



NORTH TAWTON TOWN COUNCIL

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14th July 2023

Dear Allison and Amy

Okehampton Today article 13th July 2023 – ‘Council tries to rein in fellow member’.

Please could you publish the following in response immediately.

North Tawton Town Council are not reining in a fellow councillor and have not placed any restrictions on Cllr Martin. We do not have the legal power to put any sanctions on a councillor which only the Monitoring Officer of West Devon can do.

The resolutions passed at the council meeting on 4th July were because of long-standing concerns regarding Cllr Martins behaviour towards fellow Councillors and the Clerk, The resolutions give council approval for the Clerk and fellow Councillors to decide for themselves which communications they will respond to from Cllr Martin due to concern for their welfare and the high number of negative communications from him.

The Council have not placed any restrictions on Cllr Martin’s right to make Freedom of Information requests or complaints.

North Tawton Town Council struggle with the motives of Councillor Martin who regularly and repeatedly uses social media and the press to raise issues that he has not brought to council meetings, and which the residents and public have not raised with the council themselves. He continuously denounces and breaches council policy which he claims to be ultra vires and yet accuses the council and clerk of breaches of policy that he perceives have occurred without seeking clarification from the Clerk, the council or the external auditors on the facts of his claims.

Council Martin has placed articles in the press to state he was ‘surprised to read in the finance committee minutes’, and yet he is a member of the finance committee as well as the Transport Committee and Estates Committee and has attended the meetings from which the Minutes were published. Councillor Martin has not raised his concerns, or those of residents who have approached him, at council meeting, instead raises them on a public stage, which undermines the democratic process and brings the Town Council into disrepute.

All Councillors are permitted to inspect any documents held by the council, including council finances and therefore if any Councillor has concerns about missing information, this should be brought to the attention of the Clerk, Council or auditors. There is no financial information missing from council documents.

Cllr Martin regularly claims he is holding the council to account. The Council’s response is that he is causing disruption at taxpayers’ expense for no other reason than to cause annoyance.

Colin Lee, Chair of North Tawton Town Council

Cllr Whiteley, Cllr Burrow, Cllr Lee, Cllr Hodge, Cllr Watson, Cllr Kennedy, Cllr Simmons, Cllr Bath, Cllr Martin, Cllr Ranford, Cllr Mathis, Cllr Fey