

In brief

Dog fouling JPs 'too lenient'

FOLKESTONE: Magistrates have been told to "get with it" for fining a woman who let her dog foul memorial gardens just £50.

Shepway District Council took Jackie Adams, of Manor Road, to court when she refused to pay her fixed £50 penalty – but JPs only fined her the same amount, although she also had to pay another £50 in costs.

Shepway Council's deputy leader Rory Love said the fine was lenient and sent out the wrong message.

He added: "Given that no mitigating circumstances were offered by the woman in court, I do think that the magistrates have got it spectacularly wrong."

"This administration was elected on a promise of zero tolerance against the small minority of dog owners who commit this antisocial and unacceptable crime. Unlike magistrates, we are accountable to our electors for delivering our promises."

"This woman not only committed the crime, but also showed her total contempt for her community by refusing to pay the original fine. In such cases, we need to be supported by more realistic penalties by magistrates. They need to get with it."

Theft appeal



FOLKESTONE: This CCTV image has been released of a man that

Councillor and DJ withdraws claims over CCTV project

Apology by Tory Wimble

Report by Mike Sims

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A TORY councillor and local DJ has been forced to issue a public apology, admitting serious allegations he published about a New Romney trader were untrue.

David Wimble, a district member who represents New Romney town ward, published the story in a community giveaway magazine, questioning the actions of the organiser of a local CCTV project, Jacqueline Ratcliff.

Under the headline "Where's our money gone from CCTV campaign", Cllr Wimble published an article containing allegations, which due to legal reasons the *Herald* cannot repeat, about the scheme's accounts and Mrs Ratcliff's health.

Although Cllr Wimble initially told the *Herald* he stood by every word, he altered his stance by running a full front-page apology in *The Looker*.

It admitted: "There were several factual errors and personal comments in the article which should not have been published."

Cllr Wimble confirmed that the accounts were all in place and apologised for any upset caused not only to fibromyalgia sufferer Mrs Ratcliff, who runs the Best Wishes gift shop in New Romney High Street, but also to others with similar health problems.

Mrs Ratcliff said she was "very upset and distressed" by the original article and said she had got involved with the CCTV project in an attempt to help the community.

Sorry

In his "editor's word" column, Cllr Wimble added: "I am very aware now that some people took this the wrong way."

"I would like to personally say sorry to Mrs Ratcliff as she thought that I personally was accusing any wrongdoing. This was never the case, which is why I apologised by printing the article on the front page."

Cllr Wimble had originally said that if anyone should apologise it should be Mrs Ratcliff to him rather than the other way round, and that he had "a good mind" to



U-TURN: Councillor and DJ David Wimble has apologised and publicly withdrawn comments he published about shopkeeper and CCTV project organiser Jacqueline Ratcliff

ask for the money he gave to the CCTV project back.

When the *Herald* asked Cllr Wimble to explain his U-turn, he said: "Yes I do stand by the question that I asked as we have had a number of people write and contact us. However I have now seen all the bank reconciliation and am satisfied."

"I have offered to try and help get the CCTV installed as a dis-

trict councillor, as per my original offer."

Mrs Ratcliff and her husband John had written to Shepway District Council reporting Cllr Wimble to the standards board, but they have agreed to withdraw the complaint following his apology.

Mrs Ratcliff said: "I'd like to thank the many people in the community who have supported

me over this. It has meant a lot."

"I was extremely upset by these baseless allegations and the front page apology has helped to set the record straight."

Conservative Party agent Gordon Williams said that he had passed the matter on to Cllr Robert Bliss, Tory group leader on Shepway District Council. Cllr Bliss was unavailable for comment.