



CHELtenham

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Notice of a meeting of Standards Committee

Friday, 3 July 2020
10.00 am

Virtual WEBEX video conference via YouTube -
<https://www.youtube.com/user/cheltenhamborough>

Membership	
Borough Councillors:	Max Wilkinson (Chair), Louis Savage, Karl Hobley, Martin Horwood, Jo Stafford, Klara Sudbury and John Payne
Independent Members:	Mr Martin Jauch, Mr Duncan Chittenden

Agenda

4. **CHELtenham BOROUGH COUNCIL CODE OF MEMBERS' CONDUCT- COMPLAINT AGAINST COUNCILLOR DENNIS PARSONS** (Pages 3 - 8)
Report of the Monitoring Officer

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Cheltenham Borough Council

Standards Committee

3 July 2020

Supplementary Report of Monitoring Officer on complaints that Councillor Dennis Parsons has failed to comply with the Cheltenham Borough Council Code of Members' Conduct

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This supplementary report is to update the Committee on matters arising since the Monitoring Officer's report was prepared.

2. Additional information

- 2.1 On the 25th June 2020, Councillor Parsons sent a letter, a copy of which is attached at Appendix A, to the Mayor of Cheltenham Borough Council, with copies to the Leader and Chief Executive. The letter is an unreserved apology to the Council (Councillors & Officers) and the public for his conduct at the Council meeting on the 15th June 2020.
- 2.2 Attached at Appendix B is a letter dated the 1st July 2020 from Councillor Parsons to the Chair and members of the Standards Committee in response to the Monitoring Officer's report.
- 2.3 These two additional items should be taken into account by the Standards Committee when considering section 7 of the report and determining any appropriate sanctions and further action that are necessary and appropriate.

Report Author

Borough Solicitor & Monitoring Officer,
Cheltenham Borough Council

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COUNCILLOR DENNIS PARSONS



cllr.dennis.parsons@cheltenham.gov.uk 07540 398914

25 June 2020

Mr. Mayor

At the Cheltenham Borough Council meeting on 15 June, I made comments that were completely inappropriate and should not have been said. I am therefore writing to offer my sincere and unreserved apologies to the Council (Councillors & Officers) and to the public for this gross error of judgement on my part.

I am very, very sorry for the offence and distress which I have caused and, having seriously reflected on this, can confidently say that it will never be repeated.

As an elected member of the Council, I know that, on this occasion, I have fallen short of the high standards of conduct expected of a Councillor and for that I am truly sorry and wish to place my apology on record through this letter.

I particularly acknowledge with deep regret the detrimental impact that my huge misjudgement has had on the Council's reputation at a time when so much good work is being done.

I am copying to the Leader and to the Chief Executive Officer.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Dennis Parsons

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COUNCILLOR DENNIS PARSONS



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1 July 2020

To the Chair and members of the Standards Committee

I would like to make a few very brief comments for consideration by the Standards Committee when meeting to consider the report on complaints made against me.

I would say, at the outset, that I have no disagreement with the general tenor and conclusions of the report and neither do I resile from the position recorded at paragraph 5.10 acknowledging that my actions constituted a breach of the Code of Conduct. My comments relate solely to the impression given by paragraph 5.7 of the report, that my contribution to the meeting would have been prepared in advance. This was not the case, as I had not intended to participate in the discussion on this Motion.

I feel that it is important for Standards the Committee to be aware of the facts surrounding my contribution to the meeting, so that incorrect inferences are not drawn. My experience of Council / Committee meetings is that Members do not routinely script their speeches in advance, but often react / respond to comments and discussion that take place at the meeting. This was what happened, in my case, at the meeting on the 15th June.

I can confirm that I did not attend the meeting with the intention of speaking on this Motion. In fact, had I intended to do so, I would, in accordance with our protocol for virtual meetings, have confirmed this ahead of the meeting. I only decided to speak in this debate in response to some of the comments made by colleagues. I had not spent time before the meeting considering what I wanted to say. Had I done so, I would have carefully crafted my speech to ensure that my message was appropriately conveyed. My remarks were, on the contrary, entirely impromptu and consequently, as pointed out in the report, were wholly misconceived and totally unacceptable.

As stated, I do not seek to defend or excuse my behaviour, but simply want the Standards Committee, when considering this matter, to be aware of all of the circumstances.



Councillor Dennis Parsons

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