Herefordshire Council

COC090
Investigation report Appendix 6
REDACTED
Witness evidence Jonathan Thomas

SUPPORTING INFORMATION – Ref complaint against Councillor Sinclair.

18.9.24
To Ledbury Town Council

As you may recall Ledbury Town Council did not support my brother's (David Thomas) fight to protect his home life and mental health against the ongoing nonsense that came from The Barn in Ledbury.

As is well documented this involved breaching of licence conditions, noise disturbance, intimidation and harassment and all without planning permission granted.

This all happened over a period of five years or so, eventually leading to my brother having to move this summer, for his own sanity.

Putting it simply, he was pushed out of his home of 20 years or so. Unsupported.

As a family we have supported him to move elsewhere.

The owner of The Barn continues to point my brother out to others when in public and is often seen sniggering and smiling sarcastically at my brother when passing. No doubt for him in celebration, as my brother has moved. This is something that my brother has to try to ignore.

Today, Councillor Bradford and Councillor Sinclair were outside my brother's work place (**REDACTED**). They walked passed. Councillor Sinclair is a supporter of The Barn and is no doubt fully aware of the history with regards to The Barn's operation and the detrimental impact it has had on my brother over the years.

As they were walking Councillor Sinclair looked at my brother who was outside of the shop and whilst smiling, turned to Councillor Bradford and said 'Oh let's go to The Barn for a drink tonight'. Again, in the presence of my brother.

Not only is this behaviour antagonistic, but it is pathetic, childish. irresponsible, not to mention unkind and not the sort of behaviour one would expect from a man in his position.

I am encouraging my brother to visit Ledbury Town Council tomorrow in person to report this incident and to seek advice on how he may respond.

If a member of the Council or if Councillor Sinclair wishes to discuss this matter further with me then please don't hesitate to contact me.

Jonathan Thomas
REDACTED

20.9.24
To Ledbury Town Council

Further to my emails with regards to Councillor Sinclair's behaviour on Wednesday 18th September:

Prior to the forthcoming official complaint against Councillor Sinclair, please see attached email from Councillor Sinclair.

This has been shared with West Mercia Police to support incident reference CDS 140560 24220 002.

All for your consideration!!

Jonathan Thomas

20.9.24
To Councillor Sinclair

Further to my email on Wednesday 18th September, I wish to inform you that I have reported the incident to West Mercia Police, on the grounds of potential bullying, intimidation and harassment. They have advised that my brother is to report all incidents should they occur again in the future. I am aware that the owner of The Barn continues to infrequently antagonise my brother and again, these incidents also are / will be reported.
Without a doubt you are aware of the history with regards to The Barn and how they have operated over the past five years, without planning permission in place which made the whole sorry situation more of a farce. The Barn had their licence revoked (sadly not for long) for a reason – or should I say reasons. Evidence was presented and action taken.
Further to the disturbances my brother also had to deal with intimidating behaviour and verbal abuse from the owner of The Barn and his cronies as he was pointed out as 'the' complainant as he simply walked to or from his front door, passing The Barn.
Without a doubt you are also aware of the stress that was put upon my brother during this time, affecting his mental health and physical health and leading him to seek GP input.
This stress spilled out into my family as we did our best to support him to try and cope with the nonsense that was coming from The Barn and to try to cope with not being fairly supported by parties involved.
The only helpful thing Ledbury Town Council did for my brother was to allow him to speak for more than the allocated time given for members of the public at council meetings, when he presented his case.
This had to be voted on and even led to a councillor becoming agitated and losing composure before storming out of the meeting because he didn't agree. This occurred after he had attempted to shout my brother down as he simply tried to inform the council what was going on right outside his window. I forget the councillors name, gladly. He later resigned from post following a complaint.
My brother is trying to put the last awful five years or so behind him and move on with his life. We all are as a family.
Eventually my brother had no other choice but to move from his home of 20 years or so.
As a son and as a community dementia nurse I also strongly believe that the stress caused to him and my family has further progressed my Mother's dementia. I can not begin to tell you how it all affected my brother and us as a family and how it has marred our experience of living in Ledbury, since 1976.
So, with the above said, I am sure you can imagine how angry I feel to hear about your goading comment, said for the benefit of my brother. This simply reveals you to be unprofessional, childish and actually not a very nice man.

I am not surprised to hear it caused my brother to lose his composure, which I expect is exactly what you wanted to happen.
As mentioned earlier my brother will be following the procedure to complain as per the information sent by Town Clerk, Angela Price and I will be supporting him to do this next week.
In the meantime, I would grateful if you could stay away from my brother and keep the spiteful comments to yourself.
Jonathan Thomas

22.9.24
To Mr Lester

I would like to know why you as Leader of Herefordshire Council are being copied in on an email from Councillor Sinclair that boasts of behaviour that goes against professional conduct?

Is deliberately 'winding up' and causing distress to a member of the general public common practice within the council?

Herefordshire Council did not support my brother with his complaints about the disturbances from The Barn over the past five years or so, as you may recall.

This recent incident involving goading and antagonistic behaviour from a member of the council, who has to abide by a code of conduct requires you to investigate this matter fully.

Please call me to discuss the matter. My telephone number is **REDACTED**.

If you do not, I expect a call from your compliance officer.

My brother, myself and family are trying to move on from the challenging five years that as you may recall have involved numerous unacceptable disturbances from The Barn - as well a lack of support from the council and also intimidating behaviour from the owner of The Barn.

Why is the intimidating behaviour continuing - but this time from a member of your council?

Councillor Sinclair is aware of the history which makes his behaviour even more shameful.

Also, why was the email from Councillor Sinclair sent to **REDACTED** the owner of The Barn? This has led us to believe that there may have been some form of corruption within the council and The Barn over the past five years. We have suspected this for some time

It is an outrage and as a family we are not letting this latest complaint be brushed under the carpet like the previous complaints

We are about to file an official complaint as advised by the town clerk at Ledbury Town Council.

Awaiting to hear from you.
Jonathan Thomas
23.9.24
Dear Mr Thomas,

Thank you for your email dated 22 September 2024.

I do not know exactly why Mr Sinclair copied me in to the email. I contacted him yesterday and requested that he does not do so in future.

I do not condone any behaviour that is disrespectful to anyone. I find the tone of the email from Mr Sinclair totally unacceptable.

If you wish to make a complaint about Mr Sinclair's email please refer the matter to the Council's monitoring officer.

I am sorry that you have been aggrieved by this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Jonathan Lester

Leader of the Council