

St Stephen by Launceston Rural Parish Council 14 March 2024

23/169 Cllr Ranson asked the following questions; (copy as supplied by Cllr Ranson to the Clerk)

Will the chair of this council apologise for the amount of time and money wasted clarifying the legal position of this council in relation to Langore village Green?

(Cllr Ranson has a pecuniary interest in Langore Village Green)

The current Chair cannot apologise as she has respected the advice of the Clerk in this legal matter. All decisions of Council are made collectively, and no individual councillor can make a decision on behalf of the Council.

It is noted that Cllr Ranson was Chair and Cllr Hayden Vice-Chair from May 2021 to May 2023 (apart from a brief period when Cllr Caudle was Chair). Cllr Ranson has a pecuniary interest in Langore Village Green VG630 and must leave the meeting when related items are discussed. Cllr Hayden took the Chair for these items and instructed the Clerk on behalf of the Council.

See Minutes 26 July 2022 22/79 – It was unanimously agreed to ask Stephens Scown to advise with drafting a suitable response to Solicitors letter dated 21/7/22.

See Minutes 1 September 2022 22/104 – A letter from Stephens Scown had been received and circulated amongst Councillors 22/105 – Amendments were agreed and the Clerk instructed to advise Stephens Scown to proceed with an amended letter.

See Minutes 5 January 2023 22/175 – It was noted that the owner of Victoria (Virginia) Cottage had provided evidence that evidence was being prepared prior to a submission to the Secretary of State and that action is suspended for a period of 3 months to enable the evidence to be collated and submitted.

See Minutes 2 March 2023 22/214 – It was resolved that the Clerk write to our solicitors stating that the PC as freeholder would be prepared to provide a statement of support to an application to S of S for access over the Green by vehicle to Virginia Cottage and that this Council would take no action when an application is made to the S of S until a response is received from the S of S. Passed unanimously.

NB. Cllr Hayden asked the current Chair at the Parish Council meeting on 14 March 2024 to apologise for spending £5000 on legal fees. The Chair refused as all decisions were taken collectively (see response above to Cllr Ranson's question). Cllr Hayden then apologised personally to the public for spending £5000 on legal fees. Cllr Hayden was the Chair and led discussions on this legal matter in Part 2 meetings, and she personally communicated with Stephens Scown on behalf of the Council.

Will the chair of this council apologise for contacting the Open Spaces Society without the consent of this council?

The current Chair did not contact the Open Spaces Society without the consent of this council.

See Minutes 5 January 2023 22/167 – It was resolved that Council join the Open Spaces Society at a cost of £45. (Cllr Ranson chaired the meeting and was present).

See Minutes 6 July 2023 22/47 – It was confirmed that the Clerk acted correctly in obtaining advice from OSS.

Given that the chair of this council is responsible for adding content to the council website, will they apologise for adding inaccurate council meeting meetings to the website?

The current Chair has not added official Council documents to the website – only the Clerk can do so.

Will the chair apologise to the Village Hall committee for the lack of action in regards to the deed of variation for the hall field?

The current Chair cannot apologise to the Village Hall Committee for the alleged lack of action in regards to the deed of variation for the hall field as council acts collectively on such matters and this item is included each month in the Part 2 section of the Agenda. (Cllr Ranson is a Trustee of the Village Hall Charity 298955).

Will the chair of this council apologise for forwarding an email from an ex parish councillor to the clerk of the council to forward to County Council planning department in relation to a planning application at Glebe farm, Truscott?

The current chair cannot apologise for forwarding an email from an ex parish councillor to the clerk to forward to planning as only Council acting collectively can instruct the Clerk to send relevant information to third parties.

It is noted with concern that some questions above are a repeat of the Code of Conduct complaints to Cornwall Council Standards by Cllr Ranson. All were rejected by the Cornwall Council Standards Monitoring Officer.

CCN132/23/24 – Cllr Ranson accused me of forwarding a document to the Planning Department without consent and that the Minutes were altered to collaborate my view. The complaint was rejected. Cllr Ranson repeats the complaint here in writing and verbally accused me of altering the Minutes in the meeting on 14 March 2024.

Cllr Ranson has chosen to ignore the ruling of the Standards Monitoring Officer.

CCN012/23/24

The Monitoring Officer noted the following:

'In rejecting this complaint, it is with some concern that I note this is yet another complaint which is either from or relates to the Complainant. I have particular concerns that he has ignored the advice from his Clerk ...and has made the complaint knowing the advice he has been given.'

'It should be noted in this it is considered that the improper motive is that the Complainant has a disclosable pecuniary interest in the subject matter of the Green, and it appears he is using this process to try to limit challenges to his use of the Green.'

Joan Heaton

7 April 2024