

Vexatious Behaviour Policy – South Pickenham Parish Council

Our position will always be that we do not expect our councillors, our Clerk, or anyone acting on our behalf, to tolerate any kind of unacceptable behaviour. Unacceptable behaviour includes behaviour which is in any way abusive, offensive or threatening, in whatever form this abuse or threat may be presented, whether this occurs by telephone or by email, through face-to-face contact, or in written correspondence. It is also unacceptable that any person should accuse the Council or individual councillors of bias, of self-interest, or of acting outside the legal remit of a Parish Council unless the accuser is able to document such maladministration. Unacceptable, too, would be sending multiple emails, and/or leaving multiple voicemails.

We will take appropriate action to curtail and sanction such behaviour:

The Clerk will initially contact the offending party in writing, or by e-mail, to explain why this behaviour is causing concern, and will ask them to change their behaviour, outlining at the same time the actions that the Council may take if they do not comply. The Clerk will send the offending party a copy of the Council's Vexatious Behaviour Policy.

Records will be retained by the Clerk, including: the name, address and contact details of anyone who is considered to be acting in an abusive, vexatious or maliciously persistent manner.

The fact that any individual is to be regarded as vexatious or unreasonably persistent in their contact with the Council or with individual councillors, and any restrictions imposed on our contact with him or her, will be recorded, and may be notified to other appropriate parties. We will record what such restrictions are, when they were imposed, and when they were discontinued.

The Council may restrict the method of communication which may be used as a means of contact by the offending party. He or she may be informed that communication with the Council, our Clerk, or any councillor, may be limited to signed and dated letters, thus excluding contact by email or by telephone. In this way we will protect ourselves against unfounded accusations.

Furthermore, when restrictions are in force the Council will only reply to questions from the offending party where the information is not already available on our notice board, in the Parish magazine, or on the Council's web-page. The Council will not reply to repeated questions, where this enquiry has previously been answered.

The Council finds that it is not necessary to comply with unreasonable demands from anyone, nor is it necessary to answer every point in letters couched in unreasonable terms. Our judgement will be applied, in order to separate legitimate queries in any communication from those that are unreasonable.

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