



Agenda  
Item  
23C(i)

## **LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL**

### **CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY**

#### **Concerns & Complaints**

Ledbury Town Council recognises that from time to time there will be concerns expressed by members of the public over the activities of the Council or one of its employees. The Council is committed to dealing effectively with any concerns or complaints you may have about our service. We aim to clarify any issues about which you are not sure. If possible, we will put right any mistakes we have made, we will provide any service you're entitled to which we have failed to deliver. If we got something wrong, we will apologise and where possible we will try to put things right. We also aim to learn from our mistakes and use the information we gain to improve our services.

#### **When to use this Policy**

When you express your concerns or complain to us, we will usually respond in the way we explain below. However, sometimes you may have a statutory right of appeal, so rather than investigate your concern, we will explain to you how you can appeal. Sometimes, you might be concerned about matters that are not decided by us and we will then advise you about how to make your concerns known.

Also, this policy does not apply if the matter relates to a Freedom of Information or Data Protection issue. In these circumstances, you should write to the Town Clerk, Ledbury Town Council, Church Street, Ledbury, HR8 1DH.

#### **Have you asked us yet?**

Of you are approaching us for a service for the first time, (i.e. Cemetery, Recreation Ground or other amenity area) then this policy does not apply. You should first give us a chance to respond to your request. If you make a request for a service and then are not happy with our response, you will be able to make your concern known as detailed below.

#### **Informal Resolution**

If possible, we believe it's best to deal with things straight away rather than try to sort them out later. If you have a concern, raise it with the person you are dealing with and they will attempt to resolve it for you there and then if there are any lessons to learn from addressing your concern then the Member or employee will draw them to the attention of the Clerk. If they can't help, they will explain why and you can then ask for a formal investigation, or in the case of a complaint against a Member you will be

referred first to the Local Resolution Policy and if necessary then to the standard complaints procedure as outlined in the Councillor Code of Conduct and Hereford Council Standards procedure.

[https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/602/standards\\_and\\_ethics](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/602/standards_and_ethics);

### **How to express your concern or complaint formally**

You can put your concern/complaint forward in any of the following ways:-

- Ask for a copy of our complaints form from the person with whom you are already in contact, advising that you want your concern/complaint dealt with formally;
- Contact the Council offices on 01531 632306 if you wish to make your complaint over the phone;
- Download a copy of our complaints form from our website at <http://www.ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk>
- Email us at: [reception@ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:reception@ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk)
- Write to us at: - Ledbury Town Council, Church Street, Ledbury, HR8 1DH

### **Dealing with your concern**

- We will formally acknowledge your concern/complaint within 5-working days of receipt and advise you of how we intend to deal with it;
- We will ask you to tell us how you would like to communicate with you and establish whether you have any particular requirements – i.e. do you have a disability;
- We will deal with your concern/complaint in an open and honest way;
- We will make sure that your dealings with us in the future do not suffer just because you have expressed a concern or made a complaint.

We will, as a rule, only be able to look into your concern/complaint if you tell us about it within 6-months of it occurring.

We may, in exceptional circumstances, be able to look at concerns which are brought later than 6-months, however, you will need to demonstrate good reasons why you have not been able to bring it to the attention of the Council sooner and we will need sufficient information about the issue to enable us to consider it properly. (in any event, regardless of the circumstances, we will not consider any concerns about matters that took place more than three-years ago).

A separate Local Resolution Policy is provided in respect of the following low level complaints:

- Minor complaints from Members about Members;
- Minor complaints from Officers about Members;
- Members alleged to have not shown respect and consideration for others – either verbally or written.

### **What if there is more than one body involved?**

If your complaint involves more than one body (i.e. Hereford Council, Health Board etc.) we will usually work with them to decide who should take a lead in dealing with your concerns. You will then be given the name of the person who will be handling your complaint for future communications.

If the complaint is about a body working on behalf of the Council (i.e. contractors) you may wish to raise the matter informally with them first. However, if you want to express your concern or complaint formally, we will look into this and respond to you accordingly.

### **Investigation**

You will be advised of who is handling your concern/complaint. If your complaint is straightforward, we will usually ask an officer of the Council to look into it and get back to you. If it is more serious, we may use someone from elsewhere in the Council or in some cases we may appoint an independent investigator.

