

North East Derbyshire District Council

Ethical Standards Survey 2014 Survey Results – Parish Councils

INTRODUCTION

North East Derbyshire District Council's Standards Committee wanted to identify what standards of conduct are being observed and to identify areas where further awareness raising and training are needed across four audiences: officers, district councillors, parish and town councillors and parish clerks. To gather this information a questionnaire was sent to everyone in these groups. The questionnaires were broadly the same in content with some adjustments as relevant to each sector. The questionnaire was also made available electronically via Survey Monkey and the link to this was on the paper version of the questionnaire and publicised via Nedi.

This report relates to the parish councillors and clerk segments only.

The questionnaires were mailed to all councillors and clerks on 14th February. The survey closed on Friday 30th May.

The total number mailed to **parish councillors** was 254, while **70** were returned completed; a response rate of 27.6%.

A total of 24 were mailed to **parish clerks** and **11** were received; a response rate of 46%.

Although the questionnaire was available both on paper and online the vast majority of those returned were completed in paper format.

This report presents the summary findings from the surveys aimed at parish councillors and clerks only. While the results are shown in percentages for consistency throughout the report the sample size of the parish clerk response is very small and extreme care should be taken when considering these results.

Four appendices are attached to the report, these provide:

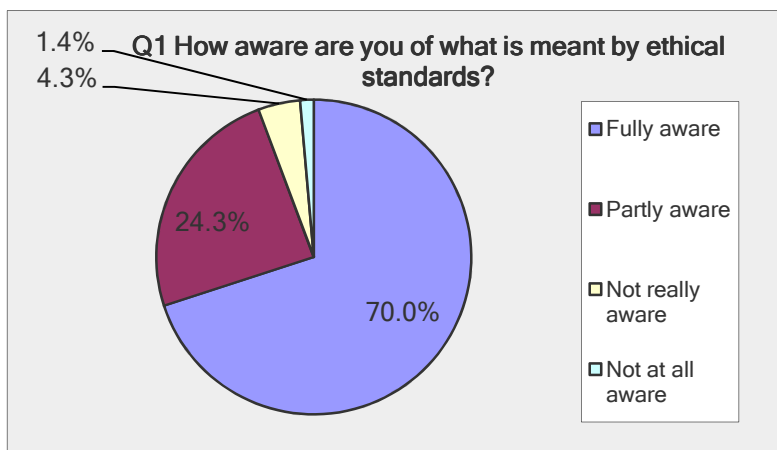
- Data tables (Appendix A)
- Comparison Tables (Appendix B)
- Analysis of open comments (Appendix C)
- Demographic profiles (Appendix D)

SURVEY FINDINGS

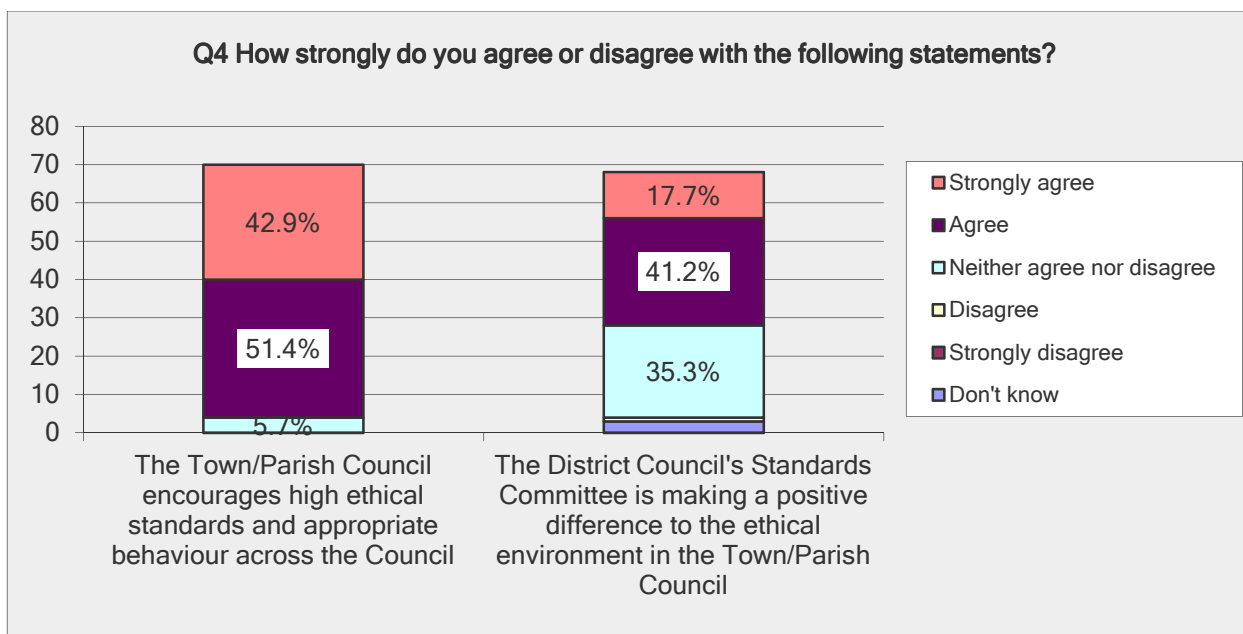
Survey Findings

1. Parish Councillors

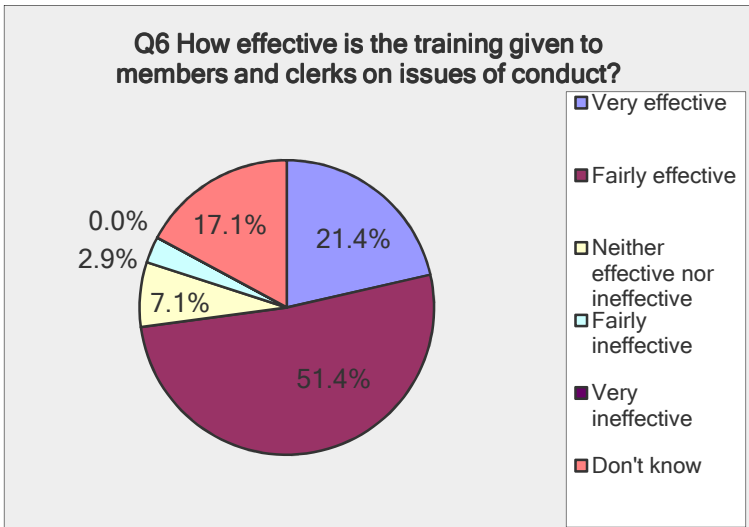
Almost all (94.3%) Parish Councillors are aware of what is meant by ethical standards, know where to find the Parish/Town Council's Members' Code of Conduct (91.4%) and are aware of how to report a breach or potential breach of the Code (80%).



