



OTTERY ST MARY TOWN COUNCIL RECEIPT OF ANONYMOUS CORRESPONDENCE OR WHEN THE WRITER ASKS FOR ANONYMITY PROCEDURE

Adopted on 7th January 2019

The Town Council shall carry out the following procedure on receipt of anonymous mail or when the writer asks for anonymity

1. The receipt of anonymous and / or malicious mail shall be recorded.
2. The records will be subject to review to identify any developing trends.
3. Such mail should be disregarded. However, it should be kept for evidence.
4. It should be brought to the attention of the Mayor and Chairman of the appropriate committee if it is considered that the accusation is so serious from a legal point of view that to do nothing would be tantamount to negligence. Such matters will be dealt with in the strictest confidence. The Mayor/Chairman of the committee will then decide on an appropriate method of dealing with that accusation such a referral to the Police if the accusation is contrary to the regulatory regime. Caution must be exercised when reacting to anonymous communications which appear to be malicious, potentially libellous or of an extremely personal nature.
5. If the mail is malicious in content, it should be referred to the Police in all instances.
6. If the contents are malicious and at a later date the sender of the mail is identified, the Council will insist that proceedings are instigated against the sender. The Council will give full support to the accused in the communication if the accusations are found to be untrue.
7. Such communications will be considered as **confidential** and will not be subject to the Freedom of Information Act and will not be subject to public scrutiny without the accused agreeing to such an action in writing
8. If a member of the public requires their personal details to remain confidential (i.e. not to be read out or referred to at a public meeting) then the member of the public should raise this with the Town Clerk at the time of writing their letter, by providing details of why they believe the Council should withhold their name. The member of the public may also verbally take their issue to the Town Clerk, or to a councillor (if they wish them to raise a particular issue on their behalf), in which they would like to personally remain anonymous. The Town Clerk in conjunction with the Mayor will decide as to whether to consent to requests of this nature
9. This policy will be reviewed periodically to check compliance with legislative changes which may occur in future.

