

Statement.

Mr Chairman, Clerk, fellow councillors, members of the public, I hope this doesn't seem too dramatic. There are no bombshells about to be dropped, but I feel there are some things that need to be said. What follows is unsolicited by any fellow councillor. It's my take on things.

I have had the privilege of being a Parish Councillor here for nearly 5 years now. I do consider it a privilege to be able to play a part, however small, in helping to safeguard the interests of parishioners and to act to make this community a more vibrant and resilient one for this and future generations. I can safely say that this is also the sole motivation of my fellow councillors. As unpaid volunteers, our sole reward is to know that we are being of service to our community.

Our role requires us to be open to scrutiny and to respond honestly to anyone who may doubt our probity or efficiency. This we all fully accept. However, for nearly 4 years now your Parish Council has been on the receiving end of a relentless barrage of complaints from one single source in our community. These complaints have been largely directed at our Chair and Clerk.

The sheer volume of these complaints, and the time taken to respond to them, has seriously affected the time and focus that the Council has had available to undertake the day to day running of this body and the work it is trying to accomplish. We have been accused of "unlawful" behaviour, bullying and even financial irregularities. With the exception of one minor breach of correspondence etiquette (for which an apology was made), all of these allegations have been found to have been unwarranted.

The most recent, lengthy complaint was referred by Cornwall Council's Standards Committee to an Independent Person for an impartial

investigation. The result was that after a lengthy and detailed examination of the facts of the complaint, the Independent Person dismissed the accusation of a breach of our Code of Conduct by Cllr Edwards. In their summing up the Independent Person noted:

“...the ongoing persistent, obsessive, bullying, intimidating and harassing behaviour over a long period of time by T. Aughey towards Botus Fleming Parish Council.”

So, there we have it. An independent, impartial judgement about what this Council has had to endure for nearly 4 years, concluding that we have no case to answer.

I hope the following does not sound too self-congratulatory, that's not the intention. Despite all this “in-coming,” the Parish Council has, I believe, achieved more in this short time than in the whole of the previous life of the Council. Such as:

- You are now at long last, the proud owners of Hatt Recreation Field. This was thanks to the months of hard work put in, especially, by our Chair, ably assisted by our Clerk
- We successfully bid for a grant of 100 trees saplings to plant in the Parish as part of our action to tackle climate change.
- We bid for and were granted funding to install the 20 mph traffic calming infrastructure in Vollards Lane and have just been notified that we have been successful in our bid to instal a 30 mph scheme in Botusfleming.
- We have acted as supporter, enabler and banker to community groups such as Playtime in Hatt and BOTHER, who have therefore been able to raise thousands of pounds to provide play equipment and plans for a walk/cycle way from Hatt to Carkeel.

We now look forward to a period of stability when we can continue to serve our community without the unfounded and egregious attacks of the recent past.

Thank you.