

EAST PECKHAM PARISH COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS POLICY

Policy on dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints

East Peckham Parish Council attempts to always work in an open and accountable way. However it is recognised that there might be complaints against Parish Councillors but in order to be fair to individual members the Parish Council will not publicly acknowledge such a complaint until the independent Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Monitoring Officer decides that there is a case to investigate. The Parish Council has no control over what the complainant makes public however it will take no action that interferes with the investigation or which will inflame the situation.

The East Peckham Parish Council procedure for dealing with notification of a complaint, from the Monitoring Officer, about a councillor is;

- On notification of a complaint the Chair* of the Parish Council will write a **confidential** briefing note to all councillors simply stating that Councillor X is the subject of a complaint to the Monitoring Officer. In the interests of fairness the issue/complaint will not be discussed at any Parish Council meeting.
- If the decision is to take no further action then the Chair* of the Parish Council will write a **confidential** briefing note to all councillors stating no further action is being taken. The issue/complaint will not be discussed at any Parish Council meeting and it is up to Councillor X whether he/she wishes to have the complaint acknowledged publicly as unfounded.
- On receipt of notification, from the Monitoring Officer, that there has been a decision to further investigate the complaint, the Chair* of the Parish Council will again write a **confidential** briefing note to all councillors stating that the complaint is being investigated further. The issue/complaint will not be discussed at any Parish Council meeting however the Chair* and Deputy Chair* will draft a press release in case the complaint becomes public. The press release will stick to the facts and not comment on the actual complaint.
- If the decision is to take no further action then the Chair* of the Parish Council will write a **confidential** briefing note to all councillors stating no further action is being taken.
- On notification that the Monitoring Officer considers that there is substance to the complaint, which is when it is likely that the complaint will become public, the Chair* of the Parish Council will again write a briefing note to inform all councillors of the situation. Advice will be sought from the Monitoring Officer on whether the issue should be acknowledged as an item at the next Parish Council Meeting. The Parish Council (and individual councillors if approached) will stick to the facts and not comment on the actual complaint. The press release will be released if necessary.
- If necessary at the conclusion of the investigation the Parish Council will prepare another press release and acknowledge any decision taken by Monitoring Officer. A draft of this press release will be supplied to all councillors. If it is felt necessary an emergency Parish Council meeting will be arranged.

*or if necessary the Vice Chair or Clerk.

Note: If there is a recommendation from the Monitoring Officer that Councillor X or the Parish Council might require some training then the Parish Council will need to discuss generalities (i.e. need for and cost of training) but specifics of the complaint/decision will not be discussed