We will provide details of our understanding of your concern/complaint and ask you to confirm that we have the correct understanding. We will also ask you to tell us what you would like as an outcome to the concern/complaint. The person appointed to look at your complaint will usually need to see any files or correspondence we hold relevant to your complaint, if you do not want this to happen it is important that you advise us of this.

If there is a simple solution to your problem, we may ask you to consider it and advise us whether you are happy to accept the outcome. For example; where you have asked for a service and have not received it, we will offer to provide the service, rather than investigate and produce a report.

We will aim to resolve concerns as quickly as possible and expect to deal with the majority within 20-working days. However, if your complaint is more complex, we will:

- Advise you within this time why we think it may take longer to investigate;
- Advise you how long we anticipate it will take;
- Advise you of where we are, at that point, with the investigation;
- Provide you with regular updates, including advising you of whether any developments are likely to change our original estimate of completion.

The person investigating your concerns will aim, in the first instance, to establish the facts. The extent of the investigation will depend on the complexity and seriousness of the issues you have raised. In more complex cases we will draw up an investigation plan:

In some instance, we may ask you to meet with the person investigating your case, to discuss your concerns. Occasionally, if felt appropriate, we might suggest mediation or another method to try to resolve disputes.



We will look at all evidence provided, which will include files, notes of conversations, letters, e-mails and any other relevant documentation and where necessary will talk to Members and employees involved and consider our policies and legal entitlement and guidance.

### **Outcome**

If your complaint is formally investigated, we will let you know the findings via your preferred form of communication. If necessary, we will provide a longer report, which will explain how and why we came to our conclusions.

If we find we (the Council) got it wrong, we will tell you what and why it happened and show that we understand how the mistake affected you.

If we find there is a fault in our systems or method of working, we will tell you what that is and how we plan to change things to prevent it from happening again in the future.

If we got it wrong, we will apologise.

### **Putting things right**

If we do not provide a service you should have had, we will aim to provide it as soon as is practicably possible. If we did not do something well, we will aim to put it right. If you have lost out as a result of a mistake of our doing, we will try to put you back in the position you would have been in had we got it right.

If you have had to pay for a service yourself, when you should have had one from us, we will usually aim to make good what you have lost.

### **Not Satisfied?**

If we do not manage to resolve your concern/complaint satisfactorily you may complain to the Monitoring Officer who will look at individual complaints about councils, all adult social care providers (including care homes and home care agencies) and some other organisations providing local public services.

- Have been unfairly treated or received a bad service through some failures on the part of the body providing it;
- Have been disadvantaged personally by a service failure or have been treated unfairly.

The Ombudsman can be contacted by:

Tel: 0300 061 0614

Website: <https://www.lgo.org.uk/>

## **Learning Lessons**

We take our concerns and complaints seriously and try to learn from our mistakes. A summary of all complaints will be provided to the Council's Resources Committee twice a year along with the responses provided to each complaint.

Where there is a need to change, we will develop an action plan setting out what we will do, who will do it and when it will be completed by. We will advise you of when changes promised to you have been made.

## **What if I need help?**

Our staff will aim to help you make your concerns known to us. If you need assistance, we will make every effort to put you in touch with someone who can help. You may wish to contact Citizens Advice Bureau, Age Concern, Shelter, etc. who may be able to assist you.

## **What we expect from you**

In times of trouble or distress, some people may act out of character, there may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to a concern or complaint. We do not view behaviour as unacceptable just because someone is forceful or determined.

We believe that all complaints have the right to be heard, understood and respected. However, we also consider that our staff have the same rights. We, therefore, expect you to be polite and courteous in your dealings with us. We will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence.

**Copies of this policy and the complaints form are available in large print at request.**

Date adopted by Council: 30 May 2020  
Reviewed: 29 September 2022  
Review Date: September 2024

**LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL**  
**CONCERN/COMPLAINT FORM**

**Your Details**

<b>Surname</b>	<b>Forename(s)</b>	<b>Title</b>
<b>Address</b>		
<b>Tel:</b>		
<b>Mobile No.</b>		
<b>Email Address</b>		

Please state your preferred method of contact for all future correspondence:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Your Requirements** - If our usual way of dealing with complaints makes it difficult for you to use our service please advise us so that we can discuss how we might help you.

The person who experienced the problem should normally fill in this form. If you are filling this in on behalf of someone else, please fill in section B. Please note that before taking forward the complaint we will need to satisfy ourselves that you have the authority to act on behalf of the person concerned.

