

# HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

## Code of Conduct Complaints Policy

This policy was adopted by Hunton Parish Council at the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

1. Hunton Parish Council attempts to always work in an open and accountable way. It is recognised that there might occasionally be complaints against individual Parish Councillors, but in order to be fair to Members, the Parish Council will not publicly acknowledge such a complaint until the independent Monitoring Officer at Maidstone Borough Council considers that there is a case to investigate.
2. On receipt of a complaint the Chairman of the Parish Council (or if necessary, the Vice Chair or Clerk) will write a **confidential** briefing note to all councillors stating that Councillor X is the subject of a complaint which has been referred to the MBC Monitoring Officer. In the interests of fairness, the issue/complaint will not be discussed at any Parish Council meeting.
3. If the Monitoring Officer decides to take no further action, then the Chairman of the Parish Council (or if necessary, the Vice Chair or Clerk) 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.
4. On notification from the Monitoring Officer that the complaint is being investigated further, the Chairman of the Parish Council (or if necessary, the Vice Chair or Clerk) 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 Chairman and Vice 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.
5. If the Monitoring Officer subsequently takes the decision that no further action will be taken, then the Chairman of the Parish Council (or if necessary, the Vice Chair or Clerk) will write a **confidential** briefing note to all councillors stating no further action is being taken.
6. On notification from the Monitoring Officer that there is substance to the complaint, the Chairman of the Parish Council (or if necessary, the Vice Chair or Clerk) 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 reviewed and released if necessary.
7. At the conclusion of the investigation the Parish Council will, if necessary, prepare another press release, acknowledging the decision of the 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.

\* Note: A decision/recommendation made by the Monitoring Officer might require the Parish Council to discuss generalities (ie the need for and cost of training) but specifics of the complaint/decision will not be discussed.