

Councillor apologises for eating on camera during meeting citing low blood sugar

A councillor reprimanded for eating on camera during a meeting has apologised claiming low blood sugar was behind the incident.

Councillor Bryan Pottinger was taken to task at last month's meeting of Midlothian Council by Provost Debbi McColl for apparently 'licking out his bowl' after being asked to turn off his camera while eating.

A furious Councillor McColl told him his behaviour was 'absolutely inexcusable' as she demanded he switch off his computer camera after he attended the meeting remotely.

Councillor Pottinger, who was last year cleared of a complaint about alleged inappropriate comments about a female councillor's underwear by the Standards Commission, told a meeting of fellow elected members he did not mean to offend anyone during his appearance.

Speaking at yesterday's meeting Mr Pottinger, again attending remotely, said: "I would like to apologise for the error I made that I was seen eating while I was still on camera.

"I felt it was necessary at that time to have some sustenance as my blood sugar levels were getting low and I did consume a scone along with a hot beverage.

“When Councillor Virgo alerted me to the fact that my camera was on in his usual humorous manner I did not mean to upset anybody, or to offend anybody with my actions.

“I did move to put my camera off but obviously I did not move fast enough with the small buttons we have here in front of me.

“I had explained my actions to some others previously and apologised accordingly, and I am sorry that was done.

“I now want to express my apologies to Councillor Virgo and the whole meeting. It was never done in any deliberate attempt to offend or upset anybody and I hope the meeting can accept my apologies.”

Councillor Debbi McColl told the elected member: “Thank you Councillor Pottinger I think we are quite happy to accept your apologies and say no more about it.”

The row broke out during a debate on a paper about the council’s Capital Prioritisation Plan, when Councillor Virgo was speaking to the meeting and was distracted by Councillor Pottinger eating on the remote screen saying “Bryan eating his cereal there...delightful.”

Provost Councillor McColl then reacted angrily to his response telling him: “That was really inappropriate Councillor Pottinger. I just put a message in the group to say could you turn your camera off, we don’t want to see you eating and then you looked like you were licking out your bowl.

“That is absolutely inexcusable. I do not expect behaviour like that from any councillor, please turn your camera off.”

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter