

Complaint 1

October 2022

Complaint in black, response from Barr community council in blue italics

We are compelled to write to you after attending a meeting of Barr Community Council, as members of the public, last week. We were shocked and disappointed in the behaviour of a few of the community councillors.

BCC are not tabling agenda items when requested by other community organisations. On July 25th, a co-opted Councillor resigned as a co-opted trustee from <organisation> which he had been nominated onto as BCC representative. An email was sent to chairperson Tom Walker (and several emails since) asking that the community council nominate another councillor to replace him to represent the BCC on <organisation>. There have been three scheduled meetings (one postponed) since then, and they have failed to table the item. There is an email trail which shows these requests. It is now mid-October, and three months have passed without this item being discussed.

Issue 1: request made by <organisation> to table vote not made at first available meeting

View of the chair:

The resignation of the nominated community councillor was a bad sign in itself but I was willing to partially account for it as a personality clash. The subsequent resignations from the <organisation> by other trustees brought more reservation and concerns about the <organisation>.

If someone had been nominated before the resigned trustee was able to present their report then, knowing what I know now, I believe that it would have been a mistake. Allowing full discussion resulted in a better outcome and haste under pressure would have been worse for the community.

Further discussion points:

- Community council was aware at the time of concerns from members of the community about the conduct of the <organisation>.*
- Nomination of a replacement <organisation> trustee from the community council is not a requirement of the scheme. It is process undertaken by good will of the community council.*
- There were concerns that the resignation had not been made public or to the <organisation> membership.*
- Pressure to quickly appoint was unusual.*
- It would not have been appropriate to discuss until the previous trustee had given their report.*
- A current community councillor sits on the trustee board making the appointment superfluous to the community councils ability to know what is happening with the <organisation> or for communication.*

The language and the tone of some community councillors towards other community organisations was derogatory, rude and wholly unprofessional. For example, likening a community group of volunteers to Vladimir Putin, and accusing a community group of lying, wilfully misleading the community, providing false information and hiding information without any evidence whatsoever is entirely unprofessional, especially when those community councillors are elected to represent the views of the community and their words are given in a public forum. The conduct of some community councillors is not aligned with the values of community leadership.

Issue 2: allegations of lack of respect, bias, bad conduct

- *Disagreement exists on the alleged language and felt that the words used have been misquoted.*
 - *Human rights/freedom of speech allow for open discussion and it is within community councillor rights to verbalise views held by parts of the community.*
 - *Complaints like this discourage candour.*
 - *Chair believes in freedom of speech.*
 - *The interpretation of language is subjective.*
 - *The meetings follow the scheme in a general atmosphere of hostility and the level of goodwill has declined precipitously since our inappropriate suspension. It is difficult but we continue.*
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One community Councillor was singled out and it was demanded that he should answer questions about another group he is a member of, and this was without prior warning he would be expected to provide this information.

Issue 3: bullying

Scheme has section 16 to handle internal matters. It would be inappropriate for the general purpose complaints procedure to be used via a third party for this matter.

As members of the public and ex-community councillors we were shocked that the present community council were running meetings in this atmosphere of hostility towards other community groups in the village and the chair allowed such language at meetings and conducted meetings so unprofessionally.

Issue 4: Agreed to merge with issue 2 due to similarity and commented on above

Votes:

Issue 1: Agenda items should have been tabled

Disagree with complaint: 6

Abstain: 1

Agree: 0

Issue 2 & 4: Poor conduct by all of CC

Disagree with complaint: 6

Abstain: 1

Agree: 0

Issue 3: 3rd party perception of bullying

Disagree with complaint: 6

Abstain: 1

Agree: 0

Full Complaint without comment

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