Making a complaint on behalf of some else? Please provide their details

<b>Surname</b>	<b>Forename(s)</b>	<b>Title</b>
<b>Address</b>		
<b>What is your relationship to them?</b>		
<b>Why are you making a complaint on their behalf?</b>		

## **The Complaint**

**Name of department/service you are complaining about**

**What do you think they did wrong, or failed to do?**

**How have you personally suffered or been affected?**

**When did you first become aware of the problem?**

**Have you already put your concern to the frontline staff responsible for delivering the service? If so, please give brief details of how and when.**

**If it is more than 6-months since you first became aware of the problem, please give reasons why you have not complained before now.**

**What do you think should be done to put things right?**

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**(please continue on a separate sheet(s) if necessary)**

**If you have any documents to support your concern/complaint, please attach them with this form.**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please send you form to:

Town Clerk  
Ledbury Town Council  
Church Street  
Ledbury  
HR8 1DH



**LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL**  
**VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS POLICY**

The following policy is based on a template provided by Herefordshire Council and adapted for use by Ledbury Town Council (LTC).

Target audience: Anyone who contacts the parish council, councillors and employees

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This policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's Equal Opportunities,  
Complaints and Data Protection

## **Introduction**

This policy has been produced to create a joint understanding of what is considered acceptable and unacceptable behaviour when working with officers and councillors of Ledbury Town Council. It includes dealing with abusive, persistent or unreasonable behaviour and vexatious complaints from members of the public. It also includes the identifying of potentially violent individuals on the parish council's electronic management systems. The parish council is keen to positively and proactively work with parishioners to resolve issues as and when they occur.

This policy has four main sections:

Section 1:	Unreasonable behaviour when contacting LTC Vexatious/persistent complainants
Section 2:	Options to restrict and manage contact
Section 3:	Record keeping and monitoring of those who are subject to the Vexatious Complaints policy

## **The Purpose of this Policy**

- To define the behaviours that are not acceptable to the parish council, including behaviour exhibited by people making formal complaints.
- To ensure that the ability of staff and councillors to conduct business is not adversely affected by individuals who behave in an unreasonable or vexatious manner.
- To ensure employees and councillors have a safe working environment and are not exposed to unnecessary stress, harassment or violence due to the unacceptable behaviour of others and that they are supported as appropriate.
- To ensure that employees and councillors can deal confidently and effectively with unreasonable behaviour should it occur.

## **Who does this Policy apply to?**

This policy applies to everyone who has contact with the parish council.

## **Section 1: Unreasonable Behaviour when Contacting Ledbury Town Council**

The parish council has a duty of care to its employees and councillors to protect them from avoidable stress and upset at work and to use policies and procedures to protect them from what we consider to be unacceptable levels or types of contact. We recognise that when you contact the parish council you may have reason to feel aggrieved, upset or distressed. However, it is not considered acceptable when these feelings become aggressive and are directed towards individual employees or councillors.

### **1.1. What behaviour is unreasonable?**

Unreasonable behaviour is behaviour or language, in whatever form whether face to face, by telephone, social media, SMS (text message) or written that may cause employees or councillors to feel intimidated, threatened or abused. Examples may include:

- Threats of violence
- Verbal abuse
- Racist or sexist language
- Derogatory remarks
- Offensive language
- Rudeness
- Making inflammatory statements
- Raising unsubstantiated allegations
- Any form of physical abuse

1.1.2. We do not view assertive behaviour as unreasonable, for example, putting forward your case in a persuasive manner, so long as this does not overstep the line into one of the bulleted behaviours stated above.

### **1.2. Unreasonable requests and communication**

1.2.1. Requests may be considered unreasonable either by the nature and/or scale of service expected. Examples may include:

- Requesting a response within unreasonable timescales. [LTC will endeavour to acknowledge receipt within 48 hours wherever possible, but investigation of the details may take considerably longer, depending on the nature of the request.]
- Insisting on speaking with certain employees/officers/councillors (all matters should be directed via the Clerk in the first instance, who will route your request to an appropriate/available person)
- Adopting a "capture-all" or "scatter gun" approach by contacting many employees, councillors and third parties about the same issue (please refer to the above note and contact the Clerk as the first step)

1.2.2. Communication may be considered unreasonable if, for example, individuals or representatives of organisations:

- Continually contact us while we are in the process of looking at a matter
- Make a number of approaches about the same matter without raising new issues
- Refuse to accept a decision made where explanations for the decision have been given
- Continue to pursue complaints/issues which have no substance
- Continue to pursue complaints/issues which have already been investigated and determined
- Continue to raise unfounded or new complaints arising from the same set of facts

### **1.3. Unreasonable communication through social media**

1.3.1. Social media is a rapidly changing area of technology that many parish councils are using to build relationships with new and existing customers/residents. However, this form of communication can sometimes be used to bully and harass employees and councillors. All social media users should adopt the same level of courtesy used when communicating via email, telephone or face to face.

1.3.2. If a member of the public posts a message that may cause offence - or is otherwise unsuitable - about an employee or councillor, the parish council will do its best to have that post removed from the social media site.

1.3.3. When social media is used inappropriately (e.g. cyber bullying), we will try to identify the offender, take steps to remove the offending material from view and, where appropriate, initiate action against the offender.

1.3.4. Inappropriate content includes:

- Pornography
- Racial or religious slurs
- Gender-specific comments
- Information encouraging criminal or terrorism activity
- Threats, abuse or personal comments which may be regarded as defamatory
- This definition of inappropriate content or material also covers any text, images or other media that could reasonably offend someone on the grounds of race, age, sex, religious or political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or any other characteristic protected by law (see also EGPC's Equal Opportunities Policy).

#### **1.4. How we will manage unreasonable behaviour**

- 1.4.1. All parish council employees and councillors have the authority to manage unreasonable behaviour. The parish council has a zero-tolerance position on physical violence, verbal abuse, threats or harassment against our employee and councillors. Any personal assault against its employees or councillors will be reported to the police, who may decide to prosecute.
- 1.4.2. The decision to invoke this policy and place restrictions on an individual will be taken by the Chairman or in his or her absence, the Vice Chairman. If the complaint relates to an issue of Councillor conduct, it will be referred to the Herefordshire Council Monitoring Officer.
- 1.4.3. For individuals whose behaviour has been found to be unreasonable, LTC has developed a list of possible ways in which their contact with us can be managed or restricted. The options found in Section 3 may be applied as appropriate.
- 1.4.4. In all cases, the parish council will only place restrictions on an individual if we have informed them their behaviour is unreasonable and have asked them to modify it. We will explain what action will be taken if the warning is ignored. If they fail to modify their behaviour, we will take steps to restrict their communications/contact with us.
- 1.4.5. If we decide a restriction is appropriate, we will consider which of the options best fits the circumstances. The level of restriction that we apply will be proportionate, taking into account the nature, extent and impact of the unreasonable behaviour.
- 1.4.6. We will be transparent and will write to the individual to explain what restriction we are putting in place, our reasons for doing so, and how long the restriction will apply.
- 1.4.7. The restrictions will be in place for a minimum period of 3 months and the review period can be on a 3, 6 or 12 monthly basis. The individual will be informed of the review date in the original explanatory letter.



## **Section 2: Vexatious or Persistent Complainants**

### **2.1. Clarification**

- 2.1.1. An individual can only be described as “vexatious or persistent” if they demonstrate unreasonable behaviour while making (or having made) a formal complaint through our Complaints Procedure.
- 2.1.2. Dealing with a complaint is usually a straightforward process but, in a minority of cases, people pursue their complaints in a way which can either impede the investigation of their complaint or can have significant resource issues for the council. This can happen either while their complaint is being investigated or once the parish council has finished dealing with the complaint.

### **2.2. How we deal with complaints**

- 2.2.1. We are committed to dealing with all complaints equitably, comprehensively, and in a timely manner.
- 2.2.2. As stated above, complaints regarding the conduct of elected members are dealt with by the Monitoring Officer at Herefordshire Council.

### **2.3. What do we mean by unreasonable behaviour?**

- 2.3.1. Unacceptable behaviour is defined above (section 1.1) and can be applied to complainants going through the formal complaints process.
- 2.3.2. We will not normally limit the contact which complainants have with parish council employees or councillors; however we do not expect employees or councillors to tolerate unacceptable behaviour by complainants.
- 2.3.3. We will act to protect employees from unreasonable behaviour. If a complainant behaves in a way that is unreasonably persistent or vexatious, we will follow this policy, which may include invoking one or more of the options detailed in section 3.
- 2.3.4. Raising legitimate queries or criticisms of a complaints procedure as it progresses (for example if agreed timescales are not met) should not in itself lead to someone being regarded as a vexatious or unreasonably persistent complainant.
- 2.3.5. Similarly, the fact that a complainant is unhappy with the outcome of a complaint and seeks to challenge it once, or more than once, should not necessarily cause him or her to be labelled vexatious or unreasonably persistent.

