

DECISION NOTICE: NO FURTHER ACTION

Reference SEC036

Complaint

On 7th September 2011, the Standards and Ethics (Local Assessment) Sub Committee of this authority considered a complaint from Mrs Jane Corbett concerning the alleged conduct of Councillor John Stedman, a member of Salford Priors Parish Council. We have set out a general summary of the complaint below:

It is alleged that Councillor Stedman told the Parish Council that evidence relating to a parish questionnaire would be destroyed if it did not concur with the wishes of the Parish Council. Secondly, it was alleged that at a meeting of the Parish Council Councillor Stedman considered a representation about lighting within the parish from the Memorial Hall Committee of which he is Chairman. It is suggested that Councillor Stedman should have declared a conflict of interest and removed himself from the room for this item of council business.

Decision

In accordance with Section 57A(2) of the Local Government Act 2000, as amended, the sub-committee of the Standards Committee decided that no action should be taken on the allegation.

Reasons for decision

The Sub Committee decided that it would not be possible to establish exactly what had been said without conducting an investigation. Furthermore, even if the words that Councillor Stedman was alleged to have used were reproduced accurately, from the surrounding circumstances it was likely that there had not been a serious intention behind them.

The Sub-Committee felt that whilst the remarks if true might reflect poorly on Councillor Stedman's judgement of the mood of the meeting, they would not be capable of bringing his office or the parish council itself into disrepute.

In relation to the second part of the complaint, the Sub-Committee determined that Councillor Stedman's membership of the Memorial Hall Committee was, in relation to a discussion of the lights within the village, not capable of amounting to a prejudicial interest. It was however a personal interest that should have been declared at the meeting. A personal interest does not

