



Decision Notice

Subject Member: Councillor Nick Unsworth, Coggeshall Parish Council

Complainant: Councillor Tom Walsh, Coggeshall Parish Council

Monitoring Officer: Kim Mayo

Independent Person: Mrs Crowe (Independent Person)

Date of Determination: 4th May 2023

Summary of Complaint:

On 19 January 2023, the Monitoring Officer received a complaint from Cllr Tom Walsh. The complaint related to Cllr Unsworth's behaviour exhibited at Parish Council Meetings, at a third-party organization meeting and through social media posting placed on Facebook.

Code of Conduct:

The Complaint was considered against Coggeshall Parish Council's Code of Conduct. The Monitoring Officer believes that the Complaint falls under the general obligations to:

- i. treat others with respect; and
- ii. must not bully any person.

Findings of the Monitoring Officer:

In considering the behaviours shown by Cllr Unsworth during the meetings of a third party organisation and during meetings of the Coggeshall Parish Council, the Monitoring Officer believes Cllr Unsworth has shown, and continues to show a level of disrespect towards Cllr Walsh.

The Monitoring Officer considers the intended statements made on Facebook to be clear, and that this falls within the parameters of the criteria of bullying, which is an attack/abuse intended to cause another harm and distress.

The Facebook postings are an attempt to spread malicious rumors (as defined by the National Bullying Helpline). It is clear that the posts caused damage and distress, through their original postings, being sharing across other pages within Facebook and the comments received against them. The language used within these posts was designed to cause harm to the individual within a public platform.

It is the findings of the Monitoring Officer that Cllr Unsworth is in breach of the Code of Conduct under both elements of the Coggeshall Parish Council Code of Conduct.

In reaching this determination, the views of the Council's Independent Person, were sought and have been taking into consideration.

Cllr Unsworth is not standing for election at the Local Elections in May 2023 and therefore ceases to be subject to the Code of Conduct and the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 on the date of retirement, namely 9 May 2023. Therefore, it is not possible to impose any sanctions that could be completed ahead of this deadline.