

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE HEARINGS PANEL

4 April 2022

A complaint alleging that Councillor Sam England, a member of Goxhill Parish Council, breached Goxhill Parish Council's Code of Conduct.

Monitoring Officer's Summary

1. The Complaint

The complaint comprises four separate complaints that were consolidated into one complaint.

The complainants for each complaint are as follows:

Complaint 1 submitted by Miss Vicky Haines on 18 November 2020 and Complaint 3 submitted on 18 February 2021.

Complaint 2 submitted by Cllr Gathercole on 12 January 2021

Complaint 4 submitted by Cllr Dunkley on 23 February 2021.

The subject member in each complaint was Cllr Sam England of Goxhill Parish Council.

The complaints were considered by the Monitoring Officer and Assessment Panels of the Standards Committee on 14 January 2021, 16 February 2021 and 25 March 2021. In summary, the complaints alleged that at various meetings of Goxhill Parish Council and in correspondence, Cllr England behaved in such a way towards Miss Haines, who is the clerk to Goxhill Parish Council, that Cllr England breached paragraph 3.1 (failure to treat with respect) and paragraph 3.2 (bullying or intimidatory behaviour) of Goxhill Parish Council's Code of Conduct.

The Monitoring Officer and Assessment Panels determined that the complaints should be consolidated and referred for investigation.

Matthew Nundy and Katy Hague were duly appointed as the Investigating Officers by the Monitoring Officer.

2. Investigating Officers' Report

The Investigating Officers have completed their investigation and submitted their report.

In summary the Investigating Officers do not uphold:

Complaint 1 submitted by Miss Vicky Haines on 18 November 2020

Complaint 2 submitted by Cllr Gathercole on 12 January 2021

Complaint 4 submitted by Cllr Dunkley on 23 February 2021.

The Investigating Officers do uphold:

Complaint 3 submitted by Miss Vicky Haines on 18 February 2021 and find that Cllr England breached paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 of the Goxhill Parish Council Code of Conduct.

The Investigating Officers have set out their rationale at sections 8 and 9 of their report.

3. Pre-Hearing

In preparation for the hearing before the Hearings Panel, the complainants and Cllr England have been provided with a copy of the Investigating Officers' report. The matter was not considered appropriate for informal resolution.

Cllr England has confirmed that he does wish to contest the findings of the Investigating Officers in relation to Complaint 3 and accordingly the hearing of this matter will be dealt with in accordance with the contested hearings procedure detailed in the Council's Standards Arrangements.

4. **Key Factors**

Whether Cllr England did breach paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 of the Goxhill Parish Council Code of Conduct in an exchange of emails between himself and Miss Haines as detailed in Miss Haines' complaint submitted on 18 February 2021.

5. **Procedure**

The procedure to be followed by the Hearings Panel is enclosed with the agenda.

The Panel should note that its powers are purely recommendatory given that this matter concerns the conduct of a parish councillor.

Will Bell
Monitoring Officer
21 March 2022