



UNREASONABLY PERSISTENT / VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS POLICY

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What are unreasonably persistent or vexatious contacts / complaints?

Knapton Parish Council is committed to handling complaints and communications from residents in a transparent, fair, and consistent manner.

While most contacts are handled smoothly, a small number of individuals, through the frequency, nature, or tone of their communications, may negatively impact the Council's ability to function effectively. These individuals may be deemed unreasonably persistent or vexatious under this policy.

Unreasonably persistent or vexatious complaints may:

- Lack serious purpose or value.
- Be designed to disrupt, annoy, or harass.
- Be obsessive, unreasonable, or harassing in nature.

Examples of Unreasonably Persistent or Vexatious Behaviour

Complainants may be deemed unreasonably persistent or vexatious if they:

- Refuse to specify grounds of complaint.
- Make groundless accusations against staff or councillors.
- Simultaneously raise the same complaint with multiple authorities (e.g. District/County Councillors, MP, Ombudsman).
- Change the basis of the complaint mid-process or deny earlier statements.
- Raise trivial or irrelevant issues and demand detailed responses.
- Record meetings or calls without consent.
- Make excessive demands on staff time or Council resources.
- Send high volumes of communications across multiple channels.
- Persist after complaints have been fully addressed.
- Refuse to accept outcomes or remit limitations.
- Engage the Council repeatedly about matters it has no jurisdiction over.
- Demonstrate an intent to disrupt rather than resolve.

Disagreeing with an outcome is not in itself grounds to label a complainant as vexatious.

Implementing this Policy

This policy will be applied only as a last resort, after all reasonable efforts to address concerns have been exhausted.

Before applying the policy:

- The Council will ensure the complainant has been adequately informed.
- A written warning letter will be issued, explaining that continued behaviour may trigger this policy.

The policy may only be applied following formal approval by the full Council.

Aggressive or Abusive Behaviour

Abuse, threats, or violence towards councillors, staff, or their families will not be tolerated.

Any such conduct will:

- Be recorded.
- Be reported to the police.
- Result in immediate restriction of contact (e.g. written-only communication).

Contact Restrictions

Depending on the nature and extent of the behaviour, the Council may:

- Require written contact only.
- Appoint a single point of contact.
- Limit communications to a defined frequency.
- Refuse to address repeated issues already concluded.

The complainant will receive:

- A written explanation of restrictions.
- A copy of this policy.
- Details of the restriction duration and review process.

Appeals

Complainants may appeal in writing within 15 days of receiving the decision, providing clear reasons for the appeal. Appeals should be sent to the Clerk of the Council.

Recording & Review

When applied:

- The policy's use will be recorded internally.
- Names may be withheld from public records to protect privacy.
- New communications will be reviewed for new, relevant content.

Restrictions may be lifted if the complainant demonstrates a change in behaviour.