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MEETING OF FULL PARISH COUNCIL

HELD ON MONDAY 20th JANUARY 2025 AT 7.30PM

Councillors Present : Cllrs Norcross (Chairman), Young, Bell, Hanson, Lloyd, Linfield, Johnson, Foxwell M Alexander, I Alexander and Ballance.
Clerks in attendance : John Fullbrook
Members of the Public : **12 {inc. District Cllrs Victoria Finnegan and Nicholas Marks}**
Meeting commenced : **7.32 pm**

MINUTES

ACTION

FULL/24/77 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
77.1 Apologies received from Cllrs Trundle, Sharp and S. Alexander. Cllr Campbell was absent.

FULL/24/78 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
78.1 None

FULL/24/79 **QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR {in summary}**
79.1.1 ***Q –*** *Trevor Cree stated that - Following his 6th December 2024, 'Steyning Clock Tower' Freedom of Information request, SPC had responded saying, "All historical documents so far ascertained, relating to the matter when ownership by the Council is mentioned, have provided an evidence base born out of hearsay and conjecture rather than proven fact.". Mr Cree thought this was untrue at the time and even more so now, following his own research. He hoped the Council would provide evidence at this meeting to support his theories, and appoint a solicitor to legally affirm the position of ownership or, he threatened, there was a danger that the SPC councillors who 'de facto' ceded ownership of the Steyning Clock Tower to a third party may be found guilty of misconduct in Public Office, and he further warned that {in his opinion} they may be personally liable for giving away a public asset for free without due process.*

79.1.2 ***A – The Chair responded that the matter would be dealt with under agenda item 13.1, and took exception to Mr Cree stating he thought the SPC response was untrue, stating it remains true, and found it offensive that Mr Cree wanted it to be known that he thought the Clerk and by extension the Council was telling an untruth.***

FULL/24/80 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING** - Cllr Norcross **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Ballance that the
80.1 minutes for the meetings dated the 18th November 2024 and the 17th December 2024 be accepted as a true and fair record. **Agreed.**

FULL/24/81 **MATTERS ARISING – These items were taken as read**
81.1 Clerk to receive contact details to enable discussions concerning disabled facility projects **– Actioned**

81.2 Clerk to distribute parking permit promotional leaflets **– Actioned**

81.3 SPC Code of Conduct hearings to take place on the 2nd December 2024 **– See item 85.2**

81.4 Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee new terms of reference agreed and published **– Actioned**

81.5 Squires invoice, as per supporting papers, to be paid **– Actioned**

81.6 Clerk to appoint Squires Planning as N. Plan consultants **– Actioned**

81.7 Clerk to appoint 'Design Code' consultants **– Actioned**

81.8 Clerk to complete an application to 'Locality Grant Funding' to help cover N. Plan costs **– Actioned**

81.9 Steering Committee membership and chairmanship published **- Actioned**

81.10 N. Plan Steering Committee to advertise for and select resident volunteers for their group **– Item 86.1**

81.11 Clerk to amend SPC Action Plan and take to F&GP for approval **– Actioned**

81.12 Clerk to amend SPC Standing orders as per agreed, and then republish **– Actioned**

81.13 Clerk to amend SPC Scheme of Delegation as per agreed, and then republish **– Actioned**

81.14 Clerk to implement pay award, and deal with associated back pay **– Actioned**

81.15 Climate Action Group to have its own page/ site on the SPC Website – **Actioned**

81.16 Joint Cemetery Committee to convene on the 2nd December 2024 **– See item 87.3**

81.17 Deputy Clerk to receive pay award subject to successful probationary period appraisal **– Actioned**

81.18 Clerk to receive incremental pay rise subject to successful appraisal process **– Actioned**

81.19 SPC staff to receive appropriate annual pay rises subject to procedures being completed **– Actioned**

81.20 Clerk to convene an SPC Full Council extraordinary meeting **- Actioned**

81.21 SPC to continue to monitor social media postings from members of the public **– See item 89.4**

81.22 Clerk to coordinate SPC Community Awards for the Annual Chairmans Function **– Actioned**

81.23 SPC to lobby for half hourly bus service **– See item 86.2**

81.24 Clerk to receive members remote meeting consultation information, and collate & submit **– Actioned**

81.25 Clerk to arrange for N. Plan Committee resident members to be selected in January **– See item 86.1**

81.26 SPC received notification concerning 2023/24 External Audit completion **– See item 85.6**

FULL/24/82 REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS ***(In Summary)***

82.1.1 **Cllr Victoria Finnegan – (HDC) update, Item 1. Devolution**, East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton and Hove Councils have expressed an interest in fast track privatisation and unitary authority with mayoral representation. This will allow for the 'Bolstering' of parish council responsibilities. Decisions on potential unitary authority status to be made by the Government before the end of January.

