

WICKHAMBROOK PARISH COUNCIL

Complaints Procedure

Wickhambrook Parish Council believes that a complaints procedure demonstrates to its parishioners and other contacts that the Council:

- *wishes to provide a good service*
- *values feedback*
- *undertakes its business in an open and honest manner, and*
- *wishes to deal with complaints fairly.*

Complaints and suggestions provide a valuable opportunity for improving services and performance.

Pre-Meeting procedure

1. The Complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the Council's procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk¹.
2. If the Complainant indicates that they do not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk, they may be advised to address the complaint to the Chairman of the Council.
3. The Clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the written complaint and advise the Complainant when the matter will be considered by the council within one week of its receipt.
4. The Complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish.
5. The Complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence which they wish to refer to at the meeting not less than seven clear working days prior to the meeting. The Council shall similarly provide the Complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

Meeting procedure

6. The Council shall consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.
7. The Chairman will introduce everyone.
8. The Chairman will explain the complaints procedure.
9. The Complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint.
10. Members to ask any question of the Complainant.
11. If relevant, the Clerk will explain the Council's position.
12. Members to ask any question of the Clerk.
13. The Clerk and Complainant, in this order, will be offered opportunity of last word.
14. The Clerk and Complainant (or representative) will be asked to leave the room while Members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. (If a point of clarification is necessary both parties will be invited back).
15. The Clerk and Complainant (or representative) will return to hear the decision, or to be advised when the decision will be made.

Post Meeting procedure

16. Within seven working days the Council will confirm its decision in writing to the Complainant together with details of any action to be taken.

ⁱ Complaints about an employee of the council (i.e. the clerk) should be dealt with as an employment matter. Complaints received from the clerk about the parish council should be handled in accordance with current advice issued by ACAS. When the parish council has an issue with the clerk there is a set procedure for handling discipline at work.

This policy was passed by resolution of the Wickhambrook Parish Council and reviewed at the Annual Parish Council Meeting 26 May 2016

Next review May 2017