

## Stetchworth Parish Council

'Complaints Procedure governing any breach of the Code of Conduct which takes effect from 1 July 2012.

*Policy adopted by Stetchworth Parish Council 18.9.2012.*

*Note that complaints pertaining to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall be referred to the Police. The complainant shall be notified of this action and the Clerk shall also notify the Monitoring Officer of the complaint and the referral.*

### **General complaints regarding potential breach of the Code of Conduct:**

1. Any and all complaints regarding the conduct of a Councillor or Co-opted Member of a Committee or Sub-Committee, should be made in writing to the Parish Clerk (address & details).
2. Upon receipt of a written complaint the Clerk will advise the complainant that the Councillor(s) against whom the complaint(s) is made will be given 5 working days to offer a response and that response will be copied to the complainant within 24 hours of such receipt.
3. The complainant will be given 48 hours after this time, to consider the response and confirm to the Clerk whether the complainant is satisfied; or whether an additional letter of apology from the councillor(s) would resolve the matter; or whether further action is required.
4. If the complainant remains dissatisfied then the Clerk shall inform the Parish Chairman (or Vice-Chair if the Chairman is the subject of complaint) of the complaint and the Chairman/ or Vice Chairman shall instruct the Clerk to convene a meeting of the Complaints Committee within 10 working days.
5. The Complaints Committee shall comprise of a Chairman (not necessarily the Chairman of the Council but one appointed to the role by the Council); two other Town/ or Parish Councillors and two independent people with an understanding of the Code (such persons might be Town or Parish Councillors from neighbouring areas) who shall receive £50 (*or appropriate sum/expenses to be agreed by Parish*) each for their time/expenses.
6. The Complaints Committee shall deliberate impartially and decide whether or not there is a case to answer. If "no case to answer" the complainant shall be so advised by the

Clerk. If “a case to answer” then the Complaints Committee shall decide upon one or other of the following actions:

- A letter of apology or
- A letter of apology plus additional training

7. The outcome will be advised by the Clerk to both the complainant and to the Councillor(s) concerned who is/are deemed to have accepted it and expected to abide by the action(s), since this complaints procedure has been approved by the Parish Council. The complainant will still have the right to make a complaint to the District Council, but should note that any action by the Parish Council will be taken into account by the District Council in its decision on whether to take any further action on the complaint.