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Do you have a rogue chairman?

DETAILS CATEGORY: CPALC EDITORIAL CREATED ON 01 MARCH 2013 WRITTEN BY HERBERT SMITH

Since the advent of Localism and the Localism Act every council and councillor should be sufficiently aware that the days are gone of the chairman of the council...

acting like the squire of the manor

who makes decisions alone or with the clerk

deciding who will speak at meetings

actively leading the council meeting to approve their views

excluding public involvement

keeping as much information out of the public eye as possible

The good news is many councils have woken up to the fact that the chairman is not some all powerful being and is just another councillor with only the responsibility to make sure the meeting flows well and completes the

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Hazlen Parish Counc

business of the council as listed on the agenda for that evening.

The bad news is there are still too many chairmen who are either living in the past or think their election to office of chairman sets them apart from fellow councillors.

The ugly truth is that when a council has a rogue chairman one councillor on their own can achieve little to effect change. Without the support of fellow councillors it is often too difficult to reign in the situation.

Even electing a new chairman annually it is often difficult to break the cycle and too few councils have standing orders that condition a chairman being in post for the recommended 3 years before standing down.

Is it then any wonder that disenchanted councillors choose to exercise the only other vote open to them and vote with their feet leaving their moribund council to continue on as a clique.

It is a shame when this happens but more shame on those councillors that allow it to happen.

However as a councillor it's easy to change. At the next annual parish council meeting just call for a secret vote and elect a new chairman.

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Posts in discussion

Posted: 10 hours 25 minutes ago by MapleB

#1640



May we kindly have permission to post this article on our website?

Posted: 10 hours 59 minutes ago by Graham Redman

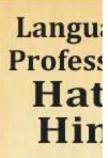
#1638



My experience is that changing the chairman may have little effect either; we have had successive chairman who have proceeded to act without reference to the Council, presumably because that is how it has always operated.

and the alleged chamb of secret Are you still legally а parish Chang Directi with 2012 Parish Annua **Parliar** commi reports on the role of counci but ignore

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It's the sort of thing I w ould expect from a small Council such as where I grew up, which had annual spending of a few thousand pounds and a clerk doing a couple of hours a week (so the chairman was effectively helping out to keep down costs, and nothing of any real substance ever happened anyway). Here we have a clerk working four days a week, plus an admin assistant, and dedicted parish Council office and an annual admin cost north of £80k.

I would have expected a change after a rap on the knuckles by the external auditor but it is abundantly clear that the majority of Councillors sitting round the table don't care w hether things are done properly, or don't know how they should be done properly, otherw ise they would stop ratifying his actions after the fact.

Posted: 11 hours 59 minutes ago by editor

#1636



No I w as actually not referring to Hazlemere, for all its problems. There are also many other town and parish councils where this sort of appalling behaviour occurs.

Posted: 12 hours 26 minutes ago by HRA2009

#1634



This article sounds familiar; could they be talking about Hazlemere in Bucks?

Unfortunately, it is not this simple, how ever, when the majority of councillors are living in the past (old guard) they vote together regardless of the issues.

They even boycotted a full council meeting together, as we found out in Hazlemere last night, when only three councillors turned up yesterday with the public outnumbering them significantly.

Of course they did not inform the Clerk and it is no good complaining, there is no one that residents can turn to enforce the law .

This is the council w here the chair is trying to enforce the Chatham House Rule, w hich of course he does not understand, its bizarre...... go to w w w .bucksvoice.net/hra2009/files/? folder_id=1385435 for full story.......

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