

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Revealed: The Conservative West Sussex Councillor Who Lives in Devon

West Sussex Liberal Democrats have called for Jacquie Russell to consider her position as county councillor for East Grinstead South and Ashurst Wood after it was revealed that she stood for election in East Devon this May

Jacquie Russell was elected to represent East Grinstead South and Ashurst Wood at West Sussex County Council in May 2017. However, it is now known that her family moved to Devon in 2016 and she has publicly stated that she lives there¹. Incredibly, in May this year she stood for election in Seaton (East Devon District Council) some 170 miles from the West Sussex community that she currently represents.

On Friday 7th June, the Liberal Democrat Group on West Sussex County Council drew the Council's attention to Mrs Russell's situation by distributing details² of her candidature in East Devon last month.

The Liberal Democrats understand that there is a degree of disquiet amongst some East Grinstead Conservatives about Mrs Russell's actions in living in and standing for election in East Devon while simultaneously representing residents in East Grinstead South and Ashurst Wood.

Cllr Dr James Walsh (Leader, Lib Dem Group on West Sussex County Council said: "We are calling upon Mrs Russell to consider her position as a West Sussex County Councillor. It cannot be right that she took over £17,000 of tax payers' money last year as a West Sussex County Councillor, when she lives 170 miles away from the people that she was elected to represent and when she has shown split loyalties by recently standing to represent people in East Devon. In over 30 years of being a county councillor, I have never before seen an example of a councillor attempting to represent two different communities so far apart."

Cllr Kirsty Lord (Liberal Democrat County Councillor for Hassocks & Burgess Hill South) said, "We are concerned that Mrs Russell has just been appointed as Vice Chair of the Children and Young People's Services Select Committee at a very critical time for the Council. The recent devastating Ofsted report into children's services will require at least 2 years to implement the necessary improvements. However, Mrs Russell has stated that she intends to cut her ties with West Sussex³ and will therefore presumably be stepping down no later than May 2021 before this work is complete leading to further instability in an already struggling service."

Dr Fathi Tarada, Chair of East Grinstead Liberal Democrats, said, "Residents deserve complete honesty from their elected representatives. I am disappointed that Jacquie Russell still claims to have an East Grinstead home address on the West Sussex County Council website, yet moved to Devon two years ago. East Grinstead has major issues with traffic congestion, school funding and GP provision. The residents of

¹ <https://eastdevonwatch.org/2019/04/22/seatons-hermione-grainger-candidate-responds/>

² <http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2878626/seaton.pdf>

³ <https://eastdevonwatch.org/2019/04/24/mrs-russell-tory-candidate-seaton-responds-again/>

East Grinstead South and Ashurst Wood deserve to be represented by someone who experiences these problems on a daily basis.”

ENDS

This marks the end of your story. Below, under the ‘Contacts’ and ‘Notes’ headings further information can be found.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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NOTES TO EDITOR:

1. West Sussex County Council records reveal that in the financial year 2018/19, Ms Russell received £17,443 in councillor allowances made up of a councillor’s allowance, a special responsibility allowance and travel and subsistence expenses.
2. Jacquie Russell’s election agent in East Devon confirmed that she has lived there since 2017, the year she was elected to West Sussex County Council: <https://eastdevonwatch.org/2019/04/16/the-hermione-grainger-of-local-politics-able-to-be-in-two-places-at-the-same-time/>