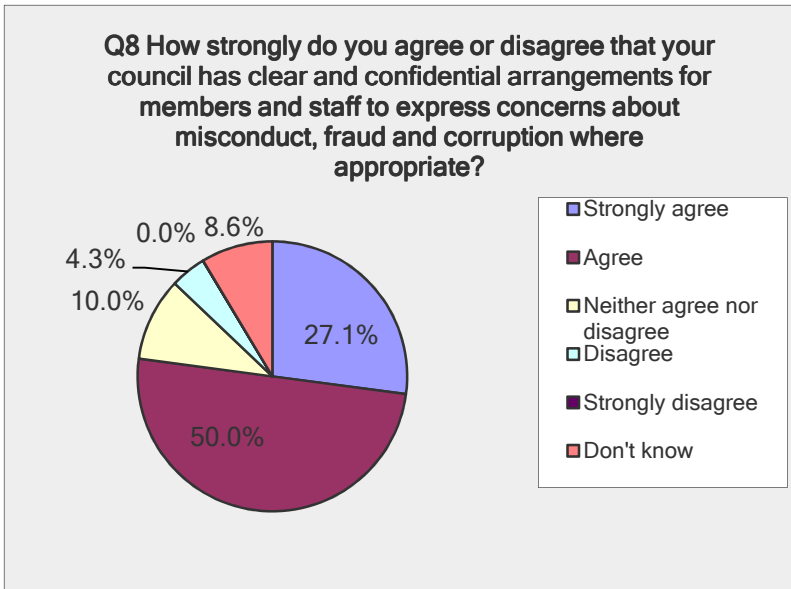
While almost all Parish Councillors who responded to the survey felt the Parish or Town Council encourages high ethical standards and appropriate behaviour across the Council (94.3%), only half (58.3%) agreed that the District Council's Standards Committee is making a positive difference to the ethical environment in the Town/Parish Council. There is a large proportion choosing the 'neither agree nor disagree' option to the later statement rather than disagreeing which would indicate a lack of knowledge or awareness.



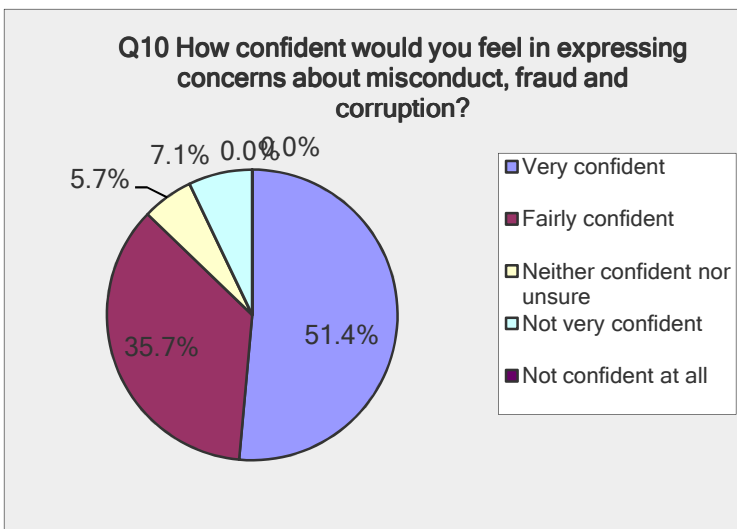
Training given to Clerks and Councillors on issues of conduct was felt to be effective by nearly three-quarters (72.8%) with 17.1% answering 'don't know'.



Around three-quarters (77.1%) agreed that their Council has clear and confidential arrangements for members and staff to express concerns and a similar proportion (78.6%) claimed to know where to find the policy and procedures for reporting misconduct, fraud and corruption.



Nine out of ten (87.1%) would feel confident in expressing concerns about misconduct, fraud and corruption. Similarly 84.2% feel confident that if they did report any suspicion that it would be properly dealt with.



A very small proportion (2.9%) had come across any examples of activity which would be considered to be fraudulent or corrupt within their working environment.

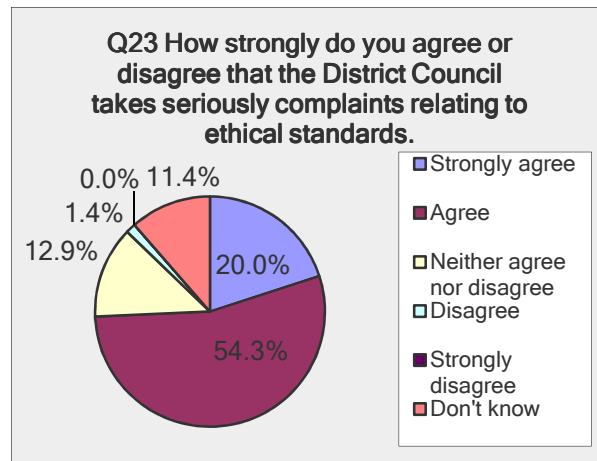
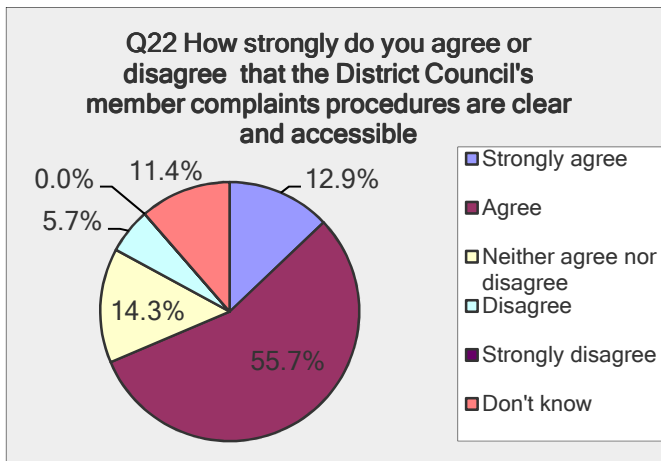
The questionnaire included three sets of statements with which recipients were asked to state how strongly they agree or disagreed.

There was a high level of agreement with almost all of the statements. The only statement with a high level of disagreement is 'There is a culture of bullying in the Council' (84.2%) which is the result one would hope to see.

