her cool after three repeated attempts of making allegations of deliberate misrepresentation on fund raising for the Pavilion. Cllr Bannerman publicly apologised three times to the whole meeting for any misunderstandings on fund raising matters and her behaviour after she returned the cash donations to the third complainant which was badly received.

As you will recall the meeting finished shortly after Cllr Hunt’s address. Whilst tidying up I found Cllr Bannerman in tears and general distress in an adjoining room following Cllr Hunt’s oral condemnation of her earlier behaviour in his speech.

I was Vice Chair of the Parish Council and served a total of 12 years being on the PC missing 2 meetings in that period. I have never experienced anything like last night. You may receive other complaints. Should you do so, and as a member of the public, I hope you will invite me to comment further and in more detail.

Cllr Hunt, if he is a gentleman, will at the very least apologise to each of those he offended. Throughout the meeting he spoke with his absolute authority and certainty on procedure, how to behave and what was lawful. Oh, the irony.

I hope our Parish does not lose an excellent long serving, knowledgeable and thoroughly decent Parish Clerk.

Yours ever

Blaise Morris



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Appendix 7

Tony Baxter [REDACTED]

Meeting - 6 October 2015

Tony Baxter [REDACTED] Sat, Oct 10, 2015 at 7:31 PM
To: Selina Bannerman [REDACTED] Justin Godfrey
<justingodfrey@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk>, JANET LIVERSAGE [REDACTED] Richard
Key [REDACTED] Michael Keogh [REDACTED] Alex Young
<alexyoung@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk>, Penny Taylor [REDACTED]
"ianhunt@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk" <ianhunt@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk>, John Ingham
[REDACTED]

Dear Colleagues,

Please find attached a complaint from our Clerk, John Ingham, concerning the actions, words and statements of Cllr Hunt resulting from the Parish Council Meeting of the 6th October.

Tony Baxter
Chairman Much Hadham Parish Council

----- Forwarded message -----

From: John Ingham [REDACTED]
Date: Sat, Oct 10, 2015 at 4:45 PM
Subject: Meeting - 6 October 2015
To: Tony Baxter [REDACTED]
Cc: Selina Bannerman [REDACTED]

Dear Cllr Baxter

I am writing to formally register my concerns regarding the behaviour of Cllr Hunt at the last meeting of the Parish Council held on 6 October. Apart from veiled attacks on me (financial), I was appalled at his attack on the members of the Council and the veiled suggestion that money had been spent illegally, that there had been no transparency and that the Pavilion Committee had not been formally constituted. All attacks being on the integrity of the Council. In my opinion, Cllr Hunt, by the contempt shown to members, has clearly breached the Council's Code of Conduct in that he behaved in a way that was totally disrespectful, his actions were bullying and intimidating and he implied that the actions of certain members were illegal.

I am at a loss to understand the diatribe which lasted for a full 5 minutes (against Standing Orders – 3 minutes) and quite frankly where Cllr Hunt was coming from. He was clearly out to undermine the whole working of the Pavilion Committee and never once did he recognise or appreciate the tremendous amount of work which has been achieved in a very short period of time since the building was completed. Neither was any credit given to Cllr Mrs Bannerman for all her time in liaising with the builder during refurbishment of the building.

The Parish Council has not been operating illegally, neither has there been any misuse of funds. The Council has refurbished its own property from Parish funds (precepted) and to date it has outfitted the building from public subscriptions ever conscious of the need that any surplus donated funds will be used to reduce the burden of the loan on the Council tax payers. The Council might not have followed protocol to the letter, which is something that is to be addressed very shortly. However, credit must be given to the fact that so

much has been achieved in a very short time. There is a full paper trail of everything that has gone on appertaining to the pavilion and the Committee.

