

What about people who repeatedly post about an unrelated topic in response to your posts? Not necessarily in an abusive or threatening way, but very persistently, and demonstrating an obsession with that topic.

It sounds as though there is an unresolved issue for the person who is continually posting. If you have done everything you can to answer their concern, you will need to become more formal in your response.

There are a number of actions you can take:

1. Let the person know that you will not be engaging any further on this topic (this may be best done as a personal message rather than in a public form)
2. If this is on Facebook, remember that you can hide their comments from others
3. You could also examine their language patterns and if there are words that are related to their situation which make their posts unique, you could try the profanity or muting tool (Facebook or X) I mentioned during the session
4. You could also block them so that they can no longer post. Just be aware that this may have the impact of accelerating their behaviour.

Also, ask Democratic Services whether your council has a vexatious policy that covers this situation. If so, ask for a copy and see what the process is. It can involve Legal Services writing to the person to ask them to cease and desist their behaviour and to provide them with a named contact within the Council. This will be the only person they will be able to communicate with, without further legal action being considered.

I hope you manage to resolve the situation.

A resident in my ward constantly posts false information and allegations trolling on my posts. They also comment to demand responses. this has been going on for over 2 years. Legal and democratic can't help. They also post updates that are false about me and the council

I am sorry to hear that you are having a problem like this, and I hope the session provided you some ideas around some strategies that will help you move forward and resolve the situation.

It's interesting that you say that Legal and Democratic services can't help. I would be very tempted to go back to them and ask them to take another look – particularly if you feel harassed by the resident's behaviour.

In a situation like this, you may be best to take a multi-pronged approach, for example:

1. On Facebook, when you post, identify who can respond to your post
2. If you think they are a troll – choose to ignore them
3. If you want to respond, give factual, evidencable information
4. Remember to report any posts (after screenshotting) that you believe to be defamatory, to the site moderator
5. Blocking the resident
6. If you believe a comment to be defamatory, following the guidance covered during the session (you will have a copy of the slides to refer back to)

Talk to Democratic Services about the Council's Vexatious policy

In February this year, the Government announced a named police officer for every authority – find out this officer's contact information and ask for advice and guidance, too.

You can also seek advice privately from a legal specialist. Many solicitors offer a fixed fee for a 30-minute meeting.

Best wishes in sorting the situation.

Does S106 just apply to candidates? Does it include elected politicians as well?

As promised, here is the link to the S106 Representation of the People Act:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1983/2/section/106>

You can find an interesting article about elected politicians and the Act here:

<https://www.4-5.co.uk/publications/section-106-of-the-representation-of-the-people-act-1983-the-personal-versus-the-political>.

Enjoy!

I sit on planning committee and local Facebook groups often state that we take "brown envelopes". This is hard to manage and respond.

Asked the person to take it down. They didn't and were protected by their political party and MO. It was defamation from another councillor

I hope the advice during the session about defamation was useful.

It's important to screen shot any posts that you may want to take action against. Probably your best initial approach is to post an open response saying that you consider their post to be defamatory and ask for a retraction and/or an apology.

If this is another councillor, then their behaviour may have contravened the Code of Conduct. Ask the Monitoring Officer to look at it again.

Also ensure that you report any posts you consider to be potentially defamatory to the site moderator. The Online Safety Act is going to force social media platforms to take down content that contravenes their own guidelines – and most Facebook groups have ground-rules about courtesy and accurate information.

Continue to collect any “evidence” if people post again. Use some of the advice I have given to earlier questions from the session, too including seeking independent legal advice.

As mentioned during the seminar, sometimes peoples' posts are just so ridiculous to other readers that's worth leaving the person's comment there for all to see. If you try to take down every troll, you will exhaust yourself.

We have a local community group which one political party has control of. The moderators will challenge and delete anything that favours other parties or goes against their own party. They are effectively stifling democracy. You can't say that a without being deleted and can't complain to monitoring

as it's not members behaving this way; it's their friends doing it on their behalf. It's not abusive but it is controlling the direction of the debate in their favour.

Short of starting your own group, which sounds on paper as though it could be a good idea, but you may not have the time or appetite to do, it sounds as though this Facebook page will always be a challenge because of the way it is being moderated.

I suggest that you limit the amount of posting you do, because this is probably wasting quite a bit of your time and energy – as well as putting your blood pressure up.

And when you do post, make your statements as neutral and factual as possible. Concentrate where you can on hard numbers and concrete evidence to make your case. This makes it difficult for the moderator because you are removing any excuse to block or delete your comments.