

Case Summary - Eythorne Parish Council (Dover)

Case no. SFE-000140
Member(s): Councillor Wendy Hansell
Date received: 20 Dec 2010
Date completed: 23 Mar 2011

Allegation:

The member failed to treat others with respect and bullied someone. The member prevented a person from having access to information to which they were entitled by law

Standards Board outcome:

The ethical standards officer found that the member did not breach the Code of Conduct

Case Summary

It was alleged that Councillor Wendy Hansell made a complaint against the clerk in an attempt to discredit her and then lied about having done so.

It was also alleged that Councillor Wendy Hansell became acting chair of the Council despite having previously resigned from her position as vice-chair and that she failed to give the clerk information about the whereabouts and security of the clerk's confidential personnel file.

The Ethical Standards Officer found that Councillor Wendy Hansell had expressed concerns about the clerk's performance to the chair of the Council. Without commenting on the veracity of Councillor Hansell's concerns, the Ethical Standards Officer considered that Councillor Hansell acted reasonably. The Ethical Standards Officer saw no evidence to support the allegation that Councillor Hansell was deliberately trying to discredit the clerk or that she subsequently lied about the matter.

The Ethical Standards Officer found that although Councillor Hansell had submitted her resignation as vice-chair prior to the chair of the Council's own resignation, the chair had not accepted it and it had been agreed to discuss the matter at a later date. The Ethical Standards Officers was satisfied that Councillor Wendy Hansell's decision to subsequently take on the role of acting chair following the chair's resignation was reasonable and in the interest of the Council. Having done so, the Ethical Standards Officer considered that Councillor Hansell could not be held

personally responsible for not being able to provide the clerk with a copy of her personnel file.

The Ethical Standards Officer considered that Councillor Wendy Hansell's had not failed to comply with Eythorne Parish Council's code of conduct

Relevant paragraphs of the Code of Conduct

Paragraph 3:

“(1) You must treat others with respect.

(2) You must not...

(b) bully any person”.

Paragraph 4 of the Code includes:

“You must not: b) prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.”

27 May 2011