

**Date of meeting:** 12<sup>th</sup> July 2007

**Attendees:** Councillor Peter McDonald and Thelma Warwick (Investigating Officer)

**Purpose:** to confirm details of the allegation.

Meeting notes recorded by Thelma Warwick

The following points were discussed:

1. The main points of the allegation were confirmed with Councillor McDonald. That is,
  - a) At the full Council meeting held on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2007 Councillor Newnes was involved in the budget debate regarding the rent paid to the Council from Bromsgrove Rovers football club. The Council owns the land (the Victoria Ground) where Bromsgrove Rovers play their matches.  
  
Over the previous two years BDC has waived the rent of £15,000 a year in the form of a grant. This year the Council decided to treat the club, which is a limited company, the same as any other limited company, that is, the club would be expected to pay the due rent. At the Council meeting Councillor Newnes pleaded that the rent on the club should not be enforced.  
  
Councillor Newnes is an associate of the Chairman of Bromsgrove Rovers club and also holds regular discos on the premises for the club for which he is paid.
  - b) At a Conservative Group meeting prior to the Council meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2007, Councillor Newnes asked the Group to support the wishes of Bromsgrove Rovers football club not to go ahead with the charges.
2. Councillor McDonald confirmed that he does want the second part (b) of the allegation pursued as part of the investigation.
3. As part of the discussion in relation to pursuing the second part of the allegation (b) Thelma Warwick mentioned that in order to reach a decision as to whether the alleged conduct occurred she needs to review all available evidence and that she believes minutes are not recorded for Group meetings. Councillor McDonald brought to Thelma Warwick's attention that there are Whip notices for Group meetings. Whip notices detail the party line and how Members should vote and, therefore, may provide supporting evidence.
4. Councillor McDonald pointed out that he has spoken with a senior member of the Conservative party who attended the Group meeting referred to in the allegation. When this individual was asked by Councillor McDonald if Councillor Newnes had been asked by the Conservative Group to declare his interest in the football club Councillor McDonald was informed that Councillor Newnes had declined.
5. Thelma Warwick informed Councillor McDonald that she had listened to the tape recording of the Council meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2007. The discussions in

Reference: Local Investigation SBE 17770.07

relation to Bromsgrove Rovers football club had taken place as part of the Leaders announcements, one of which was in regards to the football club. The following points were discussed in relation to the tape recording:

- a. Reference was made to a letter that had been left in Member's pigeon holes. Thelma Warwick asked Councillor McDonald whether he could recall the gist of the letter and he responded that he was unable to remember the letter.
  - b. Thelma Warwick asked Councillor McDonald who he recalled saying that if the football club had to pay rent it may fold. Councillor McDonald responded that he recollects Councillor Newnes special pleading on behalf of Bromsgrove Rovers.
  - c. During the discussion on the football club some members declared themselves with an interest as they are members of the Rovers Supporters Society. Thelma Warwick asked Councillor McDonald who declared. Councillor McDonald responded that he, Councillor Sean Shannon and Councillor Judy Marshall had each made a declaration. When asked if Councillor Newnes had declared, Councillor McDonald responded that Councillor Newnes did not declare although he had the opportunity to do so.
6. Thelma Warwick asked if Councillor McDonald had anything that he would like to raise as being pertinent to the investigation. The following points were raised:
- a. Suggest that Kevin Dicks is interviewed. The rationale being that Councillor McDonald believes that Councillor Newnes and Mr Herbert (Chairman of Bromsgrove Rovers) have had meetings with Kevin prior to the Council meeting and that Kevin would probably have suggested to Councillor Newnes that he should declare his interest.
  - b. Councillor McDonald has evidence that Councillor Newnes has run discos at the football club for which he has been paid. Furthermore, Councillor Newnes may be the club's Social Secretary.
  - c. At an event at Parkside School 2 – 3 years ago Councillor Newnes mentioned his friendship with the Chairman of Bromsgrove Rovers football club.
7. Thelma Warwick reminded Councillor McDonald that the meeting was confidential and clarified the next steps of the investigation.

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Peter McDonald

Dated: .....

**[ORIGINAL DOCUMENT SIGNED BY COUNCILLOR PETER MCDONALD ON 23RD JULY 2007]**