

**DEMOCRATIC HALF HOUR
LETTER OF CONCERN FOLLOWING THE PARISH COUNCIL MAIN COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON 24TH SEPTEMBER 2024
AUTHOR – VANESSA MCARA**

(The Clerk has agreed to place these notes onto the website)

Dear all, I am writing to you formally to register my significant concern regarding a specific issue within the written letter / document that was handed out at yesterday's parish council meeting. Given I have not been party to the parish council sub group meetings that have taken place during August, I was not aware that this information had been requested nor was I aware that a formal letter from the Parish council would become part of this process until yesterday.

I was however, deeply concerned to read under the conclusion, paragraph two, that an allegation by the current parish council, has been made that the previous Parish council was "woefully negligent", in relation to the issue of insurance regarding the said ground level trampoline.

I need to be clear that I consider this statement both factually incorrect, judgemental and slanderous.

The fact is that the previous Parish councillors were advised at the time, and had no reason to disbelieve the then Clerk, that the public liability insurance that was in place covered both the small ground trampoline and events that have taken place in the Clapps mead park. As your last paragraph states, the then Parish council, "possibly believed" that the insurance covered these events and the item concerned.

All parish councils are dependent upon the advice and guidance they receive, none of us are experts in the many fields we are expected to consider. I do not consider that any of my previous councillor colleagues deliberately sought to undermine or ignore health and safety standards, but on this occasion I accept that they may have received the wrong advice and guidance. This should not be about scoring points or seeking to attribute blame for what I consider is a genuine mistake.

In addition, there is no recognition in your conclusion of the fact that your current chair was a parish councillor at the time and supported the trampoline. Personally, I was missing for quite a few meetings due to my father's declining health, one councillor did not support the installation of the trampoline and last but not least, the clerk having suffered a significant bereavement herself had only come back to assist the council on a temporary basis. I find it extraordinary that you have found no recording of a discussion about insurance because I can personally remember being there when the question was asked of Sal before there was any consideration of installation early in the summer of 2023.

In conclusion, I would hope that the letter that you have handed out at yesterday's meeting has now been returned to you given the libellous and factually incorrect statement it contains. I am very aware that this was handed out to other members of the public and I would ask that you seek its return. I hope that this letter has not been published elsewhere and if it has I would ask that it is retracted.

I spent eight years as a parish councillor and throughout my time, I have always considered

carefully what I say. I took my position very seriously even though I recognise that the village as a whole does not recognise the voluntary nature of the role or the amount of time it takes. I am personally extremely offended by the casual nature in which conclusions and statements can be made which are not based on fact and I would strongly urge you to reconsider what you have said.

I look forward to hearing from you, and I need to be clear that if this matter is not addressed then I will take it further. As parish councillors you have a duty of care to all residents and employees, as well as those who use our facilities under The Equality Act 2010 and as parish councillors you should not bring the council into disrepute.

Vanessa McAra