## 2.4. Definitions

- 2.4.1. We have adopted the Local Government Ombudsman's (LGO) definition of ***"unreasonable complainant behaviour"*** and ***"unreasonable persistent complaints"***.
- 2.4.2. We define unreasonably persistent and vexatious complainants as those complainants who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the council, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints. The description "unreasonably persistent" and "vexatious" may apply separately or jointly to a particular complainant.
- 2.4.3. Examples include the way or frequency that complainants raise their complaint with employees, or how complainants respond when informed of our decision about the complaint.
- 2.4.4. Features of an unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious complainant include the following (the list is not exhaustive, nor does one single feature on its own necessarily imply that the person will be considered as being in this category):

### **An unreasonably persistent and/or vexatious complainant may:**

- Have insufficient or no grounds for their complaint and be making the complaint only to annoy (or for reasons that he or she does not admit or make obvious)
- Refuse to specify the grounds of a complaint despite offers of assistance
- Refuse to co-operate with the complaints investigation process while still wishing their complaint to be resolved
- Refuse to accept that issues are not within the remit of the complaints policy and procedure despite having been provided with information about the scope of the policy and procedure (e.g. planning decisions)
- Refuse to accept that issues are not within the power of the parish council to investigate, change or influence (examples could be a complaint about something the parish council is not empowered to do or something that is the responsibility of another organisation)
- Make what appear to be groundless complaints about the employee or councillors dealing with the complaints and seek to have them replaced
- Make an unreasonable number of contacts with us, by any means, in relation to a specific complaint or complaints
- Make persistent and unreasonable demands or expectations of employees, councillors and/or the complaints process after the unreasonableness has been explained to the complainant (an example of this could be a complainant who insists on immediate responses to numerous, frequent and/or complex letters, faxes, telephone calls or emails)
- Harass or verbally abuse or otherwise seek to intimidate employees or councillors dealing with their complaint, by

- use of foul, inappropriate, offensive or racist language
- Raise subsidiary or new issues whilst a complaint is being addressed that were not part of the complaint at the start of the complaint process
- Introduce trivial or irrelevant new information whilst the complaint is being investigated and expect this to be taken into account and commented on
- Change the substance or basis of the complaint without reasonable justification whilst the complaint is being addressed
- Deny statements he or she made at an earlier stage in the complaint process
- Electronically record meetings and conversations without the prior knowledge and consent of the other person involved
- Adopt an excessively “scatter gun” approach, for instance, pursuing a complaint not only with the council, but at the same time with the County Council, a Member of Parliament, other councils, elected councillors of this and other councils, the police, solicitors and the Local Government Ombudsman
- Refuse to accept the outcome of the complaint process after its conclusion, repeatedly arguing the point, complaining about the outcome, and/or denying that an adequate response has been given
- Make the same complaint repeatedly, perhaps with minor differences, after the Complaints Procedure has been concluded, and insist that the minor differences make these new complaints which should be put through the full Complaints Procedure
- Persistently approach the council through different routes about the same issue
- Persist in seeking an outcome which we have explained is unrealistic for legal or policy (or other valid) reasons
- Refuse to accept documented evidence as factual
- Complain about or challenge an issue based on a historic and irreversible decision or incident
- Combine some or all of these features
- Insist on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the Complaints Procedure or with good practice.

## **2.5. How we will manage vexatious or persistent complainants**

- 2.5.1. The Clerk will bring to the attention of the Chairman (or Vice Chairman) if a complainant is becoming persistent or vexatious. If appropriate, the matter will be referred to the Parish Council's Resources Committee for review. When a decision has been taken to apply this policy, a warning letter will be sent to the complainant that unless the behaviour changes the policy will be invoked.
- 2.5.2. If the behaviour persists, the Resources Committee may take the decision to make the individual a vexatious complainant. The Chairman (or Vice Chairman) will contact the complainant in writing

to explain:

- Why we have taken the decision
- What action we are taking (see the list of options in section 3)
- The duration of that action
- The review process of this policy
- The right of the complainant to contact the Local Government Ombudsman about the fact that they have been treated as a vexatious/persistent complainant

2.5.3. The Chairman (or Vice Chairman) will enclose a copy of this policy in the letter to the complainant.

2.5.4. Where a complainant continues to behave in a way which is unacceptable, the Chairman (or Vice Chairman), following consultation with the Resources Committee, may decide to refuse all contact with the complainant and stop any investigation into his or her complaint.

