

What went wrong and who is responsible? Episode 9.

Having dealt with the suspicious circumstances surrounding the commissioning and delivery of the Maoni Report, we are now examining the report itself starting with the claims made by Newby and Scalby Town Council on their website. To avoid unnecessary repetition, readers are asked to also refer to the screenshot shown of the Council’s website in Episode 8. We have already noted the first lie (*is pleased to provide an update*) and we are now ready to discuss lie number two:

“Newby & Scalby Town Council discovered the apparent misuse of a substantial grant”

This is a very serious accusation that no council should make without proof and we are reminded of the findings of the Information Commissioner who, having seen the report, dismissed this claim outright (para 19.) and said that the *“failings are those of the Council as a whole.”*

19. The Council does appear to be suggesting within its submissions to the Commissioner that the subject of the report is the failings of the individual to whom the employment tribunal relates. However, having seen the report the Commissioner’s view is that it is clear that the subject of the report is the Council as a whole.

15. In its submissions to the Commissioner, the Council acknowledged that, “the report highlights governance failures, financial mismanagement, and procedural oversights”.

We agree with the Information Commissioner who, at the time of reaching his decision that the Council must publish the Maoni Report, was unaware that Judge Flanagan was about to issue a Judgement at the Leeds Tribunal that also blows the Council’s claim completely out of the water. It would be helpful if we reminded ourselves of a key finding made by the Judge:

33. Shortly afterwards, the Respondent made the decision, with the assistance of Ms Marley, to undertake an investigation in to the Woodsmith Grant; entitled the ‘Maoni’ report. The result of an investigation was that the investigator determined that the money received from the Grant should be returned. In evidence, the Claimant made complaints regarding the Respondent failing to disclose communications between the Council and the Maoni investigator around this time. In any event, the Respondent later characterised the position as that the money had to be returned, as there had been a failure to comply with the conditions attached to the Grant. It is notable that the Claimant and Cllr Towse had spoken with Woodsmith in November 2023, when there was no suggestion that the money needed to be returned and that no demand for repayment was made at any stage.

We have already noted in Episode 7 the shady circumstances (our words) surrounding the Council’s decision, with the assistance of Ms Marley, to undertake an investigation into the Woodsmith Grant. They claimed that Reg Towse and Helen had had an unauthorised meeting with the CEO of the Woodsmith Foundation and here we learn that Judge Flanagan finds: *“It is notable that the Claimant and Cllr Towse had spoken with Woodsmith in November 2023, when there was no suggestion that the money needed to be returned and that no demand for repayment was made at any stage.”* Recall that the Judge found (para 69.) that Helen and Reg’s evidence was *“consistent and compelling”* but for reasons known only to himself did not make a similar finding for the council. Also para 69 - She (Helen) *“had raised a grievance that had simply been glossed over by the Council ...”* and *“the Council simply took steps to remove the Claimant (Helen) from her role.”*

Take heart, dear reader, as we move on to Episode 10 of our series examining the corrupt practices of our local council.