Kind regards

John
Clerk to Much Hadham Parish Council



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www.avast.com

Anthony Baxter

From: Anthony Baxter
Sent: 12 October 2015 17:06
To: 'ianhunt@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk'
Cc: selinabannermar [REDACTED] 'Justin Godfrey' [REDACTED]
Ale [REDACTED] richardkey [REDACTED] 'Michael Keogh'; 'Penny
Taylor'; 'Jan Liversage'; John Inghan [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Steering group meet 13 Oct 2015

Dear Cllr Hunt,

I have finished writing my Chairman's statement and will be sending this and all the complaint letters to the Code of Conduct complaint process later today.

I note you continually refer to me as 'Tony' in both PC meetings and in correspondence, not that I am particularly minded myself, but you do give the impression (as many have commented) as lacking proper respect for the office of Chairman and myself within that role. In important communications I would prefer that you refer to me as Chair or Chairman.

Referring to your points.

- 1) I am sure you would yourself have said that ignorance is no defence and you should certainly know about the Code of Conduct. However, I will make sure all Councillors and committee co-optees are given a copy at the next PC meeting. I don't think I need to respond about your 'practicing normal good manners and common sense' following the last PC meeting and the complaints that have been circulated as a result – it does seem that reality has left the building.
- 2) I hope you are not implying that I have been the source of misinformation circulating about the NP meeting. I wrote to ask you that given the climate of concern about procedure that you should consider delaying or postponing the meeting. I have been in contact with the Secretary of the NP committee and she will no doubt pass on to you what we agreed should be done about tomorrow's meeting. I am still not certain whether the meeting is 'valid' but in the circumstances of not withholding the NP process which I am very supportive of I think we have reached a compromise.
- 3) I will check with the Clerk on the status of the risk assessment and review whether any more input is required by you or any other councillor.
- 4) No attempt whatsoever is being made to sit on you. I cautioned you that it was not helping matters in that you were corresponding about the Pav Comm to a member of public when the subject matter concerned the NP. It was to help the situation not hinder you from your duties.

You accuse me of not deescalating the situation. On the contrary, I have behaved impartially, reasonably and legally. I have deliberately not (yet) circulated my views or account of the events before, during and after the Oct PC meeting which had I done so on say Wednesday last week would certainly have added a lot of fuel to the fire. I have consistently liaised with the Clerk and Jeff Hughes about points of procedure, I have been calm and measured in the face of severe provocation. I am reporting you to EHDC about a potential breach of the Code of Conduct that is not a threat. I am unaware of any other complaints against any other councillor.

It is interesting that you talk of me asking you where the makings of a resolution might lie and peace talks when you seem to have little appreciation of the hurt and damage you have caused and that you have studiously ignored the opportunity to apologise to the people you have offended.

Yours truly,

Tony Baxter

Dr Anthony D. Baxter
Chairman MHPC
eMail [REDACTED]
Web: www.cyprotex.com

From: Ian Hun [REDACTED]
Sent: 12 October 2015 15:35
To: Anthony Baxter [REDACTED]
Cc: selinabannermar [REDACTED] 'Justin Godfrey' [REDACTED]
Alex [REDACTED] richardkey [REDACTED] 'Michael Keogh' [REDACTED] 'Penny Taylor'
[REDACTED] 'Jan Liversage' <janliversage@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk>
Subject: RE: Steering group meet 13 Oct 2015

Tony

I'll just make a couple of points:

1. until Thursday of last week, I didn't know we had a Code of Conduct. I was never provided with one when joining the PC, so the only reference to code of conduct that I was aware of was s.13 of the model standing orders. Fortunately, by practicing normal good manners and common sense, I don't appear to be in breach of it. Can I recommend the Code be issued to new councillors by the Clerk as part of a new councillor's pack, as a matter of course? It is difficult to know what to ask for as a new councillor particularly if you don't know a document exists. I should also point out that the Code applies to co-opted members of committees (such as John Carey, for example) and it should be the case that they are automatically supplied with it too.

2. There has been misinformation circulating that the notice of our NP meeting tomorrow is incomplete and, therefore, the meeting will be invalid. This view has been articulated but has not been supported by reference to any rules, regulations, law, etc. - it is simply stated as if it were fact.