82.1.2 **2. The HDC Local Plan** – Examination has commenced with inspector raising questions of HDC officers, plus 22 action points. The Hearings were suspended after 3 days. Officers waiting to find out what the next steps are, but the expectation is that housing numbers will be raised.

82.1.3 **3. Water Neutrality** – Previously applications for dwellings have had to demonstrate secure water neutrality solutions on site, but following 3 upheld public enquiry investigations, there will now be 'Grampian' style conditions allowing for off-setting to take place off site , and using the 'SNOWS' credit system or a bespoke arrangement. Natural England will still be consulted, so it was felt there would be no harm to the Arun Valley.

82.1.4 **4. HDC Office movements** – Officers and equipment are moving this week.

82.1.5 **5. Horsham Park** – Access to be maintained in perpetuity following agreement

82.1.6 **6. New Car Sharing App. from WSCC** – There are new opportunities via a You Tube link, leaflets and an App. for those wishing to make some carbon savings in this way

82.1.7 **7. Nature Recovery Awards** – New funding opportunities for land owners from HDC, to enhance wildlife, for up to £5K

82.1.8 **8. Refurbishing vehicles -** HDC found rather than replace vehicles, they go for greener option

82.1.9 **9. 'Experience Sussex' website –** Allows for free listing for Steyning tourism opportunities

82.1.10 **10. Bramber Brooks Event** – HDC officers hosted a well-received presentation in November. They are looking for volunteers to help with the project

82.1.11 **11. 13th Jan. 'Standards' Meeting** – Cllr Finnegan attended this meeting and was willing to assist SPC in terms of help or mediation, if necessary, moving forward.

82.1.12 **12. Digital Display Boards** – Still awaiting a reply from HDC 'Director of Places'

82.1.13 **13. High Street Wi-Fi project** – WSCC expecting designs by end of this week – Victoria to report back

82.1.14 **14. Dangerous Dog** – Recent issue, and associated police ruling, has meant that the dog now needs to be muzzled in public. If spotted without muzzle then this should be reported online.

82.2 **Cllr Nicholas Marks {HDC Update} – Walking and Cycling Survey –** 450 people responded to this survey and Nick was keen to ensure the report (presented as a supporting paper for this meeting) was read and supported by Councillors , and also pointed out there were opportunities for volunteering to help the group further their ideas.

82.3 In response to a question raised, Cllr Finnegan will supply details of 'Dog Reporting' procedure to the Clerk for SPC social media promotion. **Cllr Finnegan**

FULL/24/83 **NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS REPORT**

83.1 The Neighbourhood Warden reports for November 2024 and December 2024 were received, and considered. A question was raised in connection to a person being recently robbed of their expensive coat, and whether the Wardens work roster was flexible to enable their patrols to cover certain 'hot spots' at certain times. The Clerk confirmed that their work pattern was flexible and often changed dependant on the needs of residents, or to help cover events.

FULL/24/84 **FINANCE MATTERS**

84.1 **To agree the Steyning Parish Council 2025/2026 budget and associated precept request**

A lengthy budget setting process, which had begun with each committee determining via delegated responsibility their own budget line requests, had led to a consolidated budget being discussed at F&GP committee, with that committee then presenting a recommendation to this Full Council meeting, where now a final decision was required. The Clerk therefore had presented appropriate budget papers, plus due to a recent amendment regarding Wardens costs, also presented 4 final options to members as per supporting papers, which in effect allowed a variance of choice in a range of £1,920, or 0.48% of precept rise {Between a 5.79% and 6.27% increase}. Cllr Hanson **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Foxwell to agree option 2, that is, that the Steyning Parish Council Budget and associated Precept request to Horsham District Council for 2025/26 be set at £428,170 {5.90%}, and the Band D tax figure (parish Council part only) for the Steyning Parish be £166.42 {a 5.72% rise}. **Agreed 9 For, 2 Against** **CLERK**

FULL/24/85 **GOVERNANCE**

85.1 **Chairmans Statement concerning the recent HDC Standards Committee 'Hearings' into recent SPC Code of Conduct submissions, and the likely conclusion of this matter.** The Chair read out a prepared statement {attached as an addendum to these minutes} giving summary to the long running issues {covering approx. 12 years}, which led to the need for the recent HDC 'Hearings', thereby providing background and context to the next item which was to consider the Standards Committee's findings, and proposed sanctions against Cllr Campbell. **CLERK**

