

# Hauxton Parish Council

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## **Policy for vexatious/repeated correspondence of the Parish Council**

This policy covers vexatious demands and/or repeated requests for information including Freedom of Information Act requests.

Under this policy, the Council or the Clerk to Council will consider repeated requests for information or variations of the same request, on a single issue, to be vexatious and unacceptable where the Council has already answered the request. Where excessive use of the Council's, or Clerk to the Council's time is being made in dealing with such requests no response will be made except to inform the person making such request that the requirement is unreasonable.

Taking into consideration the context and history of a request, a decision as to whether it is vexatious will be made on one or more of the following criteria:

- Can the request be fairly seen as obsessive?
- Is the request harassing the Council?
- Would complying with the request impose a significant burden?
- Is the request designed to cause disruption or annoyance?
- Does the request lack serious purpose or value?

Where the communication of the requester is considered vexatious, he/she will be informed and given the grounds for such decision.

If the conduct or correspondence of the requester or group of persons acting together is considered vexatious, the Council may refuse to respond to communications from that person or group of persons for a specified period of time or limit the amount of correspondence from them that will be dealt with.

Timescales at the discretion of the Council or Clerk to the Council\* after consultation with Chairman or Vice Chairman

1 Month  
3 Months  
6 Months

\* Where known persons are repeating requests the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman or Vice Chairman may impose the timescales.

A letter template is appended.

This policy was adopted at the Annual Meeting of Hauxton Parish Council on 11 May 2016.

Dear

I refer to your correspondence/meetings/contact <delete as appropriate> with the Parish Council over the last few weeks/months/years <delete as appropriate>. The matter(s) you continue to raise, has either been dealt with or are not within the Parish Council's remit and therefore no further correspondence on this topic will be forthcoming from the Parish Council from this date onwards.

I would advise you that the Information Commissioner's guidance on defining whether those requests are vexatious has been applied and found to meet the guidance. Therefore, further requests will not receive a response.

That guidance recommends that the following questions be considered, taking into account the context and history of the request, and the Council's decision has been based on this guidance:

- Can the request be fairly seen as obsessive?
- Is the request harassing the Council?
- Would complying with the request impose a significant burden?
- Is the request designed to cause disruption or annoyance?
- Does the request lack serious purpose or value?

In addition, the wider context and history of the request has been taken into account when considering the questions. A request may not be vexatious in isolation, but when considered in context (for example if it is the latest in a long series of overlapping requests or other correspondence) it may form part of a wider pattern of behaviour that makes it vexatious.

I therefore advise you that any communication relating to these matters will not be replied to.

Yours sincerely