

APPENDIX I

Interview with Leanne Bacon
Clerk to Northill Parish Council
1st October 2013

1. The Clerk outlined difficulties she had experienced in her dealings with Councillor Robinson in meetings. He tries to raise matters on which previous decisions have been made in Matters Arising and often tries to re-debate matters in the minutes and tries to reverse previous decisions of the Council. However until the Parish Council meeting on 8th April 2013, she felt that she had a reasonably good relationship with Councillor Robinson. He had taken part in her appraisal as Parish Clerk and had been very complimentary and had supported an increase in her salary.
2. Matters had become heated and controversial over an affordable housing scheme. Councillor Robinson and other local residents were unhappy with the decision to recommend the Biggleswade Road Site for the scheme. Planning permission had been granted for this site by Central Bedfordshire Council and it is about to be developed.
3. The Clerk had previously tried to advise Councillor Robinson about procedure at meetings and governance issues and had provided him with a copy of The Good Councillor's Guide produced by The National Associates of Local Councils.
4. The Clerk also mentioned two other issues that were of concern to Councillor Robinson – The Beacon and [REDACTED] who were in dispute with the Parish Council and Councillor Robinson appeared to be supporting the position of [REDACTED] against the Parish Council. (This is the subject of a separate complaint made by Councillor Sally Mandley and is currently under investigation).
5. The Clerk stated at the meeting on 8th April 2013 Councillor Robinson started to raise matters in his normal manner but became very insistent. The meeting was being chaired by David Milton and he tried to stop Councillor Robinson but Councillor Robinson continued to ask questions and the Clerk to the Council took over answering the questions and there followed a quite heated and animated exchange between the Clerk and Councillor Robinson. This continued for about ten minutes until the Clerk said she walked out of the meeting. The Clerk said she was very upset and felt she was being harassed and bullied and was particularly upset that this exchange had taken place in public. The Chair then adjourned the meeting as they could not conduct any further business without the Clerk.
6. The Clerk said she had received an apology from Councillor Robinson after the meeting for the manner in which he had addressed her at the meeting. When asked what she thought would be helpful in dealing with her complaint given the limited sanctions available to the Monitoring Officer and the Standards Committee under the Code, she thought that Councillor Robinson should be required to attend some training on Council and Planning Procedure and thought a letter from the Monitoring Officer about his behaviour at the meeting would be helpful.