85.2 **To receive recommendations from the HDC Standards Committee in consideration of nine code of conduct complaint determinations, and to agree the SPC's potential adoption of 'sanctions' based upon their investigations and findings.**

85.2.1 A summary of the decisions, which in short were to not uphold 6 complaints submitted by Cllr Campbell, and to uphold 3 complaints against Cllr Campbell, one of which was a joint complaint submitted by the SPC personnel committee, and which had been sanctioned by the Steyning Parish Council as a whole. The formal *Decision Notices* are to be published by HDC within 10 days of the meeting on the 13th January. It is therefore incumbent upon SPC, to agree or otherwise the sanctions noted below. Members reiterated their zero tolerance towards bullying and also noted that they hoped lessons might be learnt by Horsham District Council, as the process had taken too long. The proposed sanctions were read out, then members were asked if they preferred to vote for each item individually. As there was no appetite to do so, the proposed sanctions were read out again to ensure all members were aware of what they were voting for, and the proposal dealt with all the items noted, en bloc.

85.2.2 Cllr Norcross **proposed, seconded** by Cllr M Alexander that the following sanctions be adopted by SPC:- **CLERK**

1. That Councillor Paul Campbell provides a formal written apology to the Parish Council and the Clerk within one month of the finding of any code breaches by the Standards Committee {13th January}; **Cllr Campbell**
2. That Councillor Paul Campbell will not serve on any of the Steyning Parish Council's committees, sub-committees, panels or working/steering groups with the one exception being to serve and attend the main Steyning Parish Council meeting;
3. That Councillor Paul Campbell will not represent the Steyning Parish Council on any outside body or bodies affiliated with the council and will be removed from outside appointments;
4. That contact for communication for Councillor Campbell will only be via the Steyning Parish Council Chair or the Vice Chair of Steyning Parish Council. This includes: Emails, letters or verbal enquiries and requests for information;
5. That attendance to the office is to be on an appointment basis, arranged in advance with the Chair or Vice Chair, and only to meet with the Chair or Vice Chair, and to attend the Full Parish Council meetings;
6. That the Steyning Parish Council Procedures, Guidelines and Policies 1-30 must be followed by everyone, and to ensure compliance Councillor Paul Campbell is required to undertake training. This will be arranged by the Chair of Steyning Parish Council with Horsham District Council's Monitoring Officer/ or Deputy Monitoring Officer or relevant Officer as instructed by the MO. Progress reviews will take place at stages to maintain standards, improve performance and provide credibility; and **Cllr Norcross**
7. That the review of progress to Steyning Parish Council Procedures, Guidelines and Policies 1-30 may result in extension to sanction(s). **SPC**

Agreed, unanimously.

85.3 **Update in consideration of the recent government white paper on 'devolution' and this Councils preparedness for any future changes to local government governance in Sussex, in so far as it would likely affect next year's SPC Business Plan, and proposed projects, and therefore to agree any actions necessary.**

85.3.1 The Clerk updated members concerning the devolution process so far and to note that East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton & Hove Council had submitted a joint application to the government to become unitary authorities, which would include being governed by an elected Mayor, with district councils ceasing to exist, and with Town and Parish Councils likely gaining opportunities for extra responsibilities allowing for some services to be run more 'locally'.

85.3.2 Cllr Young **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Hanson that Cllrs Norcross, Sharp and Linfield convene a working party to investigate the possible effects of, and opportunities arising from, the proposed unified authority. **Agreed** **CLERK**

85.4 **To agree the draft Joint Parishes Youth Service MOU** – The Clerk reported that he had amended the previously agreed document {as per supporting papers}, this being limited to updating financial contributions, parish council contact details and dates. The Clerk also confirmed performance reports would be presented to the joint parishes youth committee in the first instance and then to full council. Cllr Norcross **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Linfield that the *Joint Parishes Youth Service Memorandum of Understanding for 2025/26* be adopted. **Agreed** **CLERK**

85.5 **To agree the new draft Neighbourhood Wardens MOU** – The Clerk reported that he had amended the previously agreed document {as per supporting papers}, this being limited to updating parish council contact details and the dates. The Clerk also confirmed that the contract itself would still be reviewed before acceptance, this being via the F&GP committee. Cllr Norcross **proposed, seconded** by Cllr I Alexander that the *'Neighbourhood Wardens Memo -randum of Understanding for the period 1 April 2025 to 31st March 2028'* be adopted. **Agreed** **CLERK**

85.6 **To receive notification of the External Audit Report and Certificate for the year 2023/24,**
85.6.1 **and agree publication, plus payment of associated invoice. –** The Clerk reported that the 23/24 report and certificate had been received recently {17th December} and relatively quickly following the previous years completed report and certificate for 22/23, which had been received on the 29th November. This meant that SPC were now up to date in terms of receipt of External Audit Reports for the first time in five years.

