

Complaint SC/34

My name is Paul Claxton and am currently Vice Chairman of Great Bowden Parish Council

When Planning Application 16/0097/Out was being considered I was Chairman of Great Bowden Parish Council

The whole matter of how this planning application was dealt with is in my opinion the prequel to this complaint regarding Sarah Hill

Sarah Hill has been a district Councillor representing Great Bowden Ward for a number of years during which time as a Parish Council we have sought and received unswerving support from Councillor Hill

In respect of this planning application, because of the unusual set of circumstances which ensued Councillor Hill was called upon to assist the Parish Council as were other ward councillors

The Parish Council were informed that this application was to be refused by the HDC Planning Officer dealing with 16/00997/OUT as all legal deadlines for comment had passed

We and the residents who had sent in letter of objection were therefore amazed to find that the application had been called in weeks after the deadline had passed and on the very day that the letter of refusal was to be issued

Not only that but the call in was not from a Ward Member representing Great Bowden

Additionally the call in was verbal and not in writing (and never has been made in writing)

All of the above in direct contravention of HDC's Procedures in respect of Planning Applications

The matter was therefore scheduled to be considered at the Planning Meeting on January 7th 2017

At the planning meeting in question further anomalies occurred all of which can be heard in the recording of the meeting still available on HDC's website

Councillor King attended the meeting as a substitute not as an elected member of the planning committee

(1) Item 3 on the agenda namely planning application 16/00997/FUL was promoted by the Chairman to item 1 on the agenda

(2) A statement from the Chairman was read out which stated and I quote "It has come to light that the call in concerning this application was not received in accordance with the councils procedures

(3) During the presentation of the case by the officer there are two occasions when muffled discussions (too quiet to be heard by the members of the committee and the assembled general public) took place between the officer and the Chairman

(4) Councillor King insisted there were no grounds to refuse as the application was "means of access only "a statement refuted by other members of the committee

(5) After some discussion the Chairman brought an end to the discussion in my opinion stifling further debate

There was a proposal to refuse the application to which Councillor King responded with he had proposed the application be approved prior to this proposal after some discussion by the Chairman it was accepted by the Chairman that Councillor Kings Proposal be put.

The resultant vote was 6 to 5 in favour and the application approved.

Following this meeting residents of Great Bowden and the Parish Council were incensed at the manner in which this application had been dealt with

As Chairman of Great Bowden Parish Council I asked that the manner in which the application was dealt with be reviewed through my Ward Councillors to HDC

In particular as the call in was in our opinion illegal the application should have been struck off the planning meetings agenda, no further discussion should have taken place and referred back to the officer in question who could then have issued a refusal letter

I followed this up in an article in the Great Bowden Newsletter expressing the dismay of all resident of Great Bowden, including myself, at the manner in which this application was dealt with.

To date no formal response has been received to our request from HDC Councillor Hill following all of the above wrote several articles supporting our stance one of which is the subject of today's meeting

I content that Councillor Hill has only ever acted in the best interests of Great Bowden as our duly elected representative district councillor