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Answer Options	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
	%	%	%	%
I understand the differences between a Disclosable Pecuniary interest and other interests	82.9	10.0	2.9	4.3
I regularly record and update my relevant interests in the Council's Register of Members' interests	85.5	10.1	4.4	0
I am aware of the sorts of interests that should be included in the Register of Members' interests.	92.7	4.4	1.5	1.5
I am aware of the rules for registration of gifts and hospitality.	81.4	10.0	4.3	4.3
Members listen to the advice of the Clerk	97.1	2.9	0	0
Members treat all others fairly and without discrimination	85.5	7.3	7.3	0
Members perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity	86.8	7.4	5.9	0
The role of the District Council's Monitoring Officer is clear	67.2	21.4	7.1	4.3
The communication between Members is open and constructive	84.0	14.5	1.5	0
The communication between Members and Clerk is open and constructive	94.3	5.7	0	0
There is an atmosphere of trust in the Council between Members and the Clerk	92.8	4.3	2.9	0
There is a culture of bullying in the Council	2.8	11.4	84.2	1.4
The decision making by Members is transparent, objective and follows agreed procedures	94.2	4.4	1.5	0
Members are aware that they are accountable for their decisions and actions	97.2	1.4	1.4	0
Members are held accountable for their decisions and actions	91.3	5.8	2.9	0

The majority (68.6%) agreed that the District Council's member complaints procedures are clear and accessible and a similar proportion (64.3%) agreed that the District Council takes seriously complaints relating to ethical standards. There were very small proportions of disagreement with either statement.

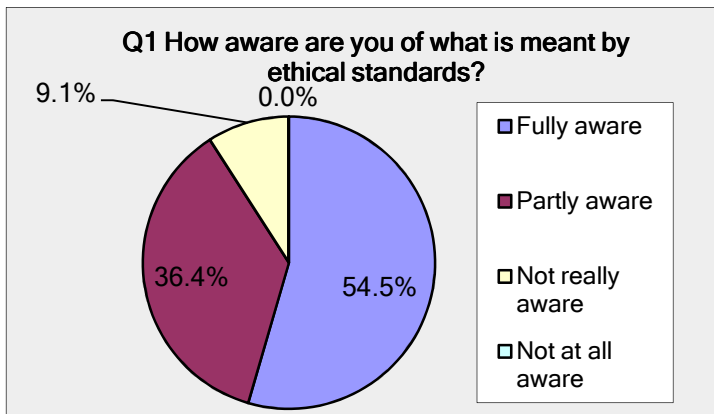


Survey Findings

2. Parish Clerks

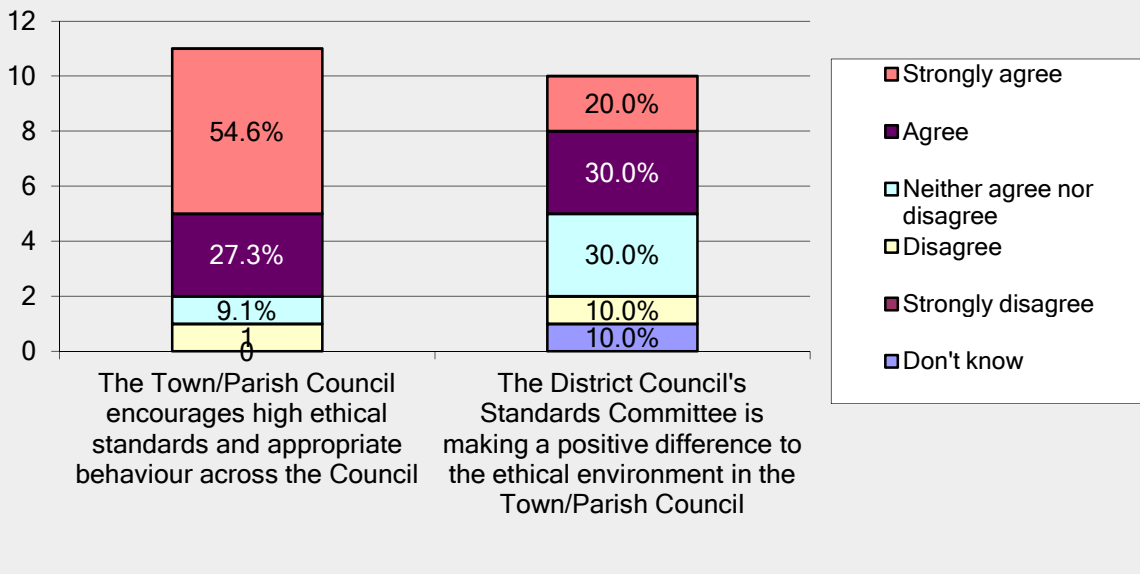
The questionnaire for Parish Clerks was very similar to that for Parish Councillors. Figures are shown in percentages for consistency with the rest of the report but it should be remembered that the base for this audience is very small at 11 respondents.

Almost all (90.9%) Parish Clerks who responded claimed to be aware of what is meant by ethical standards and the same proportion claims to know where to find the Town or Parish Council's Members' Code of Conduct and how to report a breach or potential breach of the Code.



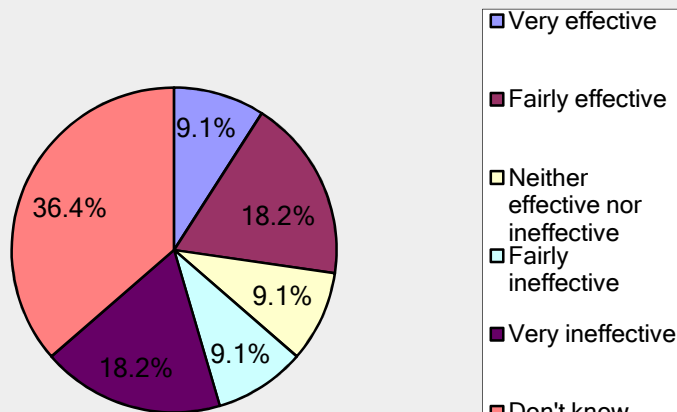
While the majority of Parish Clerks who responded to the survey felt the Parish or Town Council encourages high ethical standards and appropriate behaviour across the Council (81.9%), only half (50.0%) agreed that the District Council's Standards Committee is making a positive difference to the ethical environment in the Town/Parish Council. There is a large proportion choosing the 'neither agree nor disagree' option to the later statement rather than disagreeing which combined with the proportion stating 'don't know' would indicate a lack of knowledge or awareness.

Q4 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Training given to Clerks and Councillors on issues of conduct was felt to be effective by only a quarter (27.3%) with a third (36.4%) answering 'don't know'.

Q6 How effective is the training given to members and clerks on issues of conduct?



