

## MONITORING OFFICER DECISION NOTICE

**Complaint Number CoC01284  
Cllr. Bannister of Ledbury Town Council**

### **DECISION**

That Cllr. Bannister **DID** breach Ledbury Town Council's Code of Conduct - A.3 "Treat everyone that they deal with equally and with respect and courtesy". As Mr. Bannister is no longer a Councillor, then no further action can be taken against him but this Decision Notice will be published on the Council's website, and the findings sent to the Town Council for their consideration.

### **COMPLAINT**

The Council received a complaint that, at a meeting of Ledbury Town Council on 8 September 2022, Cllr. Bannister was disrespectful to a member of the public.

The Complainant attended a meeting of Ledbury Town Council on 8 September 2022 and says that a member of the public was allowed to make his statement but that Cllr. Bannister interrupted the representation thereby cutting short the allocated time. Cllr. Bannister then banged a table causing further disruption and further reducing the time for the representation.

The complainant then suggests that Cllr. Bannister "*stormed out of the meeting saying that he was not prepared to listen to this 'nonsense'*". The Complainant is of the view that this demonstrated a lack of understanding, compassion and was not conduct expected of an elected member whose role is to support and serve the local community.

The complainant further states that on returning to the meeting Cllr. Bannister proposed to the meeting that anyone not abiding by the meeting rules determined by Ledbury Town Council should be banned from future meetings. The complainant does not believe that meeting rules were breached as the public are allocated five minutes speaking time and if there had been no interruptions the representation would not have lasted longer than this.

The Complainant believes that Cllr. Bannister's behaviour was disrespectful and a breach of Ledbury Town Council's Code of Conduct - A.3 "Treat everyone that they deal with equally and with respect and courtesy".

### **FINDINGS**

There was a heated debate at the meeting on 8 September 2022, and the member of the public was addressing the Council as he had a right to do under their standing orders, for a five minute period. Cllr. Bannister interrupted the member of the public when they were speaking, and at the end of the five minute time period Cllr. Bannister proposed that the member of the public should be stopped from speaking. The Council voted on this and agreed to the member of the public have a short while longer. Cllr. Bannister banged the table and walked out of the meeting saying that 'he was not prepared to listen to this [nonsense]'

### **PROCEDURE**

An Investigator was asked to carry out an investigation into the facts. The evidence she collected and used to form her conclusions was:-

- Interview with Complainant
- Interview with Ledbury Town Clerk
- Email response from Cllr. Bannister dated 13 April 2023
- Minutes of the Planning Meeting held on 8 September 2022
- Standing Orders of Ledbury Town Council

## **CONCLUSION**

In accordance with S28(7) Localism Act 2011 I have sought and taken into account the views of two Independent Persons appointed by Herefordshire Council for the purposes of the Act. The Independent Persons agree that Cllr. Bannister has breached part A.3 of the Ledbury Town Council Code of Conduct.

Cllr. Bannister stood down at the election in May 2023 and therefore no further action can be taken.

There is no right of appeal against this decision notice.



Monitoring Officer

Dated: 6 June 2023