The rules governing meetings and proceeding of parish councils are set out within the Local Government Act 1972, according to Jeff Hughes, Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services, EHC.
I've attached a précis of the relevant parts of the legislation, as it applies to parish councils. You will see in there that notices of parish council meetings are not required to be dated and only those calling for extraordinary meetings need to be signed (by the members calling the meeting).

Looking for guidance elsewhere, the model standing orders specifically for our parish do not require dated, signed notices of committee meetings. The Governance Toolkit for Parish & Town Councils v3 pp25-26 makes no mention of these requirements. In fact, I am unable to find anything that supports the suggestion that the notice is invalid.

I, therefore, conclude that the notice of meeting is entirely valid and, with this information, I presume you now do too.

3. In terms of my accountabilities, you do not mention the Risk Assessment review. As you know, our Annual Return was qualified for the lack of this and the draft I prepared has been with the Clerk for several weeks, since August. Do you wish him or another councillor to conclude the work without my further input?

4. More generally, I object to being limited to comment on my own accountabilities. I remain a member of Much Hadham Parish Council and as such can undertake duties associated with that role within the standards framework specified in our Code of Conduct. That's not my view – that's from Jeff Hughes. Frankly, in areas that are working well such as Parish Paths, I have no reason to comment, other than offer a "well done". In other areas that are not working well, it is vital that elected officials give voice to valid concerns – the Nolan principles practically demand it. I suspect that, if this attempt to sit on me became public knowledge, there would be some disquiet around the parish, to say the least.

Finally, what is also disquieting is that, as Chair of the PC, you seem not to be attempting to de-escalate this crisis, and content to fan the flames by threatening to report me to EHC, presumably to add to those complaints that, I am told, are being made by members of the public against other councillor(s). Why would you prefer, on the face of it, to do that rather than ask me where the makings of a resolution might lie? If there are peace talks going on in the background that I am unaware of, then please let me know.

Regards

Ian

From: Anthony Baxter [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 October 2015 21:24
To: [ianhunt](#) [REDACTED] [selinabannerman](#) [REDACTED] 'Justin Godfrey
[REDACTED] [Alex](#) [REDACTED] [richardkey](#) [REDACTED] 'Michael
Keogh' [REDACTED] Penny Taylor [REDACTED] Jan Liversage
<janliversage@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk>
Subject: RE: Steering group meet 13 Oct 2015

Dear Councillor Hunt,

Re Steering Group Meeting Communications

In view of the fact that your conduct at the 6th October 2015 Parish Council meeting is now going to be investigated (as you will know from my earlier e-mail) under a potential breach of the Code of Conduct for Councillors I would expect you to refrain from commenting to a member of the public over an unrelated matter (to wit the "Pav Comm") concerning the Parish Council without my agreement and approval as Chairman.

On that subject, let me remind you that the Pavilion Committee was set up legally in the June 2015 Parish Council meeting as a sub-committee of the Parish Council with full delegated authority. This matter was discussed, advised by our Clerk, voted on (unanimously as I recall) and passed. No comment until now has surfaced as to the validity of that decision. There is in my opinion, as Chairman, no doubt as to their order or validity. No doubt you recall that I said the same to you, in our discussion, when you called me on my phone 99 minutes before the Parish Council meeting on Tuesday to say ("out of courtesy") without prior notice that you intended to propose that the Pavilion Committee should be disbanded and that you were going to read out a statement explaining your reasoning. (I have for good reason for not disclosing this fact to our Colleagues before now)

A verbatim account of this conversation will be submitted, along with my Chairman's statement, to the standards board as part of their investigation.

Given this situation, I advise you, as Chairman of Much Hadham Parish Council, not to comment in future on any matter outside of your accountabilities which are Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan, and your portfolio responsibilities of Highways and Planning until the Code of Conduct review is completed.

