

Fell View
Blencarn
Penrith
Cumbria
CA10 1TX

Chris Jones
Chairman Melmerby Parish Council.
The Tower House
Melmerby, Penrith
Cumbria,
CA10 1HE

Monday 15th June 2020

Dear Chris

After a lot of thought I have decided that, with considerable regret, to resign as Melmerby Parish Clerk as from 31st July 2020.

It is now two years since I first stepped in, at short notice on your request, to become involved with the former Ousby Parish Council and Melmerby village. A lot of water has gone under the bridge since then. Sorting out the lighting survey, being the first and seeing through the successful administration of the final months of the former Ousby Parish Council the second. Setting up the new Melmerby Parish Council has been exciting and very satisfying; the procedures and administration are now established. There does appear to be more harmony now than was experienced two years ago.

Working with most of you has been an absolute pleasure; however I am not prepared to continue working in an environment where one of your Councillors is continually checking up on me behind my back, questioning my actions and concerning herself with minor administrative trivia. This has been most unprofessional and at times very underhand. You employ an experience 'Proper Officer' and he should be permitted to administer your affairs without hindrance. If this behaviour and attitude continues it does not bode well for any successor.

Melmerby is a lovely fell side village however, it is blighted with a very small number of interfering Parishioners who appear, in my experience and opinion, to try and dominate, and on occasions, bully other residents with their strongly opinionated, minority held views. This underlying influence makes trying to work within the Parish unnecessarily stressful and on occasions very time wasting, both at a Parish and at a District level.

It is obviously essential that as a Parish Council, all it's Councillors and also the Parish's District Councillor, distances themselves from such vocal, minority influences; taking, at all times, a balanced stand, always being very mindful of the views of the often silent and content majority. If this were practiced by all Councillors and was the norm, Melmerby village would be a much better place for it.

I have tried and done my very best to look after the needs and interests of the Melmerby electorate and it is with great regret that I have decided that the hassle factor of being the Melmerby Parish Clerk is just not worth it.

I can assure you that I will ensure a smooth change over to my successor. I wish Melmerby Parish Council and the community you represent a harmonious and successful future.

Kind regards and very best wishes



John

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22nd June 2020

Dear John

My apology for this delayed response but in view of the importance and content of your letter I did not want to dash off an acceptance of your resignation without giving the matter careful consideration and receive advice. Last week also involved considerable pressure at work.

I should like to thank you wholeheartedly for the work you have done for Melmerby Parish Council and for me. You came to the rescue two years ago when the former Clerk gave his unexpected notice after a very short period of employment. You saw through the necessary negotiation to correct the totally inaccurate representation of facts relating to a complaint against my action as a Councillor of the old Ousby Parish Council and linked complaints against the former Chairman and 2 other Councillors. Even more important was your ability to correct the perception of many in Eden District Council and the area it serves of the professionalism and conduct of those subjected to those complaints. It then enabled your work to proceed to a satisfactory and fair split of the old Council into its 2 new successors.

You worked tirelessly and without any claims for pay additional to your standard hours. Melmerby PC has enjoyed an exceedingly good deal from employing you.

You have excellent relationships with local Council departments and the Police and have been able to obtain a speedy response to Melmerby residents' concerns and requests, from Grit Bins to Road Markings.

In trying to navigate our Parish Council through the constantly changing problems caused by the Covid19 you have always acted with the best interests of the residents at heart. This has been difficult as so much has changed so quickly: Government Regulations, our ways of having to live our lives, and technology have been updated faster than at any time in our living memories and this has generated considerable mental stress for all. It is a pity that in this unique environment, where we might be grateful to be alive and well, it has not been possible for all Melmerby Parish Councillors and you to pull together. Sometimes we must live with pragmatic decisions and adjust further down the line. I fear that in being particularly forensic in applying regulation we have lost a very good Parish Clerk.

I have greatly enjoyed working with you, partly because your way is similar to mine, aiming to get things done quickly and efficiently.

I hope we can remain in touch and when things return to some degree of normality I sincerely hope you will pop in for a coffee with Arkwright.

Best wishes for you to enjoy stress free working with Culgaith & Langwathby



Chris