STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN REGARDING THE FLYING OF THE PRIDE FLAG IN THE PARISH

Before going on to comment on the events of the 3rd June 2020 at the virtual Ockbrook and Borrowash Parish Council meeting can I first of all refer you to the etiquette / protocol for flag flying in the Parish which can be found in the flag diary on the Parish website.

The agenda item relating to the flying of the pride flag was discussed in open session at the virtual Ockbrook and Borrowash Parish Council meeting held on the 3rd June 2020.

One Councillor read out a short statement in favour of flying the Pride flag which was then seconded by another Councillor, this is recorded in the minutes.

Another Councillor then made the following statement which I think should be read in the circumstances.

_The Parish Council does not have a problem in supporting the L.G.B.T.Q+ community as it already works with and supports other minority groups within our parish._

_The Parish Council is of the opinion that it is totally wrong to politicise this issue by the flying of a flag which seemingly gives the appearance that one part of our community is being made more special than all the others. This simply cannot be right._

_The Parish Council supports and respects all members of our Parish community regardless of ethnicity, religious or sexual orientation. Residents from all backgrounds and walks of life are treated with tolerance, respect and understanding when dealing with either individual Councillors or the Parish office._

_Some Councillors fear that a dangerous precedent could be set by flying this flag which could be seen as divisive when we have spent many years working to bring our communities together._

_The Parish Council also does not wish to set a precedent as it could lead to other minority groups wishing to take the same course of action as they could feel left behind and ignored._

_The Parish Council is of the opinion that residents should not be judged by their sexuality but by what they can achieve by being a member of a united community, working, playing and going forward together. This is reflected in the Parish flag, which was designed by children from a local school, which depicts a ring of children of mixed race all holding hands as a sign of unity._

A vote then took place. There were 4 votes in favour and 7 against. The motion was lost.

Please note that at no point has a representative from the L.G.B.T.Q+ community approached the Parish Council to request the pride flag be flown.

Can I just add before closing, we as a Parish Council, have listened to the comments made on Social Media and I will be recommending to Council that we set up a Working Party to look at the whole issue of flag flying.

This will be put to Council at the next meeting which will be held on 1st July 2020 and a Working Party appointed.

As we do not meet in August, they will be asked to report back with their recommendations at the September meeting.

Kind regards
Michael White
Chairman
Ockbrook and Borrowash Parish Council