Moving on, I have read the various accounts concerning the Neighbourhood Plan meeting scheduled for next week and the issues therein regarding its legality to be held (date of notice etc). In this climate of concern over procedure I think it is advisable, as the NP Committee reports to the MHPC, to defer or postpone this meeting to a later date until all Parishioners are satisfied that due process has been followed. I am in communication with the legal department of EHDC to get their advice and on Monday I will let you know my decision.

Yours faithfully

Tony Baxter

Dr Anthony D. Baxter
Chair Much hadham Parish Council
Cell: [REDACTED]

eMail [REDACTED]
Web: www.cyprotex.com

From: Ian Hunt [REDACTED] **On Behalf Of** ianhunt@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk
Sent: 10 October 2015 11:23
To: 'Morris, Blaise' [REDACTED] Anthony Baxter [REDACTED]
[selinabannerman](#) [REDACTED] 'Justin Godfrey' [REDACTED]
[Alex](#) [REDACTED] [richardkey](#) [REDACTED] 'Michael Keogh' [REDACTED]; Penny Taylor
[REDACTED] Jan Liversage <janliversage@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk>
Subject: RE: Steering group meet 13 Oct 2015

Blaise

It doesn't need to be dated.....pp25-26 of the Governance Toolkit don't mention any requirement for it to be dated, neither do the PC's model standing orders.

In view of your interest in these administrative matters generally, perhaps you would like to comment on the notices of meetings used by Pav Comm in recent months and offer an opinion on those, for the guidance of us all. I wondered if they were out of order and invalidated those meetings and any decisions taken?

Regards

Ian

From: Morris, Blaise [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 October 2015 20:24
To: Tony [REDACTED] [selinabannerman](#) [REDACTED] Justin Godfrey [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [Alex](#) [REDACTED]; [richardkey](#) [REDACTED]
Michael Keogh [REDACTED] Vernon & Penny Taylor [REDACTED]
Subject: Steering group meet 13 Oct 2015

Dear Cllr Hunt

I am told the attached Notice(s) were placed on village Notice Boards late this week and I am prepared to accept that 3 clear working days notice has been given.

But, the Notice is unlawful because it is undated.

Accordingly proper procedure has not been followed.

This in my opinion invalidates the proposed meeting.

Yours truly

Blaise Morris

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Appendix 9

Anthony Baxter

From: Anthony Baxter
Sent: 09 October 2015 12:58
To: selinabannerma [REDACTED] 'Richard Key'; JANET LIVERSAGE; Penelope taylor; Justin Godfrey; alexyoung@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk; Mike Keogh; 'ianhunt@muchhadhamparishcouncil.co.uk'; John Ingham [REDACTED]
Subject: Code of Conduct Complaint

Dear Colleagues,

In addition to my own views on the subject matter (which I have yet to share with you), I have examined the complaint statements made by three Parish Councillors and two members of the public all concerning the actions and deeds of Cllr Ian Hunt that you have been made aware of. I have discussed the matter with our Clerk, John Ingham and with the Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services at East Herts District Council. We feel that that Cllr Hunt during the Oct 6th Parish Council meeting breached basic Code of Conduct principles that all Parish Councillors sign up to and are expected to abide by, and his actions and statements should be investigated to determine whether he has indeed breached the Code of Conduct.

As a consequence I will be filling in a Code of Conduct Complaint form (<http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=25890>) and the matter will then be handled by the Monitoring Officer at East Herts District Council.

I will keep you informed of what happens from now.

Given that this action is about to take place and again after consultation with the Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services at EHDC I intend to call an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) of the Much Hadham Parish Council to discuss this matter in full and in particular to discuss what, if anything, we should do regarding Cllr Hunts portfolio responsibilities whilst the alleged breach of the Code of Conduct is being investigated.

I will be liaising with the Clerk to find a suitable date for this EGM and will be informing you all of what is happening.

I appreciate that some of you might want to talk to me privately and I will make myself available over the weekend should you wish to do so.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Baxter

Chairman Much Hadham Parish Council

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