Responses to the open question which followed would also indicate a lack of training opportunities or awareness of training amongst some of the sample.

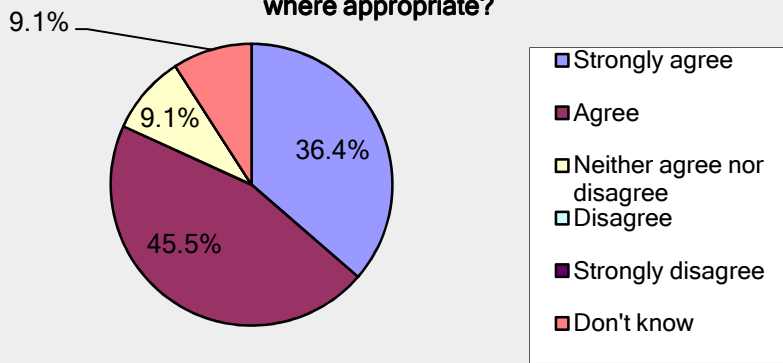
“No training has been given to date”

“To my knowledge Members and Clerks have received no training on issues of conduct.”

“Not sure there has been any training on these areas. They have been briefly raised at District and Parish Liaison meetings.”

The majority of the small sample (81.9%, 9 people) agreed that their Council has clear and confidential arrangements for members and staff to express concerns.

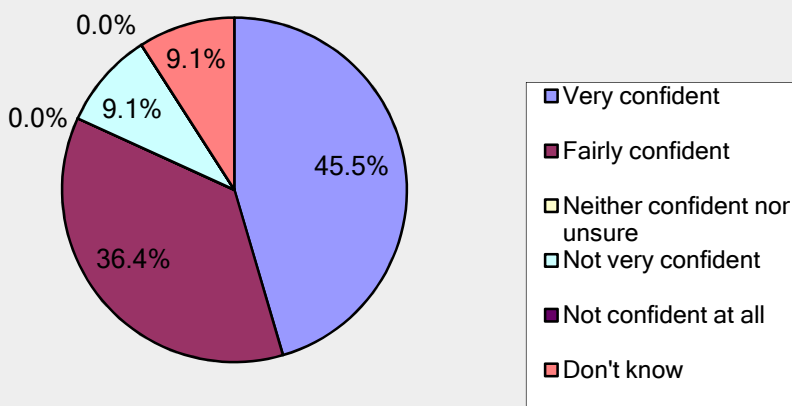
Q8 How strongly do you agree or disagree that the Parish or Town Council has clear and confidential arrangements for members and staff to express concerns about misconduct, fraud and corruption where appropriate?



Almost two-thirds (63.6%, 7 people) claimed to know where to find the policy and procedures – a third did not (36.4%, 4 people).

Most (90.9%, 10 people) would feel confident in expressing concerns about misconduct, fraud and corruption and that if they did report any suspicion it would be properly dealt with (81.9%, 9 people).

Q12 How confident would you feel if you did report any suspicion of fraud and/or corruption that it would be properly dealt with?



No Parish Clerks who responded had come across any examples of activity which they would consider to be fraudulent or corrupt within their working environment in the last 12 months.

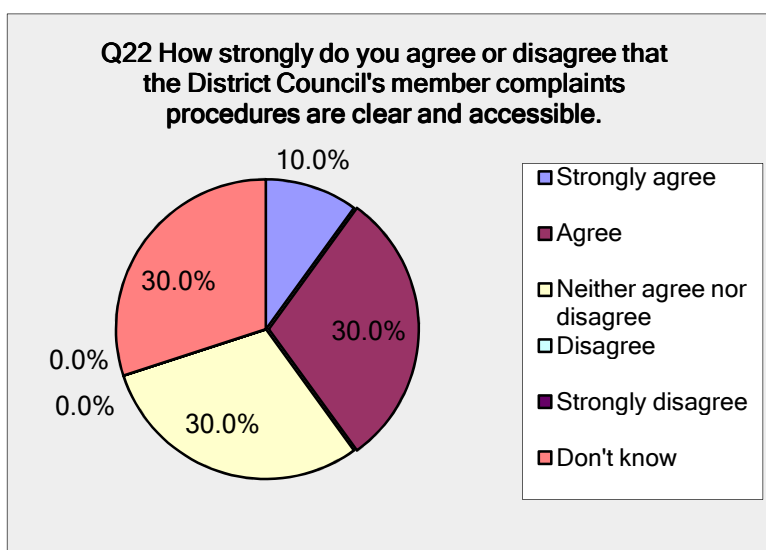
The questionnaire included three sets of statements with which recipients were asked to state how strongly they agree or disagree.

There was a high level of agreement with all of the statements, although slightly lower for “I understand the role of the District Council’s Monitoring Officer”. The only statement with a high level of disagreement is ‘There is a culture of bullying in the Council’ (90.9%).

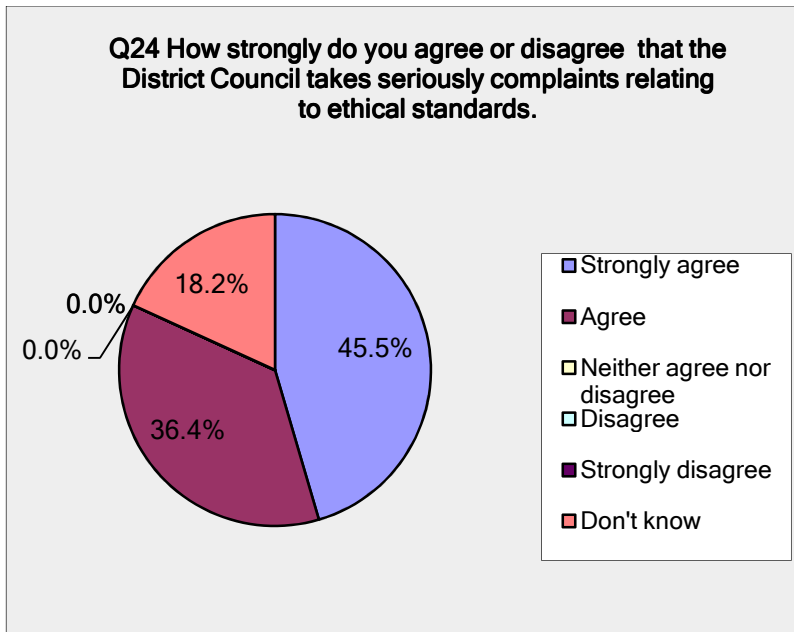
Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Answer Options	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
	%	%	%	%
I understand the differences between a Disclosable Pecuniary interest and other interests	81.9	9.1	9.1	0
I am aware that I must declare any personal interests that conflict with the Council's interests.	90.9	9.1	0	0
I am aware of the sorts of interests that should be included in the Register of Members' interests.	91.0	0	9.1	0
I am aware of the rules for registration of gifts and hospitality.	91.0	0	9.1	0
Members listen to the advice of the Clerk	91.0	9.1	0	0
Members treat all others fairly and without discrimination	91.0	9.1	0	0
Members perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity	81.9	18.2	0	0
I understand the role of the District Council's Monitoring Officer	72.8	18.2	9.1	0
The communication between Members is open and constructive	100.1	0	0	0
The communication between Members and Clerk is open and constructive	100.1	0	0	0
There is an atmosphere of trust in the Council between Members and the Clerk	81.8	18.2	0	0
There is a culture of bullying in the Council	0	9.1	90.9	0
The decision making by Members is transparent, objective and follows agreed procedures	100.0	0	0	0
Members are aware that they are accountable for their decisions and actions	100.1	0	0	0
Members are held accountable for their decisions and actions	91.0	0	0	9.1

