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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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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 disenchanting 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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Posted: 10 hours 25 minutes ago by **MapleB** #1640



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Posted: 10 hours 59 minutes ago by **GrahamRedman** #1638



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

and the alleged chamber of secrets: Are you still legally a parish council? Changing Directly Coping with Localism 2012 Parish Council Annual Meeting: Parliament on the role of council but ignore parish council

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It's the sort of thing I would 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 dedicated 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 whether things are done properly, or don't know how they should be done properly, otherwise they would stop ratifying his actions after the fact.

Posted: 11 hours 59 minutes ago by **editor** #1636



No I was 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, however, 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 where the chair is trying to enforce the Chatham House Rule, which of course he does not understand, its bizarre.....

go to [www.bucksvoice.net/hra2009/files/?folder\\_id=1385435](http://www.bucksvoice.net/hra2009/files/?folder_id=1385435) for full story.....

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