

NUTHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the 'Virtual' Extraordinary meeting of Nuthurst Parish Council held on
Wednesday, 17th February 2021 commencing at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Cllr O Hydes OBE (Chairman), Cllr J Assassi, Cllr J Bromley, Cllr N Bryant (Vice Chairman),
Cllr R Cato, Cllr J Chaytor, Cllr D Harber, Cllr C Kenny, Cllr J Mercer and Cllr T Nelson.

ALSO, IN VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE: Sarah Hall (Parish Clerk), District Councillor Toni Bradnum and five
members of the public.

EM001-20/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** that there were no apologies for absence.

EM002-20/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest, as defined under the Localism Act 2011 and the Parish
Council's Code of Conduct were made.

EM003-20/21 VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE

Cllr Tom Nelson and Cllr J Bromley formally asked the Chairman to call an Extraordinary
Meeting in order to raise a Vote of No Confidence in Cllr R Cato.

Standing Orders state that the Chairman of the Parish Council should chair meetings if he is
available to do so. The Chairman asked the members for formal permission to chair the
Extraordinary Meeting and the members unanimously agreed.

The Chairman stated that on HDC's advice there should be no specific mention of events
before 20 January 2021.

Cllr T Nelson and Cllr J Bromley both explained why they had called for the vote of No
Confidence in Cllr R Cato. They said that this was because they thought that Cllr R Cato's
conduct was impeding the effective working of the Parish Council, that his disruptive
behaviour was causing distress to a number of councillors, because of his challenge to a
majority decision and attempts to overturn that decision, his failure to adhere to
preordained agendas and a failure to conduct himself in a manner as befits a parish
councillor.

Cllr C Kenny asked if Cllr R Cato had a financial or any other interest in the application. The
Chairman commented that he was "not sure if this is allowed by the rules, if Cllr R Cato
would like to answer that question he may, but I do not think that it is actually allowed."

Cllr R Cato replied to Cllr C Kenny's question by saying that he was concerned about the
implication that he had a financial or other interest (in Swallowfield Nursery). Cllr R Cato
denied having either a financial interest in the application or an interest in Save the
Countryside Group, but that he and Mr C Beer had been good friends over 35 years.

Cllr R Cato said that he was incensed by the situation and believed the developers were
'hoodwinking' the Parish Council. He said that he believed the Design and Access statement
was untrue and that the recent landscape drawings were now "outside the Neighbourhood
Plan".

Cllr R Cato said that he had spoken to the Monitoring Officer earlier in the day and said that he was advised that, “as far as the vote of no confidence is concerned you cannot refer or make reference to anything that has gone on in the past”. Cllr R Cato said that since the 25th January 2021, and the date the agenda was published he had only sent four emails. Cllr R Cato also advised that he had apologised to Cllr J Chaytor who had been upset by the content of earlier email communications.

Cllr R Cato continued, “in the Code of Conduct when making decisions every member has to take into account advice from the Monitoring Officer and this advice has not changed. Therefore, under 7.1 of the Code of Conduct you have to take regard of what the Monitoring Officer has said and give reasons for taking decisions which are against the advice.”

Cllr R Cato said “I think you do so at your peril, because what you are doing is wrong.” Cllr R Cato said that he only ever told the truth, that the PC would not accept what is staring them in the face and the Clerk had only replied to a few emails.

The members continued to discuss the matter and the impact of Cllr R Cato’s disruptive behaviour on the Parish Council’s effective working and on the Parish Council’s unblemished reputation on planning with the Local Authority.

The Chairman called for the vote of no confidence in Cllr R Cato. There were 9 votes in favour of a Vote of No Confidence: (Cllr J Assassi, Cllr N Bryant, Cllr J Bromley, Cllr J Chaytor, Cllr D Harber, Cllr O Hydes, Cllr C Kenny, Cllr J Mercer, Cllr T Nelson) and 1 vote against (Cllr R Cato). The motion was therefore approved.

It was **RESOLVED** that vote of no confidence in Cllr R Cato was carried.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm

Cllr O Hydes
Chairman of the Parish Council

Date