85.6.2 Cllr Norcross **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Young that SPC have received notification of the {external audit} annual governance report and certificate for 2023/24 and that it has been published {by SPC}. **Agreed** **CLERK**

85.6.3 Cllr Norcross **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Bell for SPC to pay the external auditors invoice for the sum of £1,260**. Agreed** **CLERK**

85.7 **To agree SPC's response to the Government Consultation: *'Strengthening The Standards and Conduct Framework For Local Authorities in England'.*** Councillors, Councils as a whole, Clerks and SLCC members were all asked to respond to this consultation, and to do so by the 26th February. Members considered whether to respond as individuals and as a council, or just as individuals. Due to the complexity of the process involved with completing a Council agreed response, there being forty questions involved, there was consensus from members that they would complete the task as individuals only. **CLERK & Cllrs**

85.8 **To discuss the theme of this year's SPC March Annual Parish Meeting** – Members explored a number of ideas and these seemed to coalesce around the proposed Walking and Cycling Plan, in that it may be useful to have a forum for key stakeholders/ group leaders {especially from Greening Steyning, Business Chamber & District Partnership} to be in a position to speak in support or otherwise within an interactive session, or to ask these stakeholders, and perhaps Wilton Park CEO, to speak of their thoughts regarding any opportunities that could be realised following a positive local government devolution application response from the government **CLERK**

FULL/24/86 **COMMUNITY MATTERS**

86.1 **Update from Cllr Bell from the SPC Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee** – There have **CLERK**
86.1.1 recently been three working party meetings, in consideration of design code document compilation including an onsite *Town walk & guided tour* with the specialist consultant. Members have reviewed and collated notes relating to the Glebe Farm developers draft

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design code document, to enable the specialist consultant to further understand the Steering Committee's views. At the last meeting members agreed the next stage of the selection process in consideration of the non-councillor membership of the Committee. 8 candidates are being considered for the 4 positions available, with first an invite to submit not more than 300 words in support of their application with then the final interviews being planned for next week {27th Jan to 30th Jan}.

86.1.2 The first part of the Locality Grant funding application was made before Christmas, and the Clerk was notified last week of a successful bid for £10,000 to help cover N. Plan review costs. **CLERK**

86.2 **Climate Action Group update, and SPC to consider motions as per within supporting papers**

86.2.1 Cllr Johnson reported that the Climate Action Group met on the 13th January, and discussed the *Local Walking and Cycling Survey Report* {proposed motions from the group noted below}; progress towards home insulation grants for lower income homeowners; how to progress a half-hourly bus service {motion below}; updates concerning the *One Planet* webinars and also thoughts on the group having its own *Logo* and *dedicated email address*.

86.2.2 The *Walking and Cycling Survey Report* is to form the basis of a Draft Walking and Cycling Plan and be compiled by the group in the next month or so. Members were then asked to consider the following two motions. Cllr Johnson **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Norcross that each Parish Council member be asked to make preliminary comments on the draft 'Walking and Cycling Plan' {When it becomes available}, and feedback to their Climate Action Group {CAG} rep. Further discussion and recommendation from the CAG involving the Clerks of each council would ensure a common approach by all parties. This will make sure S106/ Cil applications follow due process. **Agreed, 10 For, 1 Abstained** **C.A.G.**

Cllr Johnson **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Norcross that the joint Parishes climate action group monitors progress against the adopted plan. **Agreed, 10 For, 1 Abstained** **C.A.G.**

86.2.3 In regards the item concerning the local bus service. Cllr Johnson **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Norcross that the Joint Parishes Climate Action Group are given delegated authority to invite bus companies to meet them to discuss bus frequency. **Agreed, 10 For, 1 Abstained** **C.A.G.**

FULL/24/87 **REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES**

87.1 **Cllrs Young, Hanson and M. Alexander – Isolation & loneliness / PPG.** Cllr Hanson reported on the recent PPG meeting at the Health Centre which helpfully included staff members. There is a new pharmacist, and two new doctors recently appointed. The magazine is being published again and will concentrate on Steyning 'good health'. The PPG screen coverage is to be enhanced with new installations in Library and in Paydens. Patients can book online, but in-person and phone bookings are still available. Upper Beeding surgery is currently closed, as the facility needs to be upgraded. There seem to be more GP's available for vacant positions.