There was a polarisation of opinion around whether the District Council's member complaints procedures are clear and accessible with 40% (4 people) agreeing, and 60% (6 people) either responding 'don't know' or choosing the 'neither/nor option'.



The majority (81.9%, 9 people) agreed that the District Council takes seriously complaints relating to ethical standards.



Data Tables

Parish Councillors

Q1 How aware are you of what is meant by ethical standards?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Fully aware	70.0%	49
Partly aware	24.3%	17
Not really aware	4.3%	3
Not at all aware	1.4%	1
<i>answered question</i>		70
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q2 Do you know where to find the Parish or Town Council's Members' Code of Conduct?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	91.4%	64
No	8.6%	6
<i>answered question</i>		70
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q3 Are you aware of how to report a breach or potential breach of the Members' Code of Conduct?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	80.0%	56
No	20.0%	14
<i>answered question</i>		70
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q4 How strongly would you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
The Town/Parish Council encourages high ethical standards and appropriate behaviour across the Council	42.9	51.4	5.7	0	0	0
The District Council's Standards Committee is making a positive difference to the ethical environment in the Town/Parish Council	17.7	41.2	35.3	1.5	0	4.4
<i>answered question</i>						70
<i>skipped question</i>						0

Q6 How effective is the training given to members and clerks on issues of conduct?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very effective	21.4%	15
Fairly effective	51.4%	36
Neither effective nor ineffective	7.1%	5
Fairly ineffective	2.9%	2
Very ineffective	0.0%	0
Don't know	17.1%	12
	<i>answered question</i>	70
	<i>skipped question</i>	0

Q8 How strongly do you agree or disagree that your council has clear and confidential arrangements for members and staff to express concerns about misconduct, fraud and corruption where appropriate?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly agree	27.1%	19
Agree	50.0%	35
Neither agree nor disagree	10.0%	7
Disagree	4.3%	3
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0
Don't know	8.6%	6
	<i>answered question</i>	70
	<i>skipped question</i>	0

Q9 Do you know where to find the policy and procedures for reporting misconduct, fraud and corruption?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	78.6%	55
No	21.4%	15
	<i>answered question</i>	70
	<i>skipped question</i>	0

Q10 How confident would you feel in expressing concerns about misconduct, fraud and corruption?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very confident	51.4%	36
Fairly confident	35.7%	25
Neither confident nor unsure	5.7%	4
Not very confident	7.1%	5
Not confident at all	0.0%	0
Don't know	0.0%	0
	<i>answered question</i>	70
	<i>skipped question</i>	0

Q12 How confident would you feel that if you did report any suspicion of fraud and/or corruption that it would be properly dealt with.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very confident	37.1%	26
Fairly confident	47.1%	33
Neither confident nor unsure	8.6%	6
Not very confident	4.3%	3
Not confident at all	0.0%	0
Don't know	2.9%	2
<i>answered question</i>		70
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q14 In the past 12 months have you come across any examples of activity which you would consider to be fraudulent or corrupt within your working environment?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	2.9%	2
No	97.1%	67
<i>answered question</i>		69
<i>skipped question</i>		1

Q16 Did you report your suspicions to anyone?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	100.0%	2
No	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		2
<i>skipped question</i>		68

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
I understand the differences between a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and other interests	28.6	54.3	10.0	2.9	0	4.3
I regularly record and update my relevant interests in the Council's Register of Members' Interests.	30.4	55.1	10.1	4.4	0	0
I am aware of the sorts of interests that should be included in the Register of Members' Interests	33.3	59.4	4.4	0	1.5	1.5
I am aware of the rules for registration of gifts and hospitality	31.4	50.0	10.0	2.9	1.4	4.3
<i>answered question</i>						70
<i>skipped question</i>						0

Q20 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Members listen to the advice of the Clerk	47.1	50.0	2.9	0	0	0
Members treat all others fairly and without discrimination	46.4	39.1	7.3	7.3	0	0
Members perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity	42.7	44.1	7.4	5.9	0	0
The role of the District Council's Monitoring Officer is clear	24.3	42.9	21.4	5.7	1.4	4.3
The communication between Members is open and constructive	39.1	44.9	14.5	1.5	0	0
The communication between Members and Clerk is open and constructive	52.9	41.4	5.7	0	0	0
<i>answered question 70</i>						
<i>skipped question 0</i>						

Q21 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
There is an atmosphere of trust in the Council between Members and the Clerk	57.1	35.7	4.3	2.9	0	0
There is a culture of bullying in the Council	1.4	1.4	11.4	37.1	47.1	1.4
The decision making by Members is transparent, objective and follows agreed procedures	42.0	52.2	4.4	1.5	0	0
Members are aware that they are accountable for their decisions and actions	44.3	52.9	1.4	1.4	0	0
Members are held accountable for their decisions and actions	34.8	56.5	5.8	2.9	0	0
<i>answered question 70</i>						
<i>skipped question 0</i>						

Q22 How strongly do you agree or disagree that the District Council's member complaints procedures are clear and accessible

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly agree	12.9%	9
Agree	55.7%	39
Neither agree nor disagree	14.3%	10
Disagree	5.7%	4
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0
Don't know	11.4%	8
<i>answered question</i>		70
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q24 How strongly do you agree or disagree that the District Council takes seriously complaints relating to ethical standards.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly agree	20.0%	14
Agree	54.3%	38
Neither agree nor disagree	12.9%	9
Disagree	1.4%	1
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0
Don't know	11.4%	8
	<i>answered question</i>	70
	<i>skipped question</i>	0

