

Witness Statement

Mrs M C Prettyman

1. My name is Mrs Margaret Claire Prettyman of The Thatched House, Hill Common, Hickling, Norfolk NR120BT
2. I am making a statement voluntarily as a witness for Mrs Dinah Slatter to properly record events surrounding the delivery of a document last year to the registered address of Hickling Parish Council.
3. Dinah and I walk regularly, usually 3 times each week. We take it in turns to meet at each others houses, but our planned meeting time never varies. We always meet at 7.30 am or thereabouts, never earlier, both summer and winter.
4. On this particular occasion we were due to meet at Dinah's. I was a little late, I cannot currently recall why, but I think I may have popped into the Barn on my way.
5. It was raining heavily and I was wearing my fluorescent pink jacket as usual. Dinah and I have matching jackets which makes us very visible on the narrow, and sometimes dark country lanes. People could have seen us as we walked openly along the road.
6. I arrived at Dinah's a little late and she came to the door with an envelope. I did not see what was inside but she told me that it contained the hard copies of a list of signatures she had gathered objecting to the published draft minutes of our Annual Parish meeting.
7. I had not been at that meeting, but many people had quite independently expressed surprise to me at the draft minutes, which they said were inaccurate in respect of the wording of a resolution passed there.
8. Dinah told me that she had already emailed a scanned copy of the list to the clerk, but wanted to make sure that a hard copy was delivered to the Parish Council as well so that they could verify its authenticity.
9. I had nothing whatsoever to do with the document, but I had heard Dinah speaking to others about it, and know that she was meticulous in asking people to only sign if they had been present at the meeting and if they objected to the minutes as drafted.
10. We left Dinah's house at about 7.40am or maybe a bit later. Dinah was very nervous about delivering the envelope, I was supposed to be feeding my friends cat that morning on our walk, but Dinah asked if we could go straight to the Parish Councils registered address on Town Street, as she said she wanted to get it over with.
11. We walked up the Causeway, turned right onto Eastfield Road and then took the short cut along the field footpath to Town Street.
12. As we got near to the house Dinah became increasingly worried that the Chair might be up and come to the door and confront her. She felt intimidated and said that the last person she would want to see that morning was Mrs Clarke. So we stopped talking and Dinah walked on her own over the grass verge and went very quietly towards the front door.
13. I turned left and stayed on the roadway walking as quietly as I could. I can remember being very aware of my position as a Trustee in the ongoing legal dispute. I was concerned not to be associated with the objections, as they had nothing to do with me, so I stayed well clear.
14. Dinah posted the envelope and joined me further on down the road towards Hickling House. We continued on our walk up to Sea Palling to feed my friend's cat.

15. All in all it takes about 15 minutes to walk to Town Street from Dinah's, so it cannot have been much before 8 when we got there. It is therefore completely and utterly untrue to say that Dinah was there, or that the documents were delivered, at 4.40am.

16. This fact is corroborated by the fact that, when Mrs Clarke complained to Dinah shortly afterwards, I wrote an email to Dinah in which I estimated that we could have been there as late as 8.15am.

17. It is clear to see from the email correspondence between Dinah and myself after Mrs Clarke's complaint that we both thought that Mrs Clarke's objection was about Dinah delivering a letter and waking her around 8am, a complaint which both of us thought to be absolutely ridiculous and vexatious.

18. I have written this statement myself and it is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that I may be required to attend a complaint hearing as a witness and am happy to do so.

Signature under Oath

Date 28/5/2014