



# Shaftesbury Town Council

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To: Members of Shaftesbury Town Council (FC), Councillors for Council; Cook (Chair), Brown (Vice Chair), Chase, Hall, Hollingshead, Lewer, Loader, Proctor, Tippins, Welch, Yeo.

You are summoned to an Extraordinary Full Council Meeting (EFC), for the transaction of the business shown on the agenda below. To be held at **7.00pm** on **Tuesday 12 May 2020** [online at Zoom.uk](#) Meeting ID: 834-4998-9897. Password 028558

All other recipients for information only

Cllr Tim Cook, Mayor and Chairman of Shaftesbury Town Council

## Public Participation

Due to the current government coronavirus response, the Town Council will be meeting online. Members of the public are encouraged to submit their questions or comments under 'Public Participation' in advance of the meeting to the Chairman and these will be made available to all Councillors. Members of the public may also link in to observe the meeting using the details above.

## Online Meeting Arrangements

The Chairman will host the meeting, attendees will be muted and councillors invited to speak in turn at each agenda item in line with Standing Orders Rules of Debate, Councillors may raise their hand to indicate that they wish to speak at other times. Voting will be by voting buttons enabled within the meeting and the decision and summary of votes will be read back before moving to the next item.

## The 7 principles of public life

Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership

## Agenda

- |          |  |          |
|----------|--|----------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>APOLOGIES .....</b>   | <b>2</b> |
|          | To receive and consider for acceptance, apologies for absence (1 min)  |          |
| <b>2</b> | <b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST .....</b>  | <b>2</b> |
|          | To declare any interests relating to the business of the meeting and receive any dispensation requests from the Clerk. (1 min) |          |
| <b>3</b> | <b>MEMBER MOTION – MOTION OF NO CONFIDENCE .....</b>   | <b>3</b> |
|          | Motion of No Confidence in Councillor Karen Tippins (30 mins)  |          |

(End)

## **1 Apologies**

To receive and consider for acceptance, apologies for absence

(1 min)

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### **1.1 Background**

- 1.1.1 The Council (including committees) should approve (or not) the reason for apologies given by absent councillors. If a council member has not attended a meeting of the council (or its committees) or has not tendered apologies which have been accepted by the council (or committee), for six consecutive months, they are disqualified.

## **2 Declarations of Interest**

To declare any interests relating to the business of the meeting and receive any dispensation requests from the Clerk.

(1 min)

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### **2.1 Background**

- 2.1.1 Members and Officers are reminded of their obligations to declare interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct 2019. The Clerk will report any dispensation requests received
- 2.1.2 Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to a councillor's interest, the councillor has the responsibility of declaring that interest in accordance with the adopted code of conduct. (Shaftesbury Town Council, 2019)

### 3 Member Motion – Motion of No Confidence

Motion of No Confidence in Councillor Karen Tippins

(30 mins)

#### NOTICE OF MOTION TO COUNCIL

To be referred to Committee (if yes, specify which committee)	No
Title of Motion	That this Council has No Confidence in Councillor Karen Tippins
Proposed by	Cllr Andy Hollingshead
Seconded by	Cllr Alex Chase
Proposed Resolution	To resolve that this council has no confidence in Councillor Karen Tippins and to request that she resign forthwith
Background (provided by the proposer)	<p>In December 2019 Councillor Tippins was elected as a Town Councillor to East Ward, Shaftesbury.</p> <p>Since her election she has conducted a campaign of bullying and harassment, directly and indirectly, at the Town Clerk and has made every effort to frustrate the business of the council, and has breached the Code of Conduct on numerous occasions. The bullying and harassment of the Town Clerk is now subject of investigation.</p> <p>She has made false allegations of corrupt practice in a public forum against named councillors with no defence of fair comment or legal privilege.</p> <p>The frustration of the business of the council is demonstrated by the fact that two HR meetings, those of the 31st January, 2020 and the 10th February, 2020, had to be abandoned due to her refusal to leave the meeting once it had resolved to go into confidential session. Furthermore, her aggressive and pedantic fault finding of the Clerk and of the Chair at other meetings, including committee meetings of which she is not a member, have made meetings extremely difficult to conduct and conclude.</p> <p>Her aggressive and pedantic fault finding and determination to frustrate the will of the council also extends to her correspondence with the officers and councillors. Of numerous examples I refer to the recent email exchanges over the decision taken by the Council to support the NHS and our community against the coronavirus epidemic.</p>

	<p>Instead of recognising the urgent need for common action against a dangerous epidemic she, instead, chose to continue her vitriolic campaign against the clerk, and also attacked the councillor sponsoring the proposal to provide funding in support of our local NHS both directly and by complaining to Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust. That councillor has now resigned because of bullying.</p> <p>In conclusion, we consider her conduct has led to her losing the confidence of this Town and this community, and of this Council.</p> <p>Appendix A details the evidence that underpins this Motion.</p>
Financial implication (anticipated by the proposer)	<p>The cost of a by-election in East Ward.</p> <p>However, the Coronavirus Act, 2020, which the government introduced on 19 March, postpones any elections that were due to be held in May 2020 until 6 May 2021.</p> <p>Any other electoral events, such as the council or parliamentary by-elections, will also be postponed until May 2021.</p>
Financial implications (anticipated by the Proper Officer)	<p>The cost of a by-election is approximately £4,500.</p>
Legal implications (considered by the proposer)	<p>There are no legal impediments to a vote of no confidence in a town councillor. In the event of Councillor Tippins resigning there would be no effect on the working of the council as she is not on any committees</p>
Proposers signature	
Seconders signature	
Supported by:	<p><b><u>Councillors:</u></b>  Brown  Cook  Hall  Lewer  Loader  Proctor  Welch</p>

