

Appendix

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He indicated that any documents that went from the controlling group were immediately leaked to the opposition and accused the monitoring officer of supplying the documents to Chorlton.

He did say that he was prepared to draw a line under Craigwen though!!

He was also critical of issues around FOI and the implications were that the officers were more likely to be helpful on FOI requests for the opposition than they were when he was in opposition.

Cllr Schofield proceeded to say how he had got involved in Craigwen and that he was unaware of the fact that the council was bidding. He said that he was open in his actions and if he was intending to be devious than he could have used an agent. He stated that he considered that the council's procedures for purchase had been in breach of the law. He also stated that he also believes that PwC had been lent on. He referred to Lynn Ball 'threatening' PwC with legal action with the so called tanks on the lawn letter, and that PwC had backed off as a result of that. This was said in such a way suggesting that Lynn Ball had been acting improperly. I pushed him on this as I could not see how PwC could be leant on to do something improper ie drop a valid issue under threat. He was adamant and again urged to me to look at it challenging how the Council could run with a Monitoring Officer who got away with threatening PwC.

There was a complaint to do with John Arthur Jones and the BBC. He indicated that somehow John Arthur Jones was trying to hold the Council to ransom.

Cllr Schofield accused Lynn Ball of doing things on Craigwen which 'amounts to lying' and that there were areas where because her conflicts she should keep out of matters. He said that there was 'no legal right' for the Council to be at the auction and that this was a very serious matter. I told him I'd read some files and as far as I could see this was no more than a procedural/admin problem and that I did not regard it as a serious matter; however he clearly did and I said if it was a procedural flaw and that there was a degree of unity and the same decision would be taken again then you may respond the way the council had. It was not actually a matter of being illegal and difference between that and unlawful.

Cllr Schofield did not agree with this was quite adamant that it was illegal - (he did not seem to understand the difference). He was particularly critical of her use or misuse of S5 reports. He said that Lynn Ball used S5 to protect the opposition but uses S5 to threaten the controlling Group. He said again you have to look at it carefully and look at Aled Morris Jones and compare it with Winston Thomas.

I said this was a serious allegation. He said that Craigwen was illegal.

I said as far as I was aware I didn't believe that PwC had agreed with that opinion. He indicated that that was not his view and that was a lot more information to come out yet with an implication that it was to come from him. I asked him about how the information would be released which he side stepped saying it would be politically damaging and he then criticised Lynn Ball for releasing information to opposition groups and said to Lynn Ball was 'not fit for purpose'. I made it clear that this was a serious allegation and he said he had a number of 'serious allegations about Lynn Ball'.

He thought whilst there were good structures in some parts of the Council she had 'personal weaknesses'. He believes that the monitoring officer role and the legal officer role should be split perhaps through joint working. He did not believe the monitoring officer role was full-time and could be secured through joint working perhaps sharing a full-time officer across various councils - he said such appointment could be overseen by some kind of properly constituted panel.

He was then very critical of Lynn Ball and Gareth Winston Roberts implying that they were too close to each other and that there was something improper in their (working) relationship. He did not believe that in many of the recent issues in the Council, Lynn Ball should have been part of the decision making process as she had a conflict of interest.

He said Lynn Ball's relationship with the opposition groups went back 4/5 years or more. She got them off the hook that as monitoring officer - she should not have done and that there was a conflict in her role. He repeated the allegation of partial use of S5. The role should have been split. Cllr Schofield said that he in fact was a whistleblower and he had blown the whistle on Lynn Ball's appointment as monitoring officer; he believed there had been improper interference in the process and said something about internal audits and some kind of complaint and good luck to get off. He was highly critical of the process and personally I thought it contradicted himself something to do with advertising or not (seemed to think that something was wrong). There was no independent investigation into her appointment. Eversheds had been appointed and they clearly were not independent as Lynn Ball had worked for them in the past....

As a result of all of this, ie his involvement in her appointment process, Lynn Ball was 'biased against Cllr Schofield'.

Cllr Schofield was critical of aspects of the Council's constitution and that Chairs of scrutiny change if the chairman leave particular parties.