87.2 **Cllr Norcross – HALC / WSALC updates following recent meetings –** Cllr Norcross reported on the 16th January HALC meeting. Much of the meeting was taken up with a discussion concerning the potential processes, opportunities and consequences associated with *Local Government Devolution*. It was mentioned that the smaller parishes might take the opportunity to consider amalgamating into larger parishes. Emergency plans were also discussed, with those not yet having one being urged to do so. Minutes to be distributed to Cllrs. ***{Cllr Foxwell left meeting, as ill}*** **CLERK**

87.3 **Cllrs I Alexander and Linfield – Joint Parishes Cemetery Committee** – Cllrs reported that at the last December meeting, the JPCC Clerk stated that she had attempted to find new burial site locations but had not had one positive response from the 17 letters written to nearby landowners in the last year. There is now just two years left, it is suggested, in terms of 'space left' within the Cemetery for future burials. Ongoing annual maintenance costs are estimated at £5K per year, and the fees associated with burials are being revised in order to help deal with this matter.

FULL/24/88 PROGRESS REPORT

To receive the following ongoing items

88.1 *Making Steyning a 'Dementia Friendly Town'* – Cllr Norcross to provide further information at the next meeting – **Ongoing** — **Cllr Norcross**

88.2 *Youth service team to make future presentation to SPC Full Council* **- *Ongoing*** — **CLERK**

88.3 Cricket club Lease agreement to be discussed at F&GP Committee **- *Ongoing*** — **CLERK**

FULL/24/89 CORRESPONDENCE AND INFORMATION ITEMS

89.1 **Town Clock / Clock Tower statement from Cllr Sharp** – Unfortunately Cllr Sharp was unwell and could not attend this meeting nor present his statement. This matter therefore being deferred to the next meeting. — **Cllr Sharp**

89.2 **'Water Neutrality' update from HDC's planning department.** – This matter was discussed by Cllr Finnegan under item 82.1.3 – This document has been published on the SPC website

89.3 **HDC - Waste Prevention Community Grant Fund –** The supporting paper was a poster promoting this funding opportunity and it will be placed on SPC social media platforms — **CLERK**

89.4 **Social media postings – Statement from the Chairman** – All who use social media are aware of the *'noise'* created by certain individuals, and in relation to matters such as the Clock Tower ownership. The Chair reiterated that SPC does not comment on, or respond to, social media postings. Even if the postings are inflammatory, may or may not be accurate in relation to SPC business, or on occasion can be derogatory about SPC, its councillors, or its staff: The Chair suggesting its best not to dignify these comments with a response.
However, if councillors want to make a comment on social media they can do so, but only as an individual, not as a council representative.
SPC will continue to make its own postings on its own terms.

FULL/24/90 DATE OF NEXT FULL COUNCIL MEETING: 17th February 2025 at 7.30pm

Meeting closed at 9.22 pm

Signed by the Chairman …… Date 17th February 2025

A recording of this meeting is available at - https://youtu.be/g1ofuGLvRuc

Addendum

Chairmans' Statement

20th January Full Council Meeting – Minute Ref FULL/24/85

For a number of years there has been friction within Steyning Parish Council, arguably going back as far as 2012 and the attempts to install a Skateboard Park on the Memorial Playing Field. The relevance of this is that Paul Campbell was one of the main opponents of the proposed Skateboard Park, and engaged in a campaign of FOI requests and excessive correspondence with SPC, that ultimately led to ***three*** *of John's predecessors resigning and the Information Commissioners Office even appointing a case officer solely for SPC.*

Fast forward to 2019 and a new set of Councillors were elected to Steyning Parish Council, amongst them Paul Campbell. On election to the Council, Paul Campbell and others, decided that it was necessary to employ outside HR Consultants, at SPC's expense, as they were not happy with John's approach to his role. After expending considerable amounts of SPC, and therefore by extension, the taxpayers money, it was established that there wasn't an issue with John's performance, the issue lay more with the attitude and approach of some Councillors and a misunderstanding of their role and responsibilities.