Data Tables

Parish Clerks

Q1 How aware are you of what is meant by ethical standards?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Fully aware	54.5%	6
Partly aware	36.4%	4
Not really aware	9.1%	1
Not at all aware	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		11
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q2 Do you know where to find the Town or Parish Council's Members' Code of Conduct?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	90.9%	10
No	9.1%	1
<i>answered question</i>		11
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q3 Are you aware of how to report a breach or potential breach of the Code of Conduct?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	90.9%	10
No	9.1%	1
<i>answered question</i>		11
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q4 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The Town/Parish Council encourages high ethical standards and appropriate behaviour across the Council	54.6	27.3	9.1	9.1	0	0
The District Council's Standards Committee is making a positive difference to the ethical environment in the Town/Parish Council	20.0	30.0	30.0	10.0	0	10.0
<i>answered question</i>						11
<i>skipped question</i>						0

Q6 How effective is the training given to members and clerks on issues of conduct?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very effective	9.1%	1
Fairly effective	18.2%	2
Neither effective nor ineffective	9.1%	1
Fairly ineffective	9.1%	1
Very ineffective	18.2%	2
Don't know	36.4%	4
<i>answered question</i>		11
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q8 How strongly do you agree or disagree that the Parish or Town Council has clear and confidential arrangements for members and staff to express concerns about misconduct, fraud and corruption where appropriate?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly agree	36.4%	4
Agree	45.5%	5
Neither agree nor disagree	9.1%	1
Disagree	0.0%	0
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0
Don't know	9.1%	1
<i>answered question</i>		11
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q9 Do you know where to find the policy and procedures for reporting misconduct, fraud and corruption?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	63.6%	7
No	36.4%	4
<i>answered question</i>		11
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q10 How confident would you feel in expressing concerns about misconduct, fraud and corruption?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very confident	72.7%	8
Fairly confident	18.2%	2
Neither confident nor unsure	0.0%	0
Not very confident	9.1%	1
Not confident at all	0.0%	0
Don't know	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		11
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q12 How confident would you feel if you did report any suspicion of fraud and/or corruption that it would be properly dealt with?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very confident	45.5%	5
Fairly confident	36.4%	4
Neither confident nor unsure	0.0%	0
Not very confident	9.1%	1
Not confident at all	0.0%	0
Don't know	9.1%	1
<i>answered question</i>		11
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q14 In the past 12 months have you come across any examples of activity which you would consider to be fraudulent or corrupt within your working environment?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	0.0%	0
No	100.0%	11
<i>answered question</i>		11
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q16 Did you report your suspicions to anyone?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	0.0%	0
No	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		0
<i>skipped question</i>		11

Q19 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
I understand the differences between a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and other interests	36.4	45.5	9.1	0	9.1	0
I am aware that I must declare any personal interests that conflict with the Council's interests	72.7	18.2	9.1	0	0	0
I am aware of the sorts of interests that should be included in the Register of Members' Interests	54.6	36.4	0	0	9.1	0
I am aware of the rules for registration of gifts and hospitality	54.6	36.4	0	0	9.1	0
<i>answered question</i>						11
<i>skipped question</i>						0

Q20 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Members listen to the advice of the Clerk	45.5	45.5	9.1	0	0	0
Members treat all others fairly and without discrimination	36.4	54.6	9.1	0	0	0
Members perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity	36.4	45.5	18.2	0	0	0
I understand the role of the District Council's Monitoring Officer	18.2	54.6	18.2	9.1	0	0
The communication between Members is open and constructive	45.5	54.6	0	0	0	0
The communication between Members and Clerk is open and constructive	54.6	45.5	0	0	0	0
<i>answered question 11</i>						
<i>skipped question 0</i>						

Q21 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
There is an atmosphere of trust in the Council between Members and the Clerk	63.6	18.2	18.2	0	0	0
There is a culture of bullying in the Council	0	0	9.1	27.3	63.6	0
The decision making by Members is transparent, objective and follows agreed procedures	63.6	36.4	0	0	0	0
Members are aware that they are accountable for their decisions and actions.	45.5	54.6	0	0	0	0
Members are held accountable for their decisions and actions	54.6	36.4	0	0	0	9.1
<i>answered question 11</i>						
<i>skipped question 0</i>						

Q22 How strongly do you agree or disagree that the District Council's member complaints procedures are clear and accessible.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly agree	10.0%	1
Agree	30.0%	3
Neither agree nor disagree	30.0%	3
Disagree	0.0%	0
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0
Don't know	30.0%	3
<i>answered question</i>		10
<i>skipped question</i>		1

Q24 How strongly do you agree or disagree that the District Council takes seriously complaints relating to ethical standards.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly agree	45.5%	5
Agree	36.4%	4
Neither agree nor disagree	0.0%	0
Disagree	0.0%	0
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0
Don't know	18.2%	2
<i>answered question</i>		11
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Comparison Tables

Q How aware are you of what is meant by ethical standards?

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Fully aware	70.0	54.5
Partly aware	24.3	36.4
Not really aware	4.3	9.1
Not at all aware	1.4	0

Q Do you know where to find the codes and protocols that govern ethical standards expected of members and officers at the District Council/the Parish or Town Council's Members' Code of Conduct?

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Yes	91.4	90.9
No	8.6	9.1

Q Are you aware of how to report a breach or potential breach of the Members/Members and Officers' Code of Conduct?

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Yes	80.0	90.9
No	20.0	9.1

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

The (Town/Parish) Council encourages high ethical standards and appropriate behaviour across the Council/organisation.

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Strongly agree	42.9	54.6
Agree	51.4	27.3
Neither agree nor disagree	5.7	9.1
Disagree	0	9.1
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

The District Council's Standards Committee is making a positive difference to the ethical environment within the (Town/Parish) Council

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Strongly agree	17.7	20.0
Agree	41.2	30.0
Neither agree nor disagree	35.3	30.0
Disagree	1.5	10.0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know	4.4	10.0

Q How effective is the training given to staff/members and clerks on issues of conduct?

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Very effective	21.4	9.1
Fairly effective	51.4	18.2
Neither effective nor ineffective	7.1	9.1
Fairly ineffective	2.9	9.1
Very ineffective	0	18.2
Don't know	17.1	36.4

Q If you have been provided with advice, a briefing note/information or training on the following topics, please tick all those that apply.

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Human Rights Act	N/A	N/A
Data Protection Act		
Freedom of Information Act		
Equalities		

Q How strongly do you agree that the Council/your council/the Parish and Town Council has clear and confidential arrangements for members/staff to express concerns about misconduct, fraud and corruption where appropriate?

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Strongly agree	27.1	36.4
Agree	50.0	45.5
Neither agree nor disagree	10.0	9.1
Disagree	4.3	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know	8.6	9.1

Q Do you know where to find the policy and procedures for reporting misconduct, fraud and corruption?

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Yes	78.6	63.6
No	21.4	36.4

Q How confident would you feel in expressing concerns about misconduct, fraud and corruption?

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Very confident	51.4	72.7
Fairly confident	35.7	18.2
Neither confident nor unsure	5.7	0
Not very confident	7.1	9.1
Not confident at all	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Q How confident would you feel that if you did report any suspicion of fraud and/or corruption that it would be properly dealt with?

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Very confident	37.1	45.5
Fairly confident	47.1	36.4
Neither confident nor unsure	8.6	0
Not very confident	4.3	9.1
Not confident at all	0	0
Don't know	2.9	9.1

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

I understand the differences between a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and other interests

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Strongly agree	28.6	36.4
Agree	54.3	45.5
Neither agree nor disagree	10.0	9.1
Disagree	2.9	0
Strongly disagree	0	9.1
Don't know	4.3	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

I regularly record and update my relevant interests in the Council's Register of Members' Interests

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Strongly agree	30.4	N/A
Agree	55.1	
Neither agree nor disagree	10.1	
Disagree	4.4	
Strongly disagree	0	
Don't know	0	

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

I am aware of the sorts of interests that should be included in the Register of Members' interests

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Strongly agree	33.3	54.6
Agree	59.4	36.4
Neither agree nor disagree	4.4	0
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	1.5	9.1
Don't know	1.5	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Members listen to the advice of officers/the Clerk.

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Strongly agree	47.1	45.5
Agree	50.0	45.5
Neither agree nor disagree	2.9	9.1
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Members attempt to involve officers inappropriately in party political issues

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Strongly agree	N/A	N/A
Agree		
Neither agree nor disagree		
Disagree		
Strongly disagree		
Don't know		

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Members treat all others fairly and without discrimination

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Strongly agree	46.4	36.4
Agree	39.1	54.6
Neither agree nor disagree	7.3	9.1
Disagree	7.3	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Members perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Strongly agree	42.7	36.4
Agree	44.1	45.5
Neither agree nor disagree	7.4	18.2
Disagree	5.9	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

I understand the role of the Council's Monitoring Officer

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Strongly agree	24.3	18.2
Agree	42.9	54.6
Neither agree nor disagree	21.4	18.2
Disagree	5.7	9.1
Strongly disagree	1.4	0
Don't know	4.3	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

I am aware of the rules for registration of gifts and hospitality

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Strongly agree	31.4	54.6
Agree	50.0	36.4
Neither agree nor disagree	10.0	0
Disagree	2.9	0
Strongly disagree	1.4	9.1
Don't know	4.3	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

The communication between Members and Officers is open and constructive

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Strongly agree	N/A	N/A
Agree		
Neither agree nor disagree		
Disagree		
Strongly disagree		
Don't know		

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

The communication between Members and Clerk is open and constructive

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Strongly agree	52.9	54.6
Agree	41.4	45.5
Neither agree nor disagree	5.7	0
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

There is an atmosphere of trust in the Council between Members and Officers

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Strongly agree	N/A	N/A
Agree		
Neither agree nor disagree		
Disagree		
Strongly disagree		
Don't know		

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

There is an atmosphere of trust in the Council between Members and Clerk

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Strongly agree	57.1	63.6
Agree	35.7	18.2
Neither agree nor disagree	4.3	18.2
Disagree	2.9	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

There is a culture of bullying in the Council

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Strongly agree	1.4	0
Agree	1.4	0
Neither agree nor disagree	11.4	9.1
Disagree	37.1	27.3
Strongly disagree	47.1	63.6
Don't know	1.4	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

The decision making by Members is transparent, objective and follows agreed procedures

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Strongly agree	42.0	63.6
Agree	52.2	36.4
Neither agree nor disagree	4.4	0
Disagree	1.5	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Members are held accountable for their decisions and actions/Members are aware that they are accountable for their decisions and actions.

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Strongly agree	34.8	45.5
Agree	56.5	54.6
Neither agree nor disagree	5.8	0
Disagree	2.9	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

The public has easy access to information on who has taken particular decisions

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Strongly agree	N/A	N/A
Agree		
Neither agree nor disagree		
Disagree		
Strongly disagree		
Don't know		

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree that decisions made by Members may be challenged, without fear of reprisal by other Members, officers, partner organisations or the public?

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Strongly agree	N/A	N/A
Agree		
Neither agree nor disagree		
Disagree		
Strongly disagree		
Don't know		

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree that the Council's Members complaints procedures are clear and accessible?

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Strongly agree	12.9	10.0
Agree	55.7	30.0
Neither agree nor disagree	14.3	30.0
Disagree	5.7	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know	11.4	30.0

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree that the Council takes seriously complaints (from the public) relating to ethical standards?

	Parish Councillors	Parish Clerks
Base:	70	11
	%	%
Strongly agree	20.0	45.5
Agree	54.3	36.4
Neither agree nor disagree	12.9	0
Disagree	1.4	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Don't know	11.4	18.2

Analysis of Open Comments

Parish Councillors

Q5 What else should the Standards Committee do to encourage and develop high ethical standards within the Council? Please provide examples.

We are given too many forms to fill in . Example = this form. Do we really need to fill in all these forms?

The overall level of conduct; including fraud, corruption and misconduct reporting is very high. However ethical standards of conduct must be determined by the widest cross section of society to be truly objective and democratic. This could be improved and would make the councils less insular.

Be open and self-disciplined in personal behaviour to fellow councillors and general public.

Let us know where to find the information.

Issue a copy of the guide to all parish/town councillors.

Combine with all political groups.

When a councillor is reported unless it is very obvious that the complaint has no bearing on ethical standards, the councillor should receive some information reminding him/her to read their code of conduct as a refresher, even if the board is taking no further action.

More training by the Standards Committee to parish/town councillors especially new ones.

Changes in legislation should be given as early as possible.

Listen to parish council comments on ethical decisions at district level, especially to planning.

Inclusive decisions and acted upon comments from parish level.

Councils are too wasteful of public money, reduce the numbers of people involved with the Standards Committee who aren't voluntary. Lead by example!!