## **Evidence Appendix A**

1. 18/12/19 on meeting the Mayor and Clerk to sign her acceptance of office made serious allegations against various councillors, made accusations against the Clerk and the Mayor, and had to be asked to refrain from using aggressive and intimidatory behaviour. She did not comply with Council policy to respect one other and staff; she did not treat staff with respect; she behaved in a threatening and bullying manner; she attempted to intimidate the Clerk.
2. 19/12/19 she attended a licensing hearing at Dorset Council offices. The hearing was in connection with a review of the licence held by Angola'76 due to a number of complaints. Councillor Tippins was representing the licence holders in a personal capacity, but made herself known as a town councillor. She informed the hearing that her husband played at Angola'76. Potential conflict of interest and abuse of authority.
3. 8/1/20 and 9/1/20 publicly disrespectful to two members of staff, the Clerk and other officers.
4. 14/1/20 bullying and intimidatory email received by the Clerk from Councillor Tippins.
5. 16/1/20 Full Council meeting - Councillor Tippins makes a number of comments and allegations that were perceived to undermine the Clerk's authority, and was bullying and intimidatory. Furthermore, she was disrespectful to other Council members.
6. 15/1/20 HR committee Councillor Tippins was disrespectful and bullying to Councillor Hollingshead. Refused to leave the meeting when it moved into confidential session causing the meeting to be abandoned. Demanded right to see staff salary budget detail, which she has no right to see. This is subject of an active complaint.
7. 30/1/20 email to Clerk making untrue allegations about another officer and her levels of authorisation.
8. 3/2/20 email to HR provider and others which was unwarranted and divulged personal information and which was further bullying.
9. 4/2/20 GEM committee. Councillor Tippins made numerous interventions all of which were perceived as undermining the authority of the Clerk. Her conduct that evening significantly upset other members of staff.
10. 10/2/20 HR committee. Councillor Tippins was disrespectful and bullying to Councillor Hollingshead, and accused the Clerk of writing the complaint Councillor Hollingshead had made after the last meeting. Again refused to leave the meeting when it moved into confidential session causing the meeting to be abandoned.
11. 12/2/20 Councillor Tippins made a complaint against 9 councillors to the Monitoring Officer at Dorset Council falsely alleging gender bias when allocating committee places. This allegation has been dismissed and no further action will be taken by the Assessment Sub-Committee of Dorset Council.
12. 18/2/20 Full Council meeting. Throughout Councillor Tippins's behaviour towards the Clerk was aggressive and intimidatory.
13. 27/2/20 Clerk's meeting with Internal Auditor. Councillor Tippins insisted on coming to the meeting. Displayed almost continuous aggression towards the Clerk and the Auditor, and was asked to stop telling lies. There is an audio recording of this meeting.
14. March 2020 a number of emails in this month from Councillor Tippins to officers in Dorset Council which either explicitly or implicitly can be construed as undermining the Clerk.

15. 26/03/20 sent an email to the Clerk making a number of erroneous, unfounded and incorrect allegations about the Clerk and another officer. This required a response from Councillor Hollingshead as Chair of HR. He pointed out the numerous errors of fact in her email and requested Councillor Tippins apologise to both officers. No apology has been forthcoming.
16. March 2020 - Consultation Response to Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan. Identifies herself as a Councillor. The response contains three separate and serious allegations against the same Councillor which are defamatory, as well as an extensive number of distortions and deliberate mistruths. For example, she claimed that many of the statements within the NHP are either factually incorrect or not evidence based and "no doubt opinions of some of the councillors". She also claimed that the Steering Committee was not open and transparent, that feedback from the community was ignored, and that there were unnamed vested interests. These statements, and many others in the document, are wilfully false and untrue.
17. COVID-19 crisis. 01/04/20 eleven Town Councillors joined a Zoom meeting to agree how to release funds to support key workers and thereby save lives. Councillor Tippins was not on the meeting. Further to that Zoom meeting Councillor Tippins sent two emails on 02/04/20 to Councillor Prichard, the Clerk, and another officer which were aggressive, bullying and threatening. In the second email Councillor Tippins threatened that she would complain to Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust. She made that complaint thereby undermining the work of Councillor Prichard in connection with Friends of Westminster Hospital. She refused to support the council Motion on the 14/04/20 which was to release funds to support the Town and essential staff in responding to the Coronavirus epidemic. During the Zoom meeting on the 14/04/20 to discuss the Motion she was unprofessional and repeatedly called a fellow councillor 'thick' and an 'idiot'.
18. 14/04/20 Resignation of Councillor Prichard solely due to the bullying of Councillor Tippins.
19. 18/04/20 the Shaftesbury Chamber of Commerce call for Councillor Tippins to resign, launch an online petition calling for her resignation, and request the Town Council hold a vote of No Confidence in Councillor Tippins.
20. 18/04/20 on the Maltings Shaftesbury Community Group Facebook page makes unfounded and false allegations of corrupt behaviour against Councillors Prichard, Proctor and Welch.
21. 20/04/20 the Shaftesbury Civic Society publicly back the Chamber of Commerce's actions.
22. 20/04/20 on the Maltings Shaftesbury Community Group Facebook makes further false allegations of corrupt behaviour against Councillor Welch.
23. 20/04/20 (10:33 hrs) Councillor Tippins sent an email to the chief executive of Dorset Council with which she made false allegations of improper behaviour against the Town Clerk. Later that day (14:00 hrs) she sent another email to all town councillors making a further allegation against the Town Clerk of improper behaviour. This is unprofessional and bullying.
24. 22/04/20 (10:53 hrs) sent an email to the chief executive of Dorset Council making further allegations against the Town Clerk of improper behaviour. This is further evidence of bullying.