

HOLME VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL

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Press Statement for website & issue to Huddersfield Examiner re breach of Code of Conduct by Parish Councillor

For release on 8/10/2020

At its Full Council meeting on 5th October, Holme Valley Parish Council agreed that Councillor James Dalton had breached the Parish Council's Code of Conduct and it implemented a series of sanctions as a result of his unacceptable behaviour. It was noted that Councillor Dalton was already subject to sanctions from the Parish Council following a breach in October 2019. Having referred 21 complaints to the Kirklees Monitoring Officer, an assessment was undertaken by Kirklees which concluded that Councillor James Dalton had breached the Code of Conduct for all six issues raised in the complaints. The Parish Council considered the assessment report and agreed to formally write to Councillor Dalton to require the following:

- 1) An apology for the upset caused by his offensive language leading to the complaints.
- 2) The deletion of all remaining Tweets complained of.
- 3) The editing of Cllr Dalton's Twitter 'handle' and 'biog' to remove references to him being a councillor.
- 4) Cllr Dalton's attendance at diversity training.
- 5) The extension of his existing ineligibility to be a member of any Standing Committees, working groups or represent the Parish Council on outside bodies from May 2021 to May 2022.

These sanctions will all apply until at least the Annual Council meeting in May 2022 and will only be reviewed if an apology is received and action taken to address the requirements above in the meantime.

Councillor Dalton attended the Extraordinary Full Council meeting and refused to issue an apology to either the Parish Council or the complainants. He also refused to consider attending diversity training or to amend his Twitter account to remove references to being a councillor.

The Parish Council takes the nature of these complaints extremely seriously and these sanctions are the most severe available under current powers. Chair of the Parish Council, Councillor Rachel Hogley said, "The Parish Council is extremely disappointed that Cllr Dalton continues to ignore the principles of a Councillor's Code of Conduct and fails to recognise the unacceptable nature of his communications. His continuing breaches of the Code of Conduct¹ through use of deeply offensive language on his Twitter account are despicable. His views do not represent the hard work of our Councillors who are committed to serving all our local community."

Yours faithfully

Liz Bennett

Clerk, Holme Valley Parish Council

¹ The Code of Conduct is based on the principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership