

## DORSET COUNCIL DECISION NOTICE

Complaint Reference: 13/20

Subject Member: Cllr K Tippins and Cllr P Yeo of Shaftesbury Town Council

Date of Hearing: 26 February 2021

Audit and Governance (Hearing) Sub-Committee

### **1. Summary of the Complaint**

The Complainant alleged that at a meeting of Shaftesbury Town Council on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2020 Cllr K Tippins' and Cllr P Yeo's behaviour breached the Code of Conduct and showed him a lack of respect. The specific complaint is that both Councillors called the Complainant an "idiot", and when invited by the Chairman to retract her comment, Cllr K Tippins refused.

### **2. The Conduct of the Hearing**

The conduct of the hearing is as detailed in the Audit and Governance (Hearing) Sub-Committee minutes, a copy of which are appended to (and forms part of) this Decision Notice. A recording of the hearing is available [click here](#)

### **3. The Hearing Sub-Committee's Decisions**

3.1 The Hearing Sub-Committee's decisions are detailed in the appended minutes.

However, the Hearing Sub-Committee's key conclusions are also set out below.

3.2 The Sub-committee had reviewed all of the documentation in the agenda pack provided, viewed the videos and listened carefully to all of the comments made by all of the parties present, including the comments made by Cllr K Tippins which referred to Article 10 of the Human Rights Act. The Sub-Committee bore this in mind when reaching their decision.

3.3 The Sub-Committee did not dispute the right of a councillor to question others as part of their duties as a councillor, however the Sub-committee felt that the behaviour of Cllr K Tippins and Cllr P Yeo fell below the standards expected in the Shaftesbury Town Council Code of Conduct, specifically relating to Section 2.1(b) to treat others with respect.

3.4 The Sub-committee acknowledged that Cllr P Yeo did not use the word "idiot" but felt he was complicit by his actions and comments afterwards.

3.5 The Sub-committee felt that both councillors failed to understand the procedures and protocols for council meetings.

3.6 The Sub-committee acknowledged that Cllr K Tippins had already given an apology.

3.7 It was agreed that the conduct of the Councillor amounted to a breach of the following provisions of the Shaftesbury Town Council Code of Conduct:

Section 2.1 (b):

"A Councillor must.... treat others with respect;"

3.8 It was agreed that:

- both councillors give an unreserved public apology at the next Full Council meeting of Shaftesbury Town Council.
- the Monitoring Officer of Dorset Council is instructed to make a request to Shaftesbury Town Council that both councillors attend Code of Conduct training of an approved standard within 4 months.



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Jonathan Mair  
Monitoring Officer

Right of Appeal: There is no right of appeal against the decision of the Audit and Governance (Hearing) Sub-Committee.