# Terry Parish steps down amid allegations of improper conduct in council planning meeting



Terry Parish, the independent councillor for Heacham and former chairman of the planning committee at West Norfolk Council, stepped down from his role earlier this year following allegations of improper conduct during a council planning meeting.

The controversy centres around an incident in November when Mr Parish was unable to attend a council planning committee meeting in person due to injuries sustained in a car crash. Instead, he reportedly watched the meeting online from his residence and sent emails to his deputy, Sue Lintern, instructing her on how to vote on specific planning applications. These messages were later obtained by members of the council's rival Conservative group, who claimed they showed Mr Parish attempted to "pre-determine" the meeting's outcome.

The emails focused particularly on a contentious application to develop a woodland leisure park in Pentney. On the Friday prior to the meeting, Mr Parish wrote: "Pentney, no. Look at [parish council] objections. Norfolk Wildlife Trust is cagey, reads like no. Arboricultural officer seems to have been leaned on. 91 objections. Power to the people." During the meeting itself, when councillors were asked whether to defer a decision, he sent an email instructing: "No deferral. REFUSE IT." Minutes later, a further email reiterated, "REFUSE IT." The application was ultimately denied.

Mr Parish served as council leader from May 2023 until April 2024. When questioned about his involvement, he acknowledged his actions were a mistake, describing the incident as occurring "in the heat of the moment" and likening it to "shouting from the crowd at a football match." He referred himself to West Norfolk Council’s standards committee, which led to a hearing scheduled for Wednesday, 7 May.

In addition to Mr Parish's self-referral, the council received a formal complaint alleging breaches of the code of conduct related to this event. As of now, it remains undecided whether the hearing will be held publicly or in private, with the standards committee set to determine this during the upcoming meeting.

The Eastern Daily Press is reporting on the developments surrounding this case, which has raised questions about governance and procedural conduct within local councils.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.lynnnews.co.uk/news/councillor-steps-aside-amid-claims-he-broke-rules-by-influen-9402324/> - This article reports on Terry Parish stepping aside as chair of West Norfolk Council's planning committee amid an investigation into whether he unfairly influenced a meeting by sending emails instructing his deputy on how to vote on specific planning applications.
2. <https://www.lynnnews.co.uk/news/woodland-holiday-park-plan-set-for-approval-despite-claim-it-9389247/> - This article discusses the planning application for a woodland holiday park in Pentney, highlighting the significant opposition from wildlife groups and villagers, and the recommendation for approval despite these concerns.
3. <https://www.lynnnews.co.uk/news/new-era-ushered-in-as-independents-take-control-of-council-9313424/> - This article details Terry Parish's election as the new leader of West Norfolk Council in May 2023, marking the first non-Conservative council in the borough in two decades.
4. <https://www.lynnnews.co.uk/news/you-inherited-a-fully-funded-budget-row-breaks-out-over-c-9333303/> - This article covers a dispute at West Norfolk Council where Cllr Judith Collingham criticized Cllr Terry Parish for suggesting the council was in financial difficulty, despite reports indicating a fully funded budget.
5. <https://www.lynnnews.co.uk/news/woodland-holiday-park-plan-set-for-approval-despite-claim-it-9389247/> - This article reports on the planning application for a woodland holiday park in Pentney, noting the significant opposition from wildlife groups and villagers, and the recommendation for approval despite these concerns.
6. <https://www.lynnnews.co.uk/news/councillor-steps-aside-amid-claims-he-broke-rules-by-influen-9402324/> - This article reports on Terry Parish stepping aside as chair of West Norfolk Council's planning committee amid an investigation into whether he unfairly influenced a meeting by sending emails instructing his deputy on how to vote on specific planning applications.
7. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25123046.former-norfolk-council-leader-faces-standards-hearing/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data