2.5.5. Where the behaviour is so extreme or it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of our employees or councillors, we will consider other options, for example reporting the matter to the police or taking legal action. In such cases, we may not give the complainant prior warning of such action.

## **2.6. New complaints from complainants who are treated as abusive, vexatious or persistent**

2.6.1. New complaints from people who have come under this policy will be treated on their merits. The Chairman (or Vice Chairman), in consultation with the Resources Committee, will decide whether any restrictions applied previously are still appropriate and necessary in relation to the new complaint. We do not accept a "blanket approach" of ignoring genuine complaints where they are founded.

2.6.2. The fact that a complainant is judged to be unreasonably persistent or vexatious, and any restrictions imposed on our contact with him or her, will be recorded and notified to those who need to know within the parish council.

## **2.7. Review**

2.7.1. The status of a complainant judged to be unreasonably persistent or vexatious will be reviewed by the Resources Committee after three months and at the end of every subsequent three months within the period during which the policy is to apply.

2.7.2. The complainant will be informed of the result of this review if the decision to apply this policy to them has been changed or extended.



## **2.8. Referring unreasonably persistent or vexatious complainants to the Local Government Ombudsman**

- 2.8.1. In some cases, relations between parish councils and unreasonably persistent or vexatious complainants break down completely while complaints are under investigation and there is little prospect of achieving a satisfactory outcome. In such circumstances, there may be little purpose in following all the stages of the Complaints Procedure. Where this occurs, the Ombudsman may be prepared to consider a complaint before the procedure has run its course.

### **Section 3: Options to Restrict and Manage Contact**

If individuals continue to behave unreasonably after we have asked them to modify their behaviour, the options we will consider are:

#### **Option 1:**

Requiring you to contact a named employee(s) only (single point of contact or "SPOC"), usually the Clerk unless this is inappropriate in which case another councillor will be nominated.

#### **Option 2:**

Restricting contact (whether via telephone, face to face, or digital) to specified places, days and times, as agreed with you.

#### **Option 3:**

Terminating contact if you persistently raise issues to which we have already responded in full, no matter how these contacts are made (e.g. phone, digital, letter). If we believe a pseudonym is being used, we will seek to confirm the true identity.

#### **Option 4:**

Terminating contact if you are aggressive, rude, abusive or offensive. As in Option 3, if we believe a pseudonym is being used, we will seek to confirm the true identity.

#### **Option 5:**

If you have threatened our employees or councillors with physical violence be it verbal, face to face, in writing or in any other form, we may place a warning marker on any electronic records management system where we hold your records. In addition, the Police will be informed.

#### **Option 6:**

Restricting the issues we will correspond on.

#### **Option 7:**

If you send us a large volume of **irrelevant** documentation, we may return these documents to you and will advise you that further irrelevant documents will be destroyed.



**Option 8:**

If we have already fully explained our reasons for a decision and you have exhausted the procedure to request a review of that decision, we will decline to respond to further correspondence, which fails to raise new issues.

**Option 9:**

We will not respond to correspondence (e.g. letter or e-mail) which is abusive or offensive, other than to advise the Vexatious Complaints policy is being invoked. If the material in question is considered to break the law, it will be passed on to the police accordingly.

**Option 10:**

If you make a large number of reports to us which prove to be unfounded, we may ask that in future any further allegations you submit are supported by an independent third party such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, a legal representative or an advocate, to ensure that our employee resources are used in an appropriate way.

**Option 11:**

If you post derogatory, defamatory, offensive or threatening remarks on social media we will ask the site to remove them and try to block your account. We may also reserve the right to refer the matter to the police.

**Section 4: Record Keeping and Monitoring of those Subject to the Vexatious Complaints Policy**

4.1. In accordance with our Data Protection and Retention Policies, adequate records will be retained by the Clerk concerning the details of the case and the action that has been taken where this policy has been invoked. Standard information recorded for all complainants will include:

- The name and address of each person who is treated as abusive, vexatious or persistent and is being managed under this policy
- The name and address of anyone that has been identified as potentially violent towards our staff or parish councillors will be assigned a warning marker on our records management system
- When the restriction came into force and ends
- What the restrictions are
- When the complainant was advised

