



## SARRATT PARISH COUNCIL

### POLICY AND PROCEDURES: UNREASONABLY PERSISTENT OR VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS

Sarratt Parish Council pursues a value of respect to all. In respect to this the Council does not tolerate bullying, harassment or intimidation, in any form, of any of their employees or Councillors. This applies to such behaviour from members of the public and Sarratt Parish Council employees / Councillors alike.

As a basis for defining behaviour the Council uses the following definitions:

**Bullying** – a pattern of offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting, humiliating behaviour intended to undermine an individual or group, gradually as a consequence, eroding their confidence and capability

**Harassment** – conduct that violates an individual, or groups, dignity.

Both of the above are unwanted by the recipient(s), examples being: spreading malicious rumours, ridiculing, deliberate undermining. Such behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated whether occurring in the form of repetitive visits to the Council office, public meetings, by telephone or any method of written communication (including emails and social media).

Sarratt Parish Council is committed to ensuring that, where applicable, all correspondence (in any form) is answered and that the best possible resolution is sought to any complaint brought. However, the nature of some complaints or the manner in which they are pursued – particularly where correspondence/communication transgresses the boundaries mentioned above – hinders the Council's consideration of them and can also have an adverse impact on the Council's response to complaints made by other complainants. In such cases the Council may resolve to terminate communication with the offender. Such cases will be deemed as an 'Unreasonably Persistent or Vexatious Complaint' (with those concerned being identified as 'Unreasonable Persistent Complainers') and Sarratt Parish Council view such actions as a form of harassment or bullying.

Any future correspondence from a person or persons in this category will be noted and filed with no acknowledgement. Where the behaviour of a person or persons attending a Council meeting falls into the above categories the person or persons involved will be requested to leave the meeting. Further repetition, or failure to leave upon request may necessitate the assistance of the police.

Complaints with regard to a new issue, so long as they do not deal with matters covered substantially by a previous closed complaint, will be treated on their merits and any restriction on contact will be reviewed as necessary.

Sarratt Parish Council acknowledges that extreme cases of harassment, bullying or intimidation can constitute a criminal offence and will where necessary seek to pursue such cases under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.

**Reviewed and adopted:            9 February 2021**