

BEFORE WE START THE AGENDA OF TONIGHT'S MEETING I HAVE A POINT OF ORDER TO RAISE CONCERNING THE PROPOSED MAKE-UP OF THE COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES AND CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR THAT HAS BEEN PUT FORWARD AND WHICH IS ON TONIGHT'S AGENDA

Along with Cllrs. Hanson, Trundle and Northam I received a letter from Cllr. Goldsmith of Steyning First in which there was a document attached that set out a proposal as to who would be Chair and Vice- chair of the Council as well as the make-up of all the committees, Chairs and Vice-chairs of the committees, as well as members representing the Council on outside bodies.

In his letter Cllr. Goldsmith said he had taken 'informal soundings' and that he could with 'all confidence' describe himself 'as the Chair-elect'. However, the correct and democratic process is to take nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair at the first Parish meeting, which is this one tonight, of the new term and Cllr. Goldsmith could not have known if another member wished to be nominated for Chair as not all Cllrs. were included in his 'informal soundings' and if there is another nomination, then the correct procedure is to take a ballot.

The make-up of the committees should also be decided at the first meeting with all the members' preferences put to the Council for discussion and approval in an open and transparent manner – not decided prior to the first Council meeting which appears to be the case here.

More importantly it has been reported to me, that this document was prepared, not by 'informal soundings' but followed a 'secret meeting' of 10 councillors, of which Steyning First, with 7 members was the dominant group, without my knowledge or, that of Cllrs. Hanson, Trundle and Northam nor, us being invited or even consulted over our preferences.

This demonstrates, I suggest, an abuse of power, best practice and due process.

I am told that at least one of the independent councillors who attended the meeting believed that all Council members would be there and was concerned that they were not.

I fully understand that a political party can hold party meetings, as do the Conservatives at HDC, but this 'secret meeting' with other non Steyning First

Cllrs. attending was not a political party group meeting, but a 'secret meeting' of members of the Council from which I, Cllrs. Hanson, Trundle and Northam were deliberately excluded.

It is the responsibility of all Cllrs. to come to a Council or, Committee meeting, with an 'open mind', however, as this 'secret meeting' represented an overwhelming majority of the Council, to a member of the public with full knowledge of this relevant fact they could reasonably regard the meeting and, the ensuing document, as significant and, likely to prejudice the judgement of all those present, in the decisions on the Council make-up. In effect all members at the meeting could be regarded as being 'pre-determined' in the matter of the Council make-up.

Despite claims in the Steyning First manifesto that it would be a 'democratic and listening Council'; despite one of the Cllrs. at the 'secret meeting' claiming he was for 'democratic accountability, openness and transparency' regrettably the group's first act, was to hold this 'meeting' that to all intent and purposes has decided the make-up of the next Council.

Added to this, in his letter Cllr. Goldsmith stated that he 'wanted to build a strong and happy team' and yet this was not expressed in the action of excluding me and, Cllrs. Hanson Trundle and Northam from the meeting.

I believe, that by omitting us from the 'secret meeting' it is the intention of Steyning First to create a two tier Council where we will be marginalised, which is contrary to the so called Chair – Elect's assertion that 'he wants to build a strong and happy team' and contrary to the democratic process of a Council and, goes against all guidelines.

What Cllr. Goldsmith appears to be attempting, is to undermine the normal democratic process of Council and setting his course for an 'autocratic' leadership, despite the claims in the Steyning First manifesto to be a 'democratic and listening Council'.

I do not believe that the voters voted for an 'autocracy' and it won't have escaped their notice that all SF candidates polled the fewest votes, and were many votes behind me, and Cllrs. Hanson, Trundle and Northam which is why it

is fitting that Steyning First members particularly, should work with the other Cllrs and not marginalise them.

In my view, this 'secret meeting' of Steyning First and, associated Cllrs. goes against the Nolan Principles of Public Life of; Objectivity, Openness, Accountability and Leadership. In addition, I believe, it has breached the Steyning Parish Code of Conduct rules; 3(1), 3(2), 5 and 10.

Frankly, this is not a good start to this Council's term of office and could have easily been avoided by following due process and acting in a responsible, open and transparent manner.

I therefore propose that we take the Clerk's list of committee members and work through it in a democratic manner.

Finally, in the public interest I would like Cllr. Goldsmith to respond, on the record, to the following:

- 1: Why were I and Cllrs. Hanson, Trundle and Northam excluded from the meeting and why were we not consulted on our committee preferences prior to the meeting?
- 2: Have there been any other 'secret meetings' held with Steyning First and other independent Cllrs. attending?
- 3: What other matters were discussed at the 'meeting' referred to above and, any other meetings where Steyning First and other independent Cllrs. attended?
- 4: Can Cllr. Goldsmith assure the residents of Steyning that it is his intention, should he be elected as Chair of the Council, that he and his fellow Steyning First members will follow due process in future and, to do so in an open, transparent and democratic manner and that if there are to be further meetings outside of the Council that ALL Cllrs. will be included and notes taken so that any discussion can be properly reported back to Council and put in the public domain?

Cllr. Tim Lloyd 12.5.19