# Attleborough Town Council faces backlash over taxpayer-funded therapy amid ongoing feud



Members of Attleborough Town Council have found themselves amid significant controversy following a decision to offer taxpayer-funded therapy sessions to councillors in response to escalating negativity online. This move was approved during a council meeting, where concerns were raised about the detrimental impact of social media criticism on the mental health of the councillors. Much of this online backlash stemmed from a local feud between councillors regarding a business deal—specifically, a contentious lease withdrawal for the Bear pub, which has sparked accusations of poor decision-making by the Taylor family.

Samantha Taylor, who sits on the council alongside her father, John, and daughter, Taila, attributed the negative sentiments largely to personal attacks rather than legitimate criticism of council activities. The council's decision follows a pattern of internal discord, including a recent incident where councillor Stephen Fraser was charged with criminal damage after an altercation that resulted in a broken shop window. This incident, coupled with the ongoing fallout from the business dispute, illustrates a broader culture of conflict within the council, which has intensified scrutiny of its members.

At the heart of the matter lies a complex relationship between private business dealings and public life. Samantha Taylor claimed that the hostility towards her family has largely been fueled by misunderstandings surrounding private transactions that have been mistakenly conflated with their roles as public servants. In her remarks, she expressed concern over the blurring of lines between local governance and community relations: "What is most unfortunate about this is that it mostly descends from a business decision that had nothing to do with the council." The incident surrounding the Bear pub, which saw the withdrawal of a lease from councillors Daniel Burcham and his husband, Paul, has intensified perceptions of mismanagement, particularly after the Burchams reportedly left under contentious circumstances.

Critics of the council's decision to fund therapy have raised fundamental questions regarding the appropriateness of using taxpayer money to address interpersonal disputes perceived as private matters. John O'Connell, CEO of the TaxPayers' Alliance, articulated this sentiment, stating, "Residents will rightly question why council funds are being used to pay for therapy relating to what councillors themselves described as a private matter." The use of public funds for such personal issues not only raises ethical concerns but also highlights the fiscal responsibilities of public offices, particularly in times of financial constraint facing many local councils.

The backdrop of this situation is further complicated by past incidents within the council that have spotlighted issues of bullying and harassment. In recent years, Attleborough Town Council had to contend with allegations of serious misconduct involving councillors Taila Taylor and Edward Tyrer. The council spent over £114,000 in legal fees and damages related to these accusations, which were later found to be false and part of a malicious campaign against them. This prior controversy reflects a challenging environment where personal grievances can escalate into public disputes, further complicating the overall governance of the council.

As the council navigates these turbulent waters, it faces the challenging task of restoring public trust while managing its internal dynamics. There remains a palpable tension between the councillors and a vocal portion of the public, as further incidents continue to emerge. The recent activities, including a council meeting that had to be abandoned amid protests, signal a growing disconnect between council members and the constituents they serve. As the situation unfolds, the implications for local governance in Attleborough are likely to resonate far beyond the immediate locale, serving as a case study in the complexities of modern civic engagement.

Seeking to address these ongoing issues, the council has organised closed sessions to discuss potential legal action in response to the allegations and to provide necessary support for councillors grappling with the fallout of these disputes. The balance between maintaining a functional council while ensuring accountability and transparency will be critical in the coming months, as the citizens of Attleborough look on, increasingly engaged, yet wary of the evolving narrative.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25184516.attleborough-town-council-pay-therapy-councillors/?ref=rss), [[4]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-norfolk-57021788)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25184516.attleborough-town-council-pay-therapy-councillors/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-norfolk-51675627), [[3]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/local-council/20653117.revealed-114k-cost-town-council-bullying-row/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25184516.attleborough-town-council-pay-therapy-councillors/?ref=rss), [[5]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-norfolk-57086178), [[6]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/local-council/20761383.councillors-deny-claims-harassment-bullying-intimidation-meeting-chaos/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-norfolk-51675627), [[5]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-norfolk-57086178)
* Paragraph 5 – [[3]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/local-council/20653117.revealed-114k-cost-town-council-bullying-row/), [[7]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/local-council/20762096.town-council-bullying-row-sees-latest-meeting-abandoned-police-called/)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25184516.attleborough-town-council-pay-therapy-councillors/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-norfolk-51675627> - A complaint against two Attleborough Town Councillors accused of sustained bullying, likened to 'a scene from The Godfather', has been upheld. Staff at the council were reportedly reduced to tears over two years due to harassment. The council voted to remove the councillors from committees, sending a strong message that bullying is unacceptable. Both councillors, Taila Taylor and Edward Tyrer, categorically denied the allegations.
3. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/local-council/20653117.revealed-114k-cost-town-council-bullying-row/> - Attleborough Town Council has spent over £114,000 in taxpayers' money on a bullying row involving two councillors. The costs include £27,500 in damages and £43,000 in legal fees. The council issued a public apology after a judicial review concluded that the allegations were false and part of a malicious campaign. The report details attempts to organise an HR review into 'member issues' at the council.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-norfolk-57021788> - Attleborough Town Council has apologised for its handling of bullying allegations against two councillors, Taila Taylor and Edward Tyrer. The council admitted that the accusations were false and part of a malicious campaign. The council also acknowledged procedural impropriety and disregard for due process in investigating the allegations. Both councillors received a public apology and compensation, with the council expressing hope to rebuild a strong relationship.
5. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-norfolk-57086178> - The fallout from Attleborough Town Council's handling of bullying allegations has cost taxpayers £114,000. The council apologised for its actions after two councillors, Taila Taylor and Edward Tyrer, sought a judicial review. The costs covered legal fees, damages, and security. The council acknowledged a systemic failure to follow the rule of law at the time and expressed hope to rebuild a strong relationship with the councillors.
6. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/local-council/20761383.councillors-deny-claims-harassment-bullying-intimidation-meeting-chaos/> - Attleborough Town Council's meeting was abandoned after approximately 50 protesters refused to leave, following a motion to remove councillors Taila Taylor and Edward Tyrer from their committee duties. The councillors categorically denied allegations of harassment, bullying, and intimidation. Mayor Tony Crouch accused the councillors of a campaign of harassment and bullying, while the councillors argued they were whistleblowers on council malpractice.
7. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/local-council/20762096.town-council-bullying-row-sees-latest-meeting-abandoned-police-called/> - Attleborough Town Council's meeting was abandoned after the mayor refused to take questions from the public, leading to police being called. The meeting was adjourned after public participation was denied, and protesters refused to leave. The council had previously accused councillors Taila Taylor and Edward Tyrer of harassment, bullying, and intimidation, leading to their removal from committees. Both councillors denied the allegations and sought to clear their names.