

LITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

STATEMENT ON DEALING WITH ABUSIVE, PERSISTENT, VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS OR BEHAVIOUR

We do not expect volunteer Councillors or staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour by complainants. This includes abusive, persistent, vexatious, offensive or threatening behaviour ie

- Using abusive or foul language on the telephone, face-to-face, by letter, email, text or any other form of communication
- Any form of intimidating or threatening behaviour
- Sending multiple emails, texts or any other form of communication
- Leaving multiple voicemails
- The complainant relates to an issue based on a historic and irreversible decision or incident
- The complainant refuses to accept factual documented evidence

The Council will take action via the procedure below to protect volunteer Councillors and staff, if a complainant behaves in a way that is abusive, unreasonably persistent or vexatious.

PROCEDURE TO DEAL WITH ABUSIVE, PERSISTENT, VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS OR BEHAVIOUR

1. The Parish Council will ensure that the complaint is being or has been investigated properly in line with the current complaints procedure.
2. If the complaint or behaviour falls into the categories of abusive, persistent or vexatious, the Clerk will consult with the Chair, prior to communicating with the complainant, either by letter or email, to explain why this behaviour is causing concern and request a change in this behaviour or for this behaviour to desist.
3. If the disruptive behaviour continues, the Clerk will consult with the Chair and issue a further communication to the complainant, advising them of what restrictions will be put in place and why, together with the way they will be allowed to contact the Parish Council or Clerk in future.

4. The Clerk will identify a period of time these restrictions will be put in place. The Clerk will also consult with the Police, the Monitoring Office and/or take legal advice if they so wish.
5. Any restriction put in place will be appropriate and proportionate and given a time scale (usually between 3 and 6 months) and will be reviewed after 3 months.
6. Restrictions will be tailored to deal with the individual circumstances and may include:
 - Banning the complainant from making contact by telephone except through a third party
 - Banning the complainant from sending emails, letters or texts to the Clerk or individual Councillors
 - Letting the complainant know that the Parish Council will not reply to or acknowledge any further contact from them on this specific topic
 - Informing the complainant that any further complaints from them will only be investigated if the Clerk agrees that it warrants investigation
7. Where the behaviour is so extreme, or it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of staff or volunteer Councillors, the Clerk and Chair will consider other options, for example, reporting the matter to the Police or take legal action. In such cases, the Parish Council may not give the complainant prior warning of this action.
8. Adequate records will be retained by the Clerk, along with details of the case and the action that has been taken. This will include:
 - The name and address of the complainant who it has been deemed to show abusive, persistent or vexatious behaviour
 - What the restrictions are
 - When they start and end with a review date
 - When the complainant was advised
9. In addition to this procedure, the Parish Council may retain written or media generated documents for a specific purpose for as long as is relevant and subject to an annual review. In resolving to make such an exception, the Parish Council will specify the purpose and maximum period of retention.

Date implemented:

13TH MAY 2024

Date of Review:

MAY 28

Signed:Litcham

Parish Council