Training courses.

Provide induction training to newly appointed councillors - needs to be frequently available for co-opted councillors at any time of the year.

Making full use of online resources and facilities

Attend and observe meetings of town or parish councils.

Unfortunately the autonomy of Parish Councils make it quite hard for the Standards Committee to develop high standards if Parish members have no appetite for it. I wonder if they could visit Parish Councils and do a short presentation on ethical standards once per electoral term. I do understand that the Committee has limited resources though.

Q7 If you think that the training is ineffective, please add comments or give examples where you think training has been lacking.

I can't remember when the last training took place.

I am not aware of councillor / clerks training.

Transparency of financial matters. Personal financial dealings of Councillors with their council.

Our clerk gives us the instructions we need to know for our small parish.

Have never had any training during 3 years of being a parish councillor.

Changes in legislation should be given as early as possible.

The training should be compulsory as a lot of councillors do not bother to attend. Every councillor should have to attend twice during four years.

Q11 If you answered not very or not at all confident, please can you indicate what improvements could be made?

I would need to know the procedures.

I feel confidentiality is a problem in some parish councils, also being listened to without prejudice. Make it anonymous.

Training to be given.

Training sessions.

On one authority I sit on there seems to be an agreement between the clerk /RFO and some council members on questionable financial dealings. Perhaps the Standards Committee could issue some clear, basic guidelines on how councillors can deal with suspected malpractice, rather than just proven acts.

Q13 If you answered not very or not at all confident please can you indicate what improvements could be made?

If it is a parish councillor who is also a district councillor then as the standards committee stands at present there are other district councillors on the committee and they may not be un-biased.

Therefore if it is a district councillor it should be a standards committee from another council - not the one they are on.

Greater scrutiny of elected and non-elected members both financial and ethical (so minority views aren't given a disproportionate airing over the majority).

I have no experience of this.

Q15 If yes, please give brief details.

Someone having an interest in a matter that they should have declared. They eventually declared an interest and resigned from the committee.

Made aware about abuse of role leading to personal gain by fellow councillor.

Some appointments (of staff) and purchases of goods seem to be connected to one or two council members (they are friends of theirs, the goods seem extravagant). In one instance a council member has given up a long standing sub-committee role when put under pressure about personal interests.

Q17 If yes, please give brief details

It had been spoken about between the councillors.

Discussed as a group with clerk.

Q18 If no, please explain what reasons prevented you from reporting the matter.

It is difficult to prove a connection between council members and new staff (they are friends but not related or business partners). I do not have the support of the majority of the council. When I previously raised a matter of obtaining an extra quote for a service, the RFO of the council wrote a rude complaint about my conduct to the clerk and I was summoned before the clerk and RFO to be 'remonstrated with'.

Council members are quite at liberty to comment on any subject. We have a very democratic group and are free spirits within the confines of the council meetings.

Q23 If you disagree, please give your comments.

I have never seen them. I use my common sense to judge what is right and wrong and would take advice if I needed to complain.

A complaint about district councillors non attendance to parish meeting was met with an attitude of not prepared to act on complaints from district council's side.

I have not seen the procedures.

Not aware of procedure.

Q25 If you disagree, please give your comments.

Any complaint is not given any credence at district level.

No evidence on this so I cannot form a judgement.

Q26 Please add any additional comments about how the Council could ensure compliance with ethical standards and build public confidence in local democracy?

Remind past members of city council to stand back and allow other people opinions and not dominate meetings and sub committees.

No evidence on this so I cannot form a judgement.

Ref. Parish councils - some councillors need to go on training that clearly explains compliance with ethical standards. As from experience I know a lot do not really know when they are in breach of the standards. Also sadly some district councillors appear not to fully understand.

A formal complaints form should be made available and all complaints taken seriously and replied to in writing.

Introduction of officer with responsibility for ethical standards, complaints etc. at a council meeting.

Refresher training on this issue.

To not have politics or being part of a political party to have so much influence upon allegiance when decisions are made.

I have only been a Parish Councillor for very long. I was asked to join, after a vacancy occurred. I think it is very professionally run, however I would attend any training session provided. I enjoy my roll and hope to be elected officially in future.

Make rules public and issue them in clear, plain English!

Analysis of Open Comments

Parish Clerks

Q5 What else should the Standards Committee do to encourage and develop high ethical standards within the Council? Please provide examples.

Liaise with parish/town clerks annually to discuss if there are any concerns/doubts about whether their council is adhering to code of conduct ie need 1:1 or network/day just for clerks.

More training for Councillors, particularly newly appointed.

Q7 If you think that the training is ineffective, please add comments or give examples where you think training has been lacking.

No training been given to date.

To my knowledge members and Clerks have received no training on issues of conduct.

But could always find out if in doubt.

Not sure there has been any training on these areas. They have been briefly raised at District and Parish Liason meetings

Have not attended training at NEDDC

The above issue rarely mentioned.

Q11 If you answered not very or not at all confident, please can you indicate what improvements could be made?

Communication on this needs to be shared. Who go to a District level from a Parish Clerk.

Q13 If you answered not very or not at all confident please can you indicate what improvements could be made?

Q15 If yes, please give brief details.

Q17 If yes, please give brief details

Q18 If no, please explain what reasons prevented you from reporting the matter.

Q23 If you disagree, please give your comments.

Not aware of the existence of the District Council's member complaints procedure.

Q25 If you disagree, please give your comments.

Q26 Please add any additional comments about how the Council could ensure compliance with ethical standards and build public confidence in local democracy?

Publicly report every instance where a report has been made and deal with (anonymously) so public are aware.

Demographic Profiles

Q What is your gender?

<i>Base in brackets</i>	Male	Female	Prefer not to say
	%	%	%
Parish Councillors (70)	51.4	42.9	5.7
Parish Clerks (11)	36.4	63.6	-

Q What is your age group?

	24 and under	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 – 54	55 - 64	65 - 74	75 and over	Prefer not to say
<i>Base in brackets</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Parish Councillors (70)	-	2.9	7.1	18.6	30.0	30.0	7.1	4.3
Parish Clerks (11)	-	-	18.2	18.2	27.3	18.2	18.2	-

Q Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say
<i>Base in brackets</i>	%	%	%
Parish Councillors (70)	18.6	77.1	4.3
Parish Clerks (11)	18.2	63.6	18.2

Q Please describe yourself.

	White British/Irish/Other	Other background	Prefer not to say
<i>Base in brackets</i>	%	%	%
Parish Councillors (70)	95.7	-	0.4
Parish Clerks (11)	100	-	-