

October 19, 2000

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WILTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
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To Whom It May Concern:

CONSIDERATION OF OMBUDSMAN FINDING IN RELATION TO COUNTY COUNCILLOR MRS NANCY BRYANT

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to address the comments made in the report.

I apologize for bringing the Wiltshire County Council into disrepute.

NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

It is always a matter of conjecture as to whether a member has a non-pecuniary interest.

As a farmer I declare an interest at every meeting connected with agriculture, inform the officers and members of my connection. As I did at this meeting

The chairman and I as active farmers understand the present agriculture crisis. The implications of the ever-changing financial climate through the bureaucracy of modern farming is a challenge for most farmers. It is very difficult to keep up with new regulations as farmers let alone understand them as a lay person. We regularly explain our position to the other committee members prior to the commencement of interviews, as we feel the presence of active farmers with other members is of benefit to the County Council and is appreciated by the tenants and applicants. As this is not in the presence of the applicants they are unaware of the proceedings and therefore they may feel our interests are not clear to everyone.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS; BY PETER SMITH

Par, 19:

I did not and still do not classify either of the applicants as family or close friends.

[REPORT: OMBUDSMAN page 6 par: 25]

It had not entered my head that Mr. B was my granddaughter's Godfather. The family has 54 Godparents between them. I would have a hard job to remember all their names.

Par, 21:

Since the case has been made public I have had 100% support that I acted without prejudice and did not influence the results.

MY PERSONAL COMMENTS

I feel very strongly that my husband, children, grandchildren, home, church, and social life are private.

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I also feel that as a County Councillor I conduct my life in a way that is an example to my constituents. This is a discipline that I set myself for the office I hold.

Constructive comments for the future

Selecting tenants for County Farms has always been a contentious item. As the unsuccessful applicants often feel resentment that they have not been chosen.

We have discussed having an independent non-voting person being present, though the Tenant farmers Association (TFA) supported this at one of our informal meetings we did not reach agreement on an acceptable body to nominate the person.

I now believe in the interest of all concerned that the time is ripe to choose such a person.

A NEU President Rural Dean: or retired Magistrate would seem appropriate.

Thank your for you attention.

N.S. Bryant

Councillor Nancy Bryant.  
For CALNE.

Unfortunately I cannot make my-self available to the panel to night.

North Wilts District Council has called an urgent Council meeting, which I shall be attending

