

From Councillor T. E. Sharratt

14 Coupe Green, Houghton, Preston PR5 0JR; 01254-852978

28 May 2009

The Chief Executive,
South Ribble Borough Council,
West Paddock,
Leyland PR25 1DH.

Dear Chief Executive,

COUNCILLOR BARRIE YATES: FAILURE TO DECLARE INTERESTS

I wrote on April 9 to draw your attention to Councillor James Marsh's failure to declare his interests when an application from Gregson Lane Cricket Club for a £400 grant was considered at a meeting of South Ribble Borough Council's Eastern Area Committee at Bamber Bridge Methodist church on 20 January 2009. As a result of information received last night and confirmed this morning I must now inform you that Councillor Barrie Yates, then mayor of South Ribble and chairman of the meeting, also failed to declare his interests.

As I mentioned on April 9, Houghton Cricket Club and Gregson Lane Cricket Club jointly decided to organise a charity cricket match on May 4. To make the arrangements a joint working party of four was set up, including Councillor Marsh. The joint working party first met at the Old Oak Inn in Houghton Lane late last autumn and held several further meetings over the following months which Councillor Marsh attended. At the meeting of the Eastern Area Committee on January 20 he did not declare his close involvement in preparations for the cricket match, including an application for a grant from South Ribble Borough Council. I set out the details in my letter of April 9.

What I did not know until last night was that Councillor Barrie Yates also attended the first meeting of the working party. It was Councillor Yates, I am told, who suggested the sum that should be requested, saying "If you ask for £400 you'll get £200" or words to that effect. In return he asked for a donation to his mayor's charity fund, and the committee agreed. Councillor Yates did not attend any more meetings of the working party.

At the meeting of the Eastern Area Committee on January 20 Councillor Yates did not declare his interests in the application – namely, that he had attended the first meeting of the working party, suggested the sum requested, and sought a donation in return. Since I had declared my interest and left the meeting I cannot say how far Councillor Yates participated in consideration of the application and I do not know whether he voted on the matter, but it is clear that he remained in the chair throughout; nor can I say what discussions, if any, he had with his Conservative group colleagues beforehand or how far he influenced their ultimate decision. But in the event the outcome was exactly as he had predicted to the working party last autumn: a grant of £200.

The information about Councillor Yates's involvement in the application came to me spontaneously and unexpectedly last night from a member of the working party. It was confirmed to me this morning by another member of the working party.

In accordance with the councillors' code of conduct I therefore take this first opportunity to bring the matter to your attention. Please let me know what action you propose to take.

Yours sincerely,



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