He was further very critical of Lynn Ball about using Alan Carr and spending £130K on him as a solicitor he also stated that a note of a meeting had been taken to try and catch Cllr Schofield out but did not get the right people there.

He complained about John Arthur Jones in relation to Craigwen (Cllr Schofield bidding against the Council) and that this was another effort to catch him out which shows how he was treated when it was others like John Arthur Jones and Chorlton who were the problem.

Cllr Schofield stated that Lynn Ball had 'prepared documents for John Chorlton' and referred specifically to the ombudsman complaint and that her motives were to get at him. He said that you 'simply have to read the letter' to realise who had actually written it. I said that this would be a very serious matter and one that could result in serious disciplinary action if true. He urged me to look at it properly.

He said the ombudsman threw out the complaint in relation to the Para 85 letter and was to take no further action but was challenged by Lynn Ball. Cllr Schofield said that this challenge by her was wrong and was due to her relationship with the opposition. Lynn Ball should never have done that it was wrong and this and other acts were designed to do him down.

Lynn Ball had even challenged Cllr Schofield earlier when he had been ill over previous ombudsman's complaints. He accused Lynn Ball of making it public that Schofield had 'deliberately gone ill' and made sure that document became public with the implication that it was improper. He said that this was retaliation by Lynn Ball after 'the appointments fiasco'.

Indicated he only had to look at John Arthur Jones document to see who had written it.

Then Schofield indicated that Lynn Ball had gone to the police but that nobody had ever been interviewed.

It was clear that Cllr Schofield had no time for John Arthur Jones and again accused him of making accusations in a paper which 'only the monitoring officer would have known' making it clear that Lynn Ball had given the information to John Arthur Jones who had published it. I asked if he meant had deliberately given to John Arthur Jones in the knowledge that he would publish it and he said that was the case.

I said that this was a serious allegation and when pressed Cllr Schofield said it was 'general knowledge' that Lynn Ball did things to help the opposition. Even when pressured he insisted that Lynn Ball had leaked information to John Arthur Jones with deliberate intent. He said there were other examples something about standards and also about MD and severance.

He then questioned why documents had been 'released publicly' by Lynn Ball and indicated that he believed that was done publicly to embarrass him and 'designed to do harm' to him. He further stated that information had been released to the public through the Standards Committee by Lynn Ball to embarrass him about his illness and that others had no right to know anything about it.

I said that these were very serious allegations and if true could have serious consequences.

Derek Jones did a report to standards committee that Schofield believes that the way that it was handled was that officers were again judge and jury.

Cllr Schofield then said that he was prepared to move ahead. I questioned him on that on the basis that I could not see how given his previous comments he was prepared to move ahead. I said that everybody wanted people named and asked who he would have on his list. He said he was prepared to move ahead on Craigwen but had serious concerns about John Arthur Jones, John Chorlton and Lynn Ball. I said it was difficult for the Council to move forward whilst he still held those views. He homed in particularly on the Lynn Ball repeating yet again that she was not fit for purpose.

I indicated that given the serious nature of the allegations against her I really had no choice other than to investigate. I asked him whether he wished me to do that. Cllr Schofield indicated that he would and referred again to splitting of the posts between legal officer/monitoring officer as a way of removing Lynn Ball from the Council. I stated that normally I would regard conversations in my office as confidential but that I would not be able to regard his comments as confidential as I would need to discuss them with other people if I was to look at these matters seriously. He indicated that these matters were serious and should be looked at.

He was very critical of the Welsh audit office about Craigwen then about Jeremy Colman which I didn't fully understand, something to do with 'real problems' with the land (floods?) and something to do with valuation of land which I didn't understand??

He then complained about the state of smallholdings and the level of backlog work of £2.9m that needed to be done.

Finally I spoke to Cllr Schofield about strengthen corporate governance generally and told him that this was the area which I would be focusing on asked him for views or observations. His focus again was on Lynn Ball and he made it clear that he did not believe the Council could move forward whilst Lynn Ball was still an employee and I told him I would investigate his complaints. He said that there had never been a proper investigation and that I needed to look at things carefully. I told him that I would investigate them carefully.



29/8/09

Dictated 28th August 2009