

Statement in support of Cllr Doreen Stevenson  
15/06/09.

I will start by introducing myself Raymond Brookfield a Parish Councillor for many years, the oldest and longest serving Councillor on Halsall Parish Council, Twice as chairman and parish council lead on the establishment of a Pharmacy within the village and continued when my term as chairman ceased, it is now a success and being used by more and more people weekly with an increase in staff, Compiler of the Monthly Halsall News, Was a School Governor on Halsall St Cuthberts Cof E primary school and again was successful in working towards the entertainments licences, at present a school governor of Wigan road school, Also a director/Trustee of Carers U/K with 15 years of caring experience for my late wife and now her mother who will be 100years old in a few weeks.

I am also Secretary of the West Lancashire Pensioners Forum and member of the Older Peoples Partnership Board. In my spare time I support the 2 older peoples clubs in the village, The White Heather club and the Sunshine committee with their fund raising projects.

I have given you an insight into my background within the community of Halsall and London and it is all voluntary. You may feel this introduction is irrelevant to the accusations against Cllr Doreen Stevenson but bear with me and I will give my version of events that took place.

Firstly Cllr Doreen Stevenson as shown over the years she as been our District and Parish Councillor and worked hard and diligently for the residents of Halsall, and was instrumental in the Multi-use-games-area [M.U.G.A]value of £58000 being offered to the Parish Council. The meeting in February 2008 confirmed the overwhelming support from Councillors and Public , all that remained to be sorted out was where it would be situated, some extra car parking and did it need planning permission and when could we expect it.

In May 2008 we had a few changes in membership of the Parish Council and plans started being discussed about the M.U.G.A. On August 1<sup>st</sup> I received the summons and agenda for an extra ordinary meeting of the Parish Council for Thursday the 7<sup>th</sup> August 2008 at St Aidans Hall 7.30pm Item 3 on the agenda was

**To Consider the following Special Resolution under Standing Order 17.1-2**

That as a consequence of the decision by the Trustees of the Halsall War Memorial Playing Field and Hall not to grant the necessary permission to site the MUGA on the Memorial field that Minute 9 [1] of the Parish Council Meeting dated 13<sup>th</sup> February 2008 be rescinded.

In attendance at the meeting were 7 Cllrs and at least 35 public with 2 apologies from Cllrs D & M Westley with their continued declarations of personal & prejudicial interest.

Needless to say the public turned up at this meeting rather upset and concerned that they had not been consulted about the rescinding of the resolution of the February meeting were they were asked for their public support by the previous council.

**Complaints made against Councillor Doreen Stephenson**

**Failed to treat the Parish Clerk, with respect**

I did not hear Cllr Doreen Stephenson at any time say or act in any way that could be construed to be treating the Clerk Mrs Atherton with disrespect. Yes Cllr D Stephenson was annoyed not with the Clerk but with some of her fellow councillors who had originally agreed to the M.U.G.A at the February meeting.

**Accused the Parish Clerk of using delaying tactics with regards to the submission of tenders.**

I recall the Clerk stating she had a number of quotes for the overspill car parking and I could not understand why she had not brought them with her to the meeting I understand on the night she

had 5 and was awaiting 1 more. As I know 3 tenders are sufficient for local authority work it is hard to comprehend the reasons for failing to produce them at this meeting.

At no time did I hear Cllr Doreen Stephenson make any comments which could be construed to the clerk using delaying tactics.

The meeting was destined to be robust with the public seeing a project that they had been encouraged to support from the very first in February 2008 [ public consultation] to see 6 months later it being snatched away from them.

You will see by the minutes of the august meeting that Cllr B Mills proposed and Cllr D Corfield seconded the resolution that as a consequence of the decision by the trustees of Halsall War Memorial Playing Field and Hall that minute 9 [1] of the Parish council meeting dated 13<sup>th</sup> February 2008 be rescinded

The Chairman asked for any amendments to the resolution.

Cllr Brookfield proposed a negative amendment and the clerk explained the rules of amendments so this was withdrawn.

Cllr J Stephenson with the help of the clerk Mrs M Atherton formulated an amendment as follows Cllr J Stephenson proposed and Cllr D Corfield seconded; That as a consequence of the decision by the trustees not to grant the necessary permission the Parish Council asks the Trustees to reflect on public opinion and reconsider the granting of the necessary permission.

The Chairman put the amendment to the vote and it was carried.

The Amendment then became the substantive motion and was proposed by Cllr Brookfield and seconded by Cllr J Stephenson. This was put to the vote and was carried. The meeting closed at 9.40pm.

The 35 plus public left the meeting believing common sense was again prevailing but within a few days the Chairman/ Clerk notified the WLDC that the decision was not to have the MUGA.

Now as a Parish Councillor I was unaware of this decision and to this day I do not recollect a meeting giving this decision.

The September meeting was like the August meeting with robust questioning about the M.U.G.A and the minutes of the August meeting being questioned about there correctness. there were heated discussions by the public and councillors to the Chairman. There was an air of disbelief from the public at both meetings as to the commitment of the council and especially the chairman.

During the meetings certain councillors were goading the chairman and Constable D Barlow to eject some public and councillors. This is no way that meetings should be conducted and I reiterate what I have said previously Cllr D Stephenson as not failed to treat the clerk ,with respect and she did not accuse the clerk of using delaying tactics with regards to the submission of tenders.

I would like you to refer back to my initial opening introductions, Of all the committees I have been part of over 20 years or more I have never been privy to meetings as such that took place in August and September 2008

Cllr Raymond Brookfield