

A Prepared Statement

Prior to the elections for Briercliffe Parish 2018 it was understood that two Councillors, (Anne Kelly and Joan Royle), were not re-standing, thus creating two spaces on the Council of nine volunteers.

When subsequent documentation from Burnley Borough arrived through the letterboxes of Russell Hawkes, Pam Vincent and Nick Higham it was made acutely obvious that only these three candidates had stood for election...and were duly elected - uncontested.

Councillors Bailey, Dack and Lishman withdrew their nominations from the election. Although Cllr. Frost had indicated in a meeting before the elections that he would be re-standing, he did not enter his nomination...thus creating six empty Councillor positions.

This unique and extraordinary situation thrust upon the three elected Councillors prompted necessary advice from the Clerk to Briercliffe Parish Council on how to proceed.

It was decided that candidates for all vacant positions on the Parish Council could be sought through co-option and that a notice on the Community Centre Notice Board and Briercliffe Parish Council Website to this effect be posted... meeting dates were arranged to action this process. A good response to these notices returned thirteen nominations to the Clerk for the six open Councillor places.

The elected and quorate Parish Council of three were tasked with deciding a selection method from all of the proposals up for co-option. All three resolved that nominees would be chosen in order of received application... and as a result the positions were filled.

Since then there has been a constant barrage of FoI requests and defamatory statements as to the roles played by the elected Parish Council and Clerk. The constant rumination over hypothetical possibilities keeps leading to false accusations through which members of the Parish Council, (and other Parishioners attending meetings with contrasting views), have been verbally threatened, harassed and unacceptably vilified by a cohort of Parishioners who hold entrenched viewpoints and agendas in conflict with the majority decisions made by the previous, (and upheld by the current), Briercliffe Parish Council.

By offering their time and efforts towards the Parish of Briercliffe, and through no fault of their own, these volunteers have been thrust into an unprecedented and difficult situation with what was in-effect a resignation of "experienced" Councillors and, at the same time, reluctance for others to submit themselves into the Parish Council election process of 2018.

Difficulties aside...those elected and those co-opted are passionately resolute to grapple with the steep learning curve and do their utmost for the whole of the Parish of Briercliffe with Extwistle.