

OPEN LETTER
9TH JUNE 2020

To: Mr Ajaz Ahmed: Conservative Regional Chairman for the South East
By email:

Cc: Alfred Friday: Vice President of Spelthorne Conservative Association

By email:

Dear Sirs

Resignation of Councillor Olivia Rybinski from membership of The Conservative and Unionist Party

Dear Mr Ahmed,

Unfortunately, Spelthorne Conservatives has become an intolerable group to work in. I have been on the receiving end of many hounding emails from some colleagues. I have had to make formal complaints and this year I have felt completely let down by the party which I have represented for two elections. I feel this party is no longer a safe place to work, one email can trigger a barrage of abuse.

I have always worked very hard as a councillor, starting the initiative and petition to get Zone 6 and Oyster implemented, starting along with other passionate residents Spelthorne Youth Club in Ashford and holding monthly surgeries ever since I was elected over 5 years ago. I have held a Cabinet position for over 3 years and have been involved in a team who has pioneered the way forward for our Council. Recently I visited the homeless hostel we are building, the emergency accommodation on Fordbridge Road and affordable and private rentals we are building in Sunbury. We are providing homes for a wide range of residents with more coming in the near future. We have not cut any services and have been able to step in when Surrey have stopped services. Just over 5 years ago, Spelthorne Council were planning to sell off assets in order to fund government cuts. Now, we have a property portfolio to be very proud of and one which is bringing in an income so we can deliver a balanced budget. Our residents deserve councillors whose time is spent on working for the borough and not infighting.

There is a bullying and pressurising culture within this party, which has been witnessed over a number of years. Over the last few months, I have been the victim of this and it is something I never expected from an organisation like the Conservative Party. A formal complaint was a complete waste of time and proved to me that my treatment was seen to be quite normal, and was dismissed. The bullying continued and even throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the focus of many members was to change the Leadership and Cabinet. All these members care about is themselves, not the residents and not the relief efforts. The division within the group has been caused by themselves and they hide behind a mask of "unity" to get others on board.

I want to continue to work hard for the residents of Spelthorne, which is why, from today, I resign from Spelthorne Conservatives. I will always have traditional, conservative values but going forward I need to consider my own wellbeing, and a group like this is not good for anyone. I want to thank everyone who voted for me in the last two elections and I promise to continue my hard work and to represent my residents.

Yours sincerely

Olivia Rybinski
Councillor for Ashford Town
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development