Them Cuts

By

Simon Colligan
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.


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 ELMAN (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