

**WEST SUFFOLK COUNCIL'S STANDARDS
PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS**

DECISION NOTICE

Member:	Councillor Andy Neal
Council:	West Suffolk Council
Complainant:	[REDACTED]
Monitoring Officer:	Teresa Halliday
Independent Person:	Susan Putters
Complaint (as received):	At the last Full Council Meeting [14 July 2026] Andy Neal was sitting behind me and Councillor [name provided]. Just before the meeting started he asked why I was not at the demonstration at RAF Barnham due to the fact that I had voted that the site was unsuitable. He then proceeded to tell me how he liked to go to stir trouble. He then did a Nazi Salute and said 'Seig Heil'. I told him that he could not do it in the Chamber or anywhere else for that matter. He then did it two more times. This was all moments before the meeting started.
Relevant Parts of the Code alleged to have been breached:	1.1 I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect 5.3 I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute
Capacity:	The alleged breach occurred in the West Suffolk Council chamber at West Suffolk House moments before a Council meeting commenced. The meeting is a public meeting and members of the public may have been present in the chamber at the time. The Monitoring Officer is therefore satisfied that the alleged actions of Councillor Neal would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all the facts that he was acting in his official capacity at the time.

Consideration:	When invited to respond to the complaint, Councillor Neal said that he was sorry to receive it and that, in part what had been said is correct although not reported in context. He stated that he was being jovial and they were having banter. He admitted that he did say 'Seig heil' in the belief they were joking between themselves. He also stated that everyone is entitled to hold an opinion and if that opinion differs from another person that is no cause to raise a complaint. Councillor Neal offered his apologies if he gave offence as it was not his intention to do so. In considering the allegations and Councillor Neal's response, the Committee felt that Councillor Neal had let himself and the council down. The Committee agreed that making the Nazi Salute is deeply offensive and were shocked that a Councillor would behave in this way; his actions were clumsy, insensitive and inappropriate. They gave Councillor Neal credit for not contesting the allegations, noted that no malice was intended but it was foolish and wrong.
Independent Person's View:	The Independent Person considered that the actions constituted a racial hate comment/action and has no place in discussions between colleagues. They considered it was especially shocking that a Councillor, a person in a public facing position, would joke about such a thing. The Independent Person was glad that Councillor Neal had offered to apologise but he also needed to be reminded that 'banter' does not make this acceptable at all.
Decision:	The Committee unanimously determined that Councillor Neal had breached parts 1.1 and 5.3 of the Code of Conduct
Sanctions:	Councillor Andy Neal must: • Write a letter of apology to the complainant for any offence caused by his actions. The letter must be in a format approved by the Chair of the West Suffolk Standards Committee; • Apologise at the next meeting to Full Council for his actions; • Undertake further training on the Code of Conduct within the next three months.

This decision is final and there is no right of appeal

DATE: 29 September 2026

**Signed: Teresa Halliday
Monitoring Officer**