
Dear Mr Cowan

Code of Conduct Complaint

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chairman of Trimley St Martin Parish Council. Having joined the Council in 2017, I have no direct personal knowledge of the matters explored by the Deputy Monitoring Officer of Suffolk Coastal District Council in his report into your code of conduct complaints. Although the Deputy Monitoring Officer did not uphold the complaints you made against six current councillors and three former councillors, he did draw attention to the inclusion of false and misleading statements in the agenda for the meeting held on 1 March 2016. These statements, which were repeated in the minutes of that meeting, presented allegations about you as though they were established facts. The statements said that you had been responsible for bullying and harassing other Councillors, the Clerk and the Internal Auditor.

The allegations had previously been included in a Code of Conduct complaint against you, but in 2015 the then Deputy Monitoring Officer had found that they were not justified. The allegations should not have been included in either the agenda or the minutes and I am writing now to apologise on behalf of the Parish Council for the fact that they were included.

In order to make the position clear the following steps will be taken:

- a correction will be appended to the March 2016 agenda and to the minutes of that meeting;
- a link to a copy of this letter will be placed on the homepage of the Parish Council website to remain there for a period of six months, and
- a copy of this letter will be published in the Parish Pump.

I hope that it will now prove possible for the difficulties of the past to be put to rest and that everyone concerned can now move forward.

Yours sincerely

Yvonne Smart
Chairman