

Cases Considered in 2021

1. Comments were made by one Member about another Member in relation to a matter that was not the business of the District Council. It was concluded that this was a private matter and therefore the Members Code of Conduct did not apply.
2. One Member commented about another Member's Planning Application in polite language. The Standards Panel concluded that the Code of Conduct did apply to this posting given it was talking about a Mid Sussex District Council matter. While they concluded it was not a breach of the Members Code of Conduct, the majority felt that the posting was ill judged.
3. There were complaints from one Member of a Parish Council against another Member of a Parish Council some twelve months after the event that money had been expended without Council authority albeit this had been sought and given retrospectively. The Committee noted an apparent breakdown in relationships at the Parish Council which they had worked hard to repair. The Standards Panel noted that at the time the payments were made, there was no obvious person to authorise these payments and that the Councillor making the payments had made no financial gain. It was unwise for the Member to expose themselves in this way, but there was no finding of a breach of the Code of Conduct.
4. A member of the Public complained about a Councillor allegedly approaching her in an aggressive way about a land ownership/planning issue. The Member should have left the normal enforcement authorities to sort this matter out and not try to do so direct with the member of the Public. There was a potential breach of the Members Code of Conduct, but the Panel noted the Member had acknowledged that his involvement was wrong and had undertaken not to get involved further. They thought this was sufficient.
5. There was a complaint from a Member of a Parish Council against another Parish Councillor who had allegedly sung a racist song while the Parish meeting went into exempt. The Standards Panel accepted the Member who had sung the song had no knowledge of its modern racist connection and had not intended it to be racist. The singing of the song was a potential breach of the Code of Conduct given that it may bring the Councillor into disrepute but accepted that the Councillor now acknowledged his mistake and had offered a face-to-face apology to the complainant Member. They also noted that the other Councillors had closed down this issue very quickly at the meeting.