

Betley, Balterley and Wrinehill Parish Council

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To the Members of Betley, Balterley and Wrinehill Parish Council

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend the **EXTRAORDINARY MEETING** of the Betley, Balterley and Wrinehill Parish Council to be held on **Friday, 17th May 2024 at 6.30 pm at Betley Village Hall (Main Hall), Main Road, Betley, CW3 9BH** where the undermentioned business is to be transacted.

The Chair will provide advice as to how he intends to proceed with the various agenda items.

Members who did not attend the Hearing, or watch the live stream, may find it helpful to watch the recording of the Hearing before the meeting.

To access the link.

Go to the Borough Council website, a series of boxes appear (may have to press 'show more').

In the boxes go to Your Council.

Select Councillors, Committees and meetings.

Go to meetings calendar.

You will then see under 30 April 'Audit and Standards Hearing Panel'.

Click on that text, which brings up the agenda for the meeting (where you will also find the papers provided to the panel).

Under Media there is a box with the words 'Watch the meeting here'.

Click on that box and it should give you access to the recording.

Yours faithfully



Mrs M Clough

Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence from Members of the Parish Council.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest from Members of the Parish Council.

Please note that the Clerk will provide advice as to what interests (if any) Members should declare under the various agenda items and if and where the press and public should be excluded, in which case the following will be recorded:

To resolve that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item(s), because it is likely that there will be disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs contained within Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

3. REPORT FOLLOWING INVESTIGATION INTO ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING COUNCILLOR ANGELA DRAKAKIS-SMITH

Report of the Solicitor (Emma Patterson) engaged by the Monitoring Officer of Newcastle Borough Council to conduct the investigation, enclosed.

The Parish Council to receive and then to consider the report.

4. NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL AUDIT AND STANDARDS HEARING PANEL – DECISION

- (i) **ITEM 4(i)** - To receive a copy of the report discussed by the Audit and Standards Hearing Panel on 30 April 2024 entitled Member Code of Conduct Complaint – Cllr Drakakis-Smith of Betley, Balterley and Wrinehill Parish Council.

To receive the decision of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Audit and Standards Hearing Panel, which was convened to hear and determine complaints made against Parish Councillor Angela Drakakis-Smith, which was detailed as follows:-

Decision

The panel agrees in full with the conclusions of the independent report commissioned to investigate the complaints. We find that Councillor Drakakis-Smith's conduct, as detailed in the report, was in breach of the Code of Conduct, paragraphs 1.2, 2.1-3 and 5.1.

The following documents are enclosed as requested by the Audit and Standards Hearing Panel (details in the letters):-

- (ii) **ITEM 4 (ii)** - Letter dated 1 May 2024 from Anthony Harold (Monitoring Officer) on behalf of Cllr Mark Holland, Chair Standards Hearing Panel, sent to the Clerk;
- (iii) **ITEM 4(iii)** - Letter dated 1 May 2024 from Anthony Harold (Monitoring Officer) on behalf of Cllr Mark Holland, Chair Standards Hearing Panel, sent to Councillor Drakakis-Smith.

5. NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL AUDIT AND STANDARDS HEARING PANEL

To consider the recommended sanctions proposed by the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Audit and Standards Hearing Panel, as detailed below:-

Sanctions

We recommend the following sanctions, having had regard to the seriousness of the conduct code breaches in question, relevant guidance, and the range of sanctions available in the circumstances.

- We recommend that our decision is reported to the Parish Council at the next available meeting.
- We recommend that this letter and our letter to Councillor Drakakis-Smith are made public.
- We recommend that the Parish Council formally censures Councillor Drakakis-Smith.
- In consideration of the breach of paragraph 5.1 (bringing the authority into disrepute) we recommend that the Parish Council removes Councillor Drakakis-Smith from any external appointments or positions of responsibility that she holds in her role as a Parish Councillor.

6. DECISION OF BETLEY, BALTERLEY AND WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Members of the Parish Council to consider whether to impose the sanctions proposed above by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Audit and Standards Hearing Panel, or whether to replace it/them with another relevant sanction.

The sanctions available, as set out in the report to Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Audit and Standards Hearing Panel (list extracted verbatim), are:

- Censure or reprimand the Member;
- Publish its findings in respect of the Member's conduct;
- Report its findings to the Council [or to the Parish Council] for information;
- Recommend to the Member's Group Leader (or in the case of un-grouped Members, recommend to Council or to Committees) that he/she be removed from any or all Committees or Sub-Committees of the Council;
- Recommend to the Leader of the Council that the Member be removed from the Cabinet, or removed from particular Portfolio responsibilities (if applicable);
- Instruct the Monitoring Officer to [or recommend that the Parish Council] arrange training for the Member;
- Remove [or recommend to the Parish Council that the Member be removed] from all outside appointments to which he/she has been appointed or nominated by the authority [or by the Parish Council];
- Withdraw [or recommend to the Parish Council that it withdraws] facilities provided to the Member by the Council, such as a computer, website and/or email and Internet access; or
- Exclude [or recommend that the Parish Council exclude] the Member from the Council's offices or other premises, with the exception of meeting rooms as necessary for attending Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings.

[The Committee/PC has no power to suspend or disqualify the Member or to withdraw Members' or special responsibility allowances].