

## Apology

I wish to place on record my sincere apologies in relation to the handling and publication of the letter issued by Cheshire West and Chester Council dated 26 September 2025.

I acknowledge that this letter and its appendix should not have been placed in the public domain and should not have been exhibited as part of the Agenda for the Parish Council meeting in October 2025.

I further acknowledge that the letter should not have been published on the Council's website or circulated to Councillors.

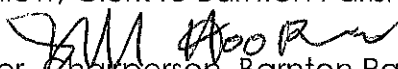
I apologise unreservedly for the unlawful and improper publication and circulation of this correspondence.

For the avoidance of doubt, and in order to ensure clarity, I also record the following determinations made by Cheshire West and Chester Council:

- In respect of matters relating to treating other Councillors with respect, bullying and harassment, Cheshire West and Chester Council has determined that the complaints made should not be the subject of an independent investigation, as such an investigation would not be proportionate or in the public interest. No findings have been made against James Devine or any other Councillor in relation to allegations of bullying, harassment, or lack of respect
- Allegations that James Devine failed to respect the impartiality of the Parish Council have been determined by Cheshire West and Chester Council not to be supported by sufficient evidence to conclude a potential breach. Furthermore, no determination has been made against James Devine in relation to the Events Group or the handling of funds connected with community events.

I regret the difficulty caused by the publication of the letter and reaffirm my commitment to ensuring that all future handling of correspondence, complaints, and governance matters is conducted in full compliance with legal requirements and best practice.

Signed:   
Toni Critchlow, Clerk to Barnton Parish Council

Signed:   
Dilys Hooper, Chairperson, Barnton Parish Council