

I reckon the following people would have put their names to the following statements if they had been asked

Di

In the gardens at Unstone Grange, I discovered a haven or refuge where I could enjoy and develop an activity which is very dear to me. When I began volunteering in 2003, I had just changed career and gained a position at a large, local, private walled garden. So it was great for me to find people who shared my enthusiasm and could provide me with support and advice in my new endeavour.

My former career, working for the Employment Service, ended when contractual arrangements changed. This resulted in what I would describe (confidentially) as a 'nervous breakdown' due to how management handled my employment. This traumatic episode was brought back to me by the behaviour of Richard's manager when she shouted and got angry with him in front of myself and another volunteer, Simon Green, when she was issuing him with a written warning at the end of a long day.

Simon and myself were very shaken by her display of temper and I am still fearful when I remember this event.

At the time of Richard's suspension, I have to admit that I suggested to him that he could continue the course at another venue and even have the course moderated independently.

John M

Involvement as a volunteer in the gardens from 1995 to 2004

Establish professional experience and status.

Initially invited to look at and review project's accounts mid-2003:~

FINDINGS Absence of basic systems

+ consequences for project implementation

+ worker time and stress.

Also surprised when invited to take on accounts for the organisation as a whole.

Christine Shimell

Firstly I would like to record that I am slightly offended that no-one at Unstone Grange can remember my surname, partly because I was a volunteer and registered student on the Practical Organic Gardening course for 6 months from April to September 2004 and also because I accompanied Richard at two meetings with management, on September 21st and December 14th 2004.

I was asked to accompany Richard because he knew that I had recently retired from my 20-year career in Rights and Advice work, which meant that I was confident and experienced in advocacy work, although I never specialised in matters of Employment Law.

I was appalled by this meeting because it demonstrated palpable incompetence in the administration of basic managerial procedures. Richard had not been issued with his P45, although the employer had communicated their "intention" to dismiss him more than two weeks before on 30th November.

I was also shocked by how personalised and nasty this meeting was made, specifically by the attitudes and (lack of basic) manners on the part of the manager, Ms Barney. She had made and repeated what she called a 'management judgement' in addition to the basic allegations against him that Richard was not fit to work with vulnerable people. She repeatedly refused to retract this statement, although she realised that it was very damaging to Richard's character and even his chances of future employment.

These points are both evidenced on the records made of the meeting, an accurate transcript of which was provided to me by Richard Clare.

As a student on the Organic Culture course which began on the same day that Richard was suspended, I would like to say that.....

Matt

In response to point 10:~

I was a volunteer in the gardens at Unstone Grange for 6 years and a resident caretaker for 5 years from 1999 until the start of 2005.

Richard mentioned to me, as he was doing to anyone with an interest, that he would like me to see an extract of the transcript of the Appeal meeting which was held on 14th August 2004. I understood that this confirmed that Daz (the supposed complainant) contradicted the grounds for bringing a complaint against Richard (referring to the warning arising 4th May, issued 11th May). However, I did not have the time to view this information that day, so declined to read the paper.

In fact I did not want to get involved in this whole situation which I saw as...

Richard readily accepted my position and accepted that I did not want to read anything. I would like to state that Richard categorically did not make any attempt to “bully” or “harangue” me into anything, but actually let the matter drop immediately.

My experience completely contradicts the impression implied in the document dated 21st February 2005, which I have seen. I believe that Richard only wanted to prove his innocence, so that he could maintain good working relationships with co-workers, care-takers and volunteers, rather than prove that he was being “victimised” and he made no attempt to organise support against the management for any purpose.

John F

I was a volunteer (only in the Organic Gardens) at Unstone Grange over the course of five years, when the gardens were being restored by volunteers including Richard Clare, from 1995 to 2000.

My evidence to this tribunal is that I believe Ms Angela Barney had a long-term personal grudge or resentment directed at Richard. In informal conversation with her at a social event, she stated that although everything was going so well in the gardens, Richard was “still the only thorn in our (meaning Unstone Grange’s) flesh”. This was years before she became manager of the gardening project and she was discussing a dedicated volunteer who had actually led the development of the gardens.

I believe that this personal prejudice was sustained over the course of several years and could be the actual explanation for why Richard was sacked.