

Mayfield Parish Council

Minutes of a Meeting of Mayfield Parish Council held on **Tuesday 7th February 2023 at 7.00 pm**
at The Church Rooms, Church Lane, Mayfield

Present: Cllr. S. Bridgett – Chairman

Cllr. P. Boura

Cllr. D. Croll

Cllr. A. Golding – arrived at 7. 06 p.m.

Cllr. G. Moodie

Cllr. J. Watson

Also present: Mrs Anne L. Wilson Parish Clerk

Nicky Taylor-Smith

18 residents

70/2022	To receive apologies for absence/note attendance. RESOLVED to receive apologies for absence from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cllr. J. Kennedy – personal reasons
71/2022	Declaration of Interests RESOLVED to note that there were no declarations of interest under consideration on this agenda in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 s32 and The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.
72/2022	Decision and Recommendations of the ESBC Local Monitoring Officer (LMO) in relation to Complaints about MPC Councillors and breaches of the Code of Conduct. This item was taken after 73/2022 as Cllr. Golding was not present at the meeting when this item was due to be discussed – see below.
73/2022	Public Speaking This item took place before 72/2022 as Cllr. Golding had not arrived at the meeting to enable the item above to take place at the correct point in the agenda. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr Parker questioned the location of the village gateway at Swinscoe Hill on the A52, suggesting it was not a gateway to Mayfield and was in Okeover parish. Cllr. Bridgett pointed out that the site proposed was to encourage traffic to slow down as it approached the Gallowtree Lane/Hollow Lane junctions which were part of Mayfield, and which had a derestricted speed limit and emphasised that the site had been endorsed by SCC Highways.• David Turner asked that a more cost-effective way of Clerking arrangements be made for both this year and next year and that the current costs took up a significant part of the budget

	<p>At this point Cllr Golding entered the room. The Chair carried on with the Public Participation session before reverting to the agenda order.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Wimbush offered comment on three matters from previous minutes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) He had asked John Teasdale the LMO if he had been misquoted as saying that interference with other people's property was an offence therefore the removal of the Parish Council noticeboard outside the shop was an offence and the removal illegal. The response was "lawyerly". ii) He confirmed that there were no notices up outside and inside the shop to indicate there was CCTV present which was a legal requirement. The owner said that there were photographs available off the CCTV system and he had told a Police Sergeant about it. The Assistant Manager of the shop had been telling (only) Mr. Wimbush about the incidents at the shop. iii) He had made informal enquiries about the interference with the memorial stones from a local stonemason whose view was that no harm had been done. • Mr. Berrisford referred to the set of minutes where Cllr Golding called the Councillors idiots. He repeated previous questions about the PC noticeboard key and the involvement of the police. • Mr Blackwell stated that the Parish Council were accused of not making the minutes open and transparent. He said referring to Cllr. Golding and not allowing him to speak was an abuse of democracy. A Councillor disagreed and stated that they held a different opinion to the resident and that the resident did not understand Standing Orders. • A question was asked about whether the meeting was called properly given that the notices were not put on the noticeboards until Saturday morning. The Clerk replied that the meeting paperwork was served within the legal timeframes and the agenda was subsequently put on the website and the noticeboards in the normal way. <p>At this point Cllr Golding sought to raise a motion to extend the already over run Public Participation session. The motion received no seconder. Members of the public sought to intervene. Margaret Wimbush asked why the Parish Council did not work for the village and asked that the Council give them time to speak and what had happened to the PC. The Chairman suggested that the village, (as represented at the meeting), had happened to the Parish Council.</p> <p>The Chairman indicated that the meeting would return to agenda item 72 at which point Cllr Golding intervened with a point of order about whether the meeting had been properly called "in accordance with statute". The Clerk asked if Cllr Golding had received the requisite papers, but Cllr Golding avoided the question and continued to repeat what he had already said. The Clerk again confirmed that the meeting had been properly called at which point a resident shouted out that they would speak "and you will listen, OK". Further disruption followed with Cllr Golding attempting to raise the same point of order, which was refused.</p>
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72/2022	<p>Decision and Recommendations of the ESBC Local Monitoring Officer (LMO) in relation to Complaints about MPC Councillors and breaches of the Code of Conduct. (Item deferred from earlier on the agenda due to Cllr Golding's absence).</p> <p>The Chairman updated Members on the meeting held with Cllr. Golding, Cllr. E. Barker and John Teasdale, the Monitoring Officer. Cllr. Bridgett confirmed that since Cllr. Golding was reluctant to make an apology John Teasdale had offered to draft it for him. As requested at the meeting, the Chairman and the Parish Clerk had seen the final version of the apology before the subsequent PC meeting. Cllr. Bridgett re-iterated that Cllr. Golding had been told by both LMO and her that he should make the apology alone and not add anything else by way of justification or mitigation which would adversely impact its validity. Members noted that as two previous attempts in October and November at a qualified apology had not been accepted by the PC, this would be the last chance for a serious and sincere apology to be proffered after which the next step might in all likelihood be the Standards Committee.</p> <p>Furthermore, Members were reminded that after the PC considered and adopted the findings and recommendations of the LMO at the October meeting David Croll accepted both and agreed to undergo training as set out in the recommendations.</p> <p>Members were also reminded that there would be no discussion.</p> <p>Cllr. Golding refused to simply make the apology and added the words before the apology "I have not been found guilty of any breach of the Code of Conduct in the Beglan report, but I will sincerely make the following apology:</p> <p><i>"Following the recommendations of the Monitoring Officer being accepted by the PC, so as to bring this longstanding matter to a conclusion, I now take this opportunity to apologise to Ms. Nicola Taylor Smith and also to Dr. Lesley Brown as recommended by the Monitoring Officer based on the Beglan Report."</i></p> <p>Some Councillors and residents did not hear the apology so Cllr. Golding was asked to read it again. Residents started shouting from the floor at the Parish Council. Cllr Croll indicated that if Cllr Golding withdrew his earlier comment about not breaching the Code, the apology might stand. Cllr Bridgett read out the four counts of breach which the LMO had endorsed from the Beglan Report and asked Cllr Golding if he accepted them and he declined to answer, saying again that the Beglan Report did not find him guilty of a breach of the Code. He went on to add that he had set out his position in a 21-page rebuttal of the Report and that he had written to the Monitoring Officer telling him where mistakes had been made.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the apology made by Cllr. Golding is not accepted as he had not followed the agreement with the Monitoring Officer in that he had not just read the apology but had undermined it by prefacing it with a rejection of the Beglan Report.</p>
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	<p>Cllr. Golding stated that the apology was sincere in the only way it can be and that it was what was agreed with the Monitoring Officer. Members agreed that the apology may be, but it had been made clear that no discussion and no statement could be read out and he had ignored this clear instruction, undermining the apology itself. Cllr Golding continued to interrupt the Chairman and Clerk and tried to raise a motion against a Standing Order, shouting that councillors wouldn't be on the PC "much longer".</p>
	<p>After minute number 72/2022 Members RESOLVED that under Standing Order 2a and 2b that Cllr. Golding be asked to leave the Parish Council meeting as his continued behaviour, following the PC's non acceptance of his apology, was considered offensive and improper, and he was disruptive and not allowing the business of the Parish Council to be transacted.</p> <p>Cllr. Golding refused to leave the meeting and went and sat with the public and provoked further disruption.</p> <p>The Chairman closed the meeting on advice from the Clerk and announced that a date for the remainder of the business on the agenda to be transacted would be found. She indicated that the important business of setting the Precept had not happened, as a result of Cllr Golding's behaviour.</p> <p>Signed Date</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Chairman</p>