

PORLOCK PARISH COUNCIL

VEAXIOUS BEHAVIOUR POLICY



Purpose

This policy outlines how Porlock Parish Council 'the council' will identify and manages behaviour that is deemed vexatious or unreasonably persistent. It aims to protect staff and councillors from undue stress and ensure council resources are used effectively.

Vexatious Definition

Behaviour that causes disruption, annoyance, or distress, without reasonable grounds and or repeatedly raises the same issue or pursues unrealistic outcomes despite responses and resolutions.

Identifying Vexatious activity

Activity may be considered vexatious if it:

- Is abusive, aggressive, or uses offensive language.
- Contains unsubstantiated accusations.
- Is persistently repeated with minor variations.
- Demands disproportionate time and resources.
- Refuses to accept documented evidence or council decisions.
- Involves multiple simultaneous complaints to different bodies ("scattergun" approach).
- Harasses or intimidates staff or councillors.

Examples of Vexatious Behaviour

Repetitive

- Submitting the same issue repeatedly, even after it has been fully addressed and closed.
- Slightly altering the wording of a previous issue to reopen the issue.

Unreasonable Demands

- Insisting on unrealistic outcomes, such as demanding the resignation of councillors without valid grounds.
- Expecting immediate responses outside of council working hours.

Abusive or Aggressive Behaviour

- Using threatening, offensive, or defamatory language in communications.
- Harassing staff or councillors through repeated phone calls, emails, or social media posts.

Refusal to Accept Evidence or Decisions

- Ignoring documented evidence provided by the council.
- Refusing to accept a decision made after a fair and transparent process.

Multiple Issues to Different Bodies

- Simultaneously submitting the same issue to various external agencies (e.g., Ombudsman, MP, media) without allowing time for resolution.

Manipulative Tactics

- Misrepresenting facts or selectively quoting correspondence to support a false narrative.
- Attempting to involve unrelated third parties to escalate the issue unnecessarily.

Excessive Volume of Correspondence

- Sending large volumes of emails or letters, often repeating the same points.
- Demanding

Procedure

Initial Review

- The Clerk will assess the behaviour and consult with the Chair.
- A written warning may be issued, explaining concerns and requesting a change in behaviour.

Imposing Restrictions

If behaviour continues:

- The individual may be restricted to written communication only.
- Contact may be limited to a single point of contact.
- Telephone calls may be restricted to specific times or banned.
- Personal meetings may require a witness.
- The Council may refuse to respond to further correspondence on the issue.

Restrictions will be proportionate and reviewed quarterly.

Notification

The individual will be informed in writing of:

- The reasons for the decision.
- The nature and duration of restrictions.
- Their right to appeal.

Review and Appeal

- The individual may appeal in writing within 14 days.
- The council will review the appeal at the next full meeting.
- Restrictions may be lifted if behaviour improves.

Monitoring

The Clerk will maintain a log of vexatious behaviour and report to the council as needed.

Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in legislation or council operations.

Dated: 10th September 2025

Duncan McCanlis
Chair

Johnathan Jones
Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer