

Them Cuts

By

Simon Colligan

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[simon@colliganweb.co.uk](mailto:simon@colliganweb.co.uk)

INT. LARGE MEETING ROOM - COUNCIL OFFICES - DAY

A large, elongated oval table dominates the room.

Modern chairs skirt the edges of it, maybe twelve to fifteen of them.

Some one quarter of the chairs have bottoms on them.

People are coming into the room. Smart professionals. Suits. Overpaid. Smiling. Under-worked. Happy.

These are the council officers, bureaucrats, officials, of this town hall.

At the head of the table, his back against the door, is NIGEL HAVERING (50s), portly man of too many lunches.

He's getting a crick in his neck; turning round greeting new entrants.

MAGGIE FULMAN (40's) and Michael ELDMAN (40's) amble into the room full of vibrant conversation.

MAGGIE

Hi Nigel.

Nigel turns his head, not his bulk.

NIGEL

Hello Maggie.

MAGGIE

This is Michael, he's our new community development co-ordinator.

MICHAEL

Hello.

NIGEL

Oh. Hello Michael. I'm Nigel.

MICHAEL

Hi Nigel.

MAGGIE

Nigel's the chair. He's the interim partnership forum leader.

MICHAEL

Pleased to meet you.

NIGEL

Welcome. Hope you feel at home here.

Michael and Maggie wander off to grab a well-earned coffee.

The room's filling up, and people are taking their seats.

It's time to call order; Nigel's getting nervous, and just a little excited.

NIGEL

Well.

(pause)

I think it's about time we called the meeting to order.

The coffee-huggers speed up; people grab seats and lend smiles and hello's like they're going out of fashion.

PENNY DENHAM (50's), large, like obese, manoeuvres her bulk into the seat next to Nigel.

PENNY

I believe I'm taking the minutes today.

NIGEL

Yes, thanks Penny.

PENNY

So, if anyone has any additional items for the agenda, I'm happy to take them now.

A pause. Everyone looks at everyone. No takers.

NIGEL

Okay. First item on the agenda, is the difficult nettle that we all have to grasp. I'm sure you've all aware that's it's vital that we make a number of cuts, and we really need everyone to put forward ideas for these cuts.

Nigel scours the gathered faces.

NIGEL

So if anyone has any... suggestions?

ALISON FATHERING (60's) suddenly finds inspiration.

ALISON  
We could cut the grass.

BRIAN OCKLING (50's) is now emboldened.

BRIAN  
How about cutting some corners?  
That normally works.

Bearded FRANK SOMERTON (60's) has been doing some thinking and now has to contribute.

FRANK  
I could always cut my hair? I  
haven't done that for a while...

PENNY  
Yes. That would be nice. Could you  
do that for us, Frank?

FRANK  
Yes, yes I certainly could.

ESTHER NGOGWE (30's) can now no longer contain herself, and must deliver further input.

ESTHER  
How about cutting the crap? People  
are always saying, particularly in  
our department, we're customer  
services, that we talk too much  
crap. And we do.

ALISON  
Yes, I used to work customer  
services. Terrible at that we were.  
What an excellent idea.

MAGGIE  
How about cutting the mustard?  
Could we do that?

Nigel's getting flustered.

NIGEL  
Yeah, I think that, that maybe we  
have...

FRANK  
Can you actually cut mustard? I  
thought that was just a saying?

ALISON

Well we don't actually need  
mustard, do we, there's always  
ketchup.

FRANK

I'm actually rather fond of  
mustard, can we not keep it in?

NIGEL

I just think, urm...

MICHAEL

Could we cut above the rest? Maybe  
that might be an idea?

PENNY

Well, I'm not too sure you could...

MICHAEL

I remember this chap I used to work  
with. It was said that he was a cut  
above the rest...

PENNY

Well, I suppose...

ALISON

Can we cut it out?

NIGEL

Yes. Good idea.

FADE OUT:

THE END