

FIREWORK DE-BRIEF MEETING WEDNESDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER 2017 TELSCOMBE CIVIC CENTRE 21.15

The meeting took place after full council with the tables arranged in a horseshoe shape. Present were Mayor Joanna Wilkins, Deputy Mayor Daryll Brindley, Town Clerk Nancy Astley and Deputy Town Clerk Stella Newman on the top table. Looking out into the room from the top table the on the right-hand row seated were Cllrs David Wright, Brian Page, myself Gwen Maskell, and Tim Armour. On the left-hand row seated were Cllrs Andy Smith, Job Harris and Cllr David Neave. From my position, I was exactly opposite Cllr Neave and Cllr Harris with Cllr Smith slightly to my left all, were in full view for me to witness what happened.

The meeting was a de-brief on the firework display held on Telscombe Tye on Saturday 2nd September 2017 to avoid any dangerous outcomes at future firework events. I had no input as I did not attend the function due to a family bereavement.

Cllr Smith started the meeting and produced the action plan arranged by The Town Clerk to be followed by the volunteers at the event. This was the "Barbarossa Plan" used in 2014. Cllr Smith stated the incorrect plan had been used because there was a fun fayre which included selling alcohol on the Tye, this stall was still selling alcohol while the fireworks were set off. In 2015 a Tyefest Function was held on the Tye involving daytime activity with alcohol and a new plan was put in place. This plan should of have been used as it covered the event of alcohol being present. Some members of the public had brought alcohol onto the Tye themselves meaning there were quite few adults having consumed alcohol for most of the day with children around. One hazard was two men went behind the cordoned off area for the fireworks, clearly having consumed alcohol. Another hazard was the number of cars parked on the Tye with some vehicles driving across the Tye to get as close as they could to the main attraction. There were children sitting on the ground to view the fireworks invisible to vehicles. At the end of the evening adults, children and cars were leaving the field through one gate together. The time is now around 9.30pm and is very dark. Cllr Smith pointed out that this was very dangerous and could have put the council in a very bad position should an accident of happened. There followed a discussion by various Cllrs with their views. Cllr Smith stated this was in no way laying blame on any one person but needed to be made clear for future reference. Within the plan, Cllr Smith was made the responsible officer for the event of which he was unaware until later in the evening. A pre-meeting for the event had been held but Cllr Smith was on holiday and unable to attend. Cllr Smith felt he had been placed in an awkward position with the radios not working to contact volunteers. The deputy Town Clerk Stella Newman stated that not enough volunteers were present on the evening making it hard to cover all the Tye as needed. Stella pointed out that although she is staff for Telscombe Town Council Stella was unpaid for the event. Cllr Smith stated that if Stella wanted to claim TOIL she is entitled to. This event is held to promote our town. The Town Clerk Nancy Astley looked quite sternly at Cllr Smith stating that she disputed the remark about alcohol being sold on the Tye a problem. It was pointed out in close vicinity is an off licence and a public house for people to get alcohol from and bring to the Tye should they wish.

Cllr Smith had sent an e-mail to the town clerk and all Cllrs noting his concerns and had a discussion with Nancy previous to the meeting. Every discussion was carried out calmly until Cllr David Neave stood up, turned to face Cllr Smith and started shouting and aggressively punching his fist at Cllr Smith.

Cllr Neave SHOUTED "As Mr NCP I dispute your F!!!!ING e-mail, this e-mail made me F!!!!ing Angry and made my Cath F!!!!ING Angry (Cath being Cllr Neave's wife and Nancy Astley's friend) While stating this Cllr Neave was leaning towards Cllr Smith across Cllr Job Harris who was sitting between them. Job is an elderly man and at one point I thought he was going to get knocked in the face by Cllr Neave's arm aggressively aiming and punching at Cllr Smith. Cllr Neave was asked by the Mayor to sit down but did not and continued to shout abuse. Cllr Neave shouted at Cllr Smith "I wanted to punch you hard up the "ARSE". Cllr Smith asked him politely to calm down. I noticed that Cllr Smith had his hands flat on the table all the time while this was happening. Cllr Neave sat and Cllr Smith asked Cllr Neave "Exactly what part of the e-mail upset you and what part upset Catherine, or is it just that you are close friends of Nancy?" Immediately Cllr Neave stood up again throwing his chair back and going around the back of Cllr Harris's chair to get closer to Cllr Smith. Also at this point Nancy Astley said "Oh here we go" and moved her chair back to join in but was stopped from standing by the Mayor. Cllr Neave said in a very aggressive tone and again punching at Cllr Smith "You are rude, I will not attend any future functions. We should stop all functions as we stopped his allotments". Cllr Neave then said "I would never send rude e-mails out". I know this to be untrue as I myself have received rude e-mails from Cllr Neave stating that I am "Rude, Unprofessional, Poison and a Wanker" In August 2016 I was Town Mayor and the Town Clerk resigned. I had to deal with the situation. This I did with the guidance of Trevor Leggo from SALC. I have never received an apology for these e-mails. The Mayor was then closing the meeting with Cllr Neave now heading towards to the exit, he turned back and said "Oh yea an apology would be nice". With that Cllr Neave left the building leaving us all bewildered that a member of our council could behave in such a rude, unprofessional and bullying way towards fellow Cllrs. All this was in front of a member of the public. Mr Stan Newman who was a volunteer at the event. This behaviour is totally unacceptable and I felt hurt and ashamed to of witnessed this.

Cllr Gwen Maskell