Councillors in SPC were by now somewhat polarised, with the majority having faith and trust in John Fullbrook and the then deputy Clerk Hazel Roxby, but a minority, of whom Paul Campbell was one, taking an opposing view. In yet another attempt to remedy this, yet another review was undertaken by an external consultant, yet again paid for by SPC. This review concluded that the issue lay not with John or Hazel but with the attitude and approach of several Councillors.

Following a change of Chair in late 2020 the number of Code of Conduct Complaints submitted increased significantly, the majority of these were submitted by Paul Campbell. By way of example, Paul Campbell and his associates submitted no fewer than TEN code of conduct complaints about me between April 2021 and April 2023. Not one of these was upheld. There were many other code of conduct complaints submitted about other Councillors as well. But the pertinent point is that each complaint had to be considered by HDC, thereby incurring a cost, this cost ultimately falls to all of us as tax payers.

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The situation eventually became so bad that HDC decided that a review of SPC should be undertaken in an attempt to resolve the constant disputes and Code complaints. This review was undertaken by external consultants, appointed by HDC and paid for by them, at an approximate cost of £14000. Although paid for by HDC the cost actually falls to the taxpayers. The review, known as the Hoey Ainscough review, concluded that there was poor behaviour by some Councillors within SPC, though it avoided using names, and made a number of recommendations to hopefully ensure better behaviour. The report and its recommendations were issued in October 2022 and agreed to by the majority of Councillors. Sadly, it did not have the desired effect. Nevertheless HDC determined that they would "put aside" all code complaints submitted prior to July 2023. With the hope that a new Council would work with each other better.

In May 2023 a new Council was elected. This is of particular significance because it was apparent for all to see that at this point the entire atmosphere and behaviour of the Council as a whole changed. I mention this because for far too long some people's narrative around SPC has been that it is riven with "factions" and infighting. This is demonstrably untrue. From May 2023 onwards SPC has had 14 councillors who work together, discuss, debate and disagree, but do so politely, respectfully and without recourse to code complaints, and arrive at a consensus. One councillor, and one councillor only appears to find this difficult and resorts to code complaints. This councillor, Paul Campbell, continued to submit Code complaints, indeed he submitted a further one about me almost immediately after I was re- elected as Chairman in May 2023, followed by another in September 23 and then June 24.

I was not the only object of his ire however, as he lodged numerous other code complaints against his fellow councillors. So much so that only 2 of his fellow 14 councillors have not, thus far, been complained about by him.

Why is this important, it is important because every complaint submitted costs us, the taxpayer, money. Takes up time and resources for HDC to consider them and serves to make the SPC appear to be ineffective. So I say again, SPC as a whole, is not ineffective, does not have issues, and functions just as a parish Council should. Making decisions through debate and where there is a difference of opinion listening, considering and then ultimately voting. Once a decision has been made, democratically, Councillors abide by them. Unfortunately Paul Campbell does not feel the need to follow this democratic process.

Now for those who might argue that I would say that I am not the only person who believes this. HDC spent an enormous amount of time and money investigating the SIX code of conduct complaints that Paul Campbell submitted {post July 2023}, and the THREE complaints that were lodged against him that will be discussed at item 9.2. It should be noted the complaints that were lodged against Paul concerned his behaviour and attitude towards John and the Office. These were the only complaints that were upheld by HDC.

I will just take a few moments to share with you some of the salient points from the investigating officer's reports. Please bear in mind that the author of the report was an entirely independent person, who had no prior knowledge of SPC or its Councillors.

"I am afraid that his distrust of Councillors and the Clerk in partcular in my opinion prevents him engaging positively in parish business"

"The tone of Councillor Campbell's response is in my opinion confrontational"

"There is clearly a difference of opinion between the Clerk and Councillor Campbell on interpretation of procedures and processess and this in itself is not a concern, however it is the tone and challenge to the Clerks authority in this email that is of concern."

With reference to the NALC Civilty Repect Pledge and PC's view that he didn't need to make it personally.

"Councillor Campbell can demonstrate acceptance of the pledge by modifying his behaviour and treating the Clerk in particular with respect and not to make personal attacks, both internally and to third parties about the integrity of the Clerk."

"This continual challenging of the Clerk in a disrespectful, non constructive way and copying the other SPC Councillors into his correspondence with the Clerk amounts to disrespect, bullying and harassment of the Clerk"

As you can imagine this has been a very stressful and trying time for all concerned, but especially for John, Hazel and the staff in general, who have all remained professional throughout.

I am very pleased that we have finally reached a conclusion after many years of working with HDC and sincerely hope that this is now the end of the matter.