

**Our ref:**

**Your ref:**

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024



Castle House  
Barracks Road  
Newcastle-under-Lyme  
Staffordshire  
ST5 1BL

Cllr Drakakis-Smith

By e-mail only: draks1@hotmail.co.uk

Dear Cllr Drakakis-Smith

We are writing as the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Standards Sub Committee Hearing Panel, which was convened to hear complaints made against you in your capacity as an elected member of the Betley, Balterley and Wrinehill Parish Council.

### **Decision**

The panel agrees in full with the conclusions of the independent report. We find that your conduct, as detailed in the report, was in breach of the Code of Conduct, paragraphs 1.2, 2.1-3 and 5.1.

Through your words and actions, you made others feel threatened and upset. You bullied, harassed and disrespected an employee of the Parish Council. You have been inappropriately sarcastic and disrespectful towards other Parish Councillors. You have brought the Parish Council into disrepute. These are serious matters.

### **Sanctions**

The panel recommends sanctions as detailed in our letter addressed today to the Parish Council. It is for the Parish Council to consider and apply such recommendations as it determines are proper. It is, however, one of our recommendations that our decision, including this letter and our letter to the Parish Council are made public.

In evaluating the appropriateness of sanctions, we are mindful of the limited range of sanctions available under the local government standards regime, particularly those available in the context of a parish council.

We consider it a mitigating factor that you offered an apology to the former Parish Clerk with regard to your disrespectful comments. This apology was considered acceptable by the author of the independent report, and we have agreed with her analysis. We also consider it a mitigating factor that you have complied with the investigation made into your conduct in answering questions that were put to you and providing feedback where requested.

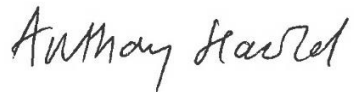
However, we consider it an aggravating factor that you have not accepted that a whole range of your behaviour has been in breach of the Code of Conduct. You have instead, at several stages, sought to challenge the process being followed and to call into question the professionalism and diligence of the officers of the Borough Council administering it.

**Next Steps**

In reaching its decision, we would like to reassure you that the Panel has considered your conduct and the relative carefully. We hope that this decision will cause you to reflect seriously on your actions and how they affect colleagues.

We hope that the content of the independent report and the comments of the author will guide you in identifying the ways in which your conduct has been below the required standard. We sincerely hope that it is possible for you and for the whole of the Parish Council to work productively and cordially together in the future, for the good of the community that you all serve.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Harold". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Anthony Harold

**For and on behalf of Councillor Mark Holland, Chair Standards Hearing Panel**