

Email to Leire Parish Council 15 Sept 2021

Cc: complaints@harborough.gov.uk ; Matthew Bills M.Bills@harborough.gov.uk

Dear Sirs

We wish to formally complain about the activities and behaviour of Leire Parish Councillors and Local Councillors following the Parish Council meeting in July and the subsequent extraordinary meeting in August.

Along with numerous other parishioners, we attended the Parish Council meeting in July at which there were discussions and votes on two planning applications. One of these was 21/01248/OUT for land "off Airedale Close". There was clearly a vote taken at this public meeting to recommend rejecting this application. Three councillors were present. Councillors xx and yy voted to recommend rejection and Councillor zz abstained because of a conflict of interest. This vote was recorded by the Clerk to the Parish.

The result of this vote should have been notified to Harborough District Council immediately following the meeting. The Clerk was also asked to notify the Independent Examiner of the vote, because this planning application is the same proposal adopted by the draft Leire Neighbourhood Plan. Neither of these actions were conducted.

Prior to the August extraordinary meeting, draft minutes of the July meeting were prepared and published on the Leire PC website. These minutes completely failed to mention the vote on planning application 21/01248/OUT, instead referring to a "decision to refer to Harborough District Council for further advice".

When challenged about these draft minutes at the August meeting, Councillor xx attempted to deny that a vote had taken place. Councillor yy was not present. There was then an offer to review the recording of the July meeting. Parishioners present also requested a copy of that recording and were told that one would be supplied. We have no evidence of any revision of the July minutes, in spite of a request for the latest version. Neither has the recording of the July meeting been provided to date (3 weeks after the August extraordinary meeting).

When we emailed local [District] Councillor aa (who had been present at the July vote) for his comments on this matter, we received a reply in which he claims "not to remember any discussion of another planning application" (implying no discussion occurred on 21/01248/OUT) although he could remember specific discussions about other topics. He made reference to the draft July minutes as evidence that no vote occurred.

There have obviously been deliberate attempts by Leire PC, the Clerk to the Parish, Local Councillors and others to suppress the publicising of the vote on 21/01248/OUT, which clearly and publicly took place in July.

This seems to be completely contrary to due process and contrary to all procedures. We at least expect figures in public office to be honest and truthful. We find this behaviour completely unacceptable and wish to formally complain.

Yours faithfully,

Name and address supplied

(We copy in Mr Matthew Bills with the expectation that this complaint will be urgently notified to Mr Jones, Independent Examiner for Leire Neighbourhood Plan)