

Dear Councillors

Unfortunately, and very reluctantly, I have taken the decision to step down as Chair of Corston Parish Council.

As Chair I accept that you are likely to be subject to criticism. This is healthy and part of the job, but when that criticism becomes personal abuse, it is not. In the days since the recent Parish Council meeting, I have been subject to more vitriol regarding the Valley Field.

Despite my efforts both within the village and beyond to find a solution, I have come to the conclusion that the way forward currently agreed by the council does not satisfy those parishioners most affected by the anti-social behaviour. There is a gulf between parishioners' expectations and what can be done within our authority. All of us as councillors have a responsibility to explain this and, in this area, I feel we collectively have failed as a Council. I am aware there is a range of opinions within the council, and there are those councillors who feel we could have handled things differently. I therefore feel it is time to look for someone with new ideas and energy to chair the Council, and perhaps lead in a different direction.

This comes at a difficult time as a new Chair will have to prepare the agenda for the November meeting, draft a 2024-2025 budget proposal for discussion, and prepare for the annual financial audit. They will also have to take on the other duties as acting Clerk including monitoring and responding to emails and maintaining the website. Nevertheless, the council has 6 other councillors so I am hoping one will step forward.

I am willing to continue as a councillor, and will help with the transition for the new Chair to get familiar with the various accounts, software tools and laptop.

In the event that we are unable to elect a new Chair, and I am hoping this is not the case, the Parish Council cannot legally operate. And cannot request, receive or spend any further funding. If this situation were to arise, and to represent the best interest of Corston parishioners, I will be willing to work with other councillors and whoever is appointed from outside the parish to manage or dispose of our funds, assets and liabilities. At the next meeting I will propose a public meeting to explain the options in more detail.

I am hoping councillors will respect my decision. It is not made lightly, nor in response to a single issue or incident. It reflects a pattern of behaviour over some time and as a volunteer, conscious of the impact on my family, it is something I can no longer accept.

Kind regards

John