

South Walsham Parish Council

Complaints Procedure

This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about the administration or procedures of South Walsham Parish Council.

Complaints about a policy decision made by the Council will be referred back to the Council, or relevant Committee, as appropriate, for consideration.

This procedure does not cover complaints about the conduct of a member of the Parish Council. Any complaint that a Councillor may have breached the Council's adopted code of conduct should be referred to The Monitoring Officer at Broadland District Council.

Matters relating to Grievance or Disciplinary proceedings that are taking, or are likely to take place, should be dealt with in accordance with the Council's grievance and disciplinary procedures.

1. If a complaint about procedures, administration or the actions of any of the Council's employees is notified orally to a Councillor, or to the Clerk to the Council, a written record of the complaint will be made, noting the name and contact details of the complainant and the nature of the complaint.
2. The complainant will be asked to put the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) to the Clerk to the Council, at the address below. The Clerk will try to acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days of receipt. Refusal to put the complaint in writing does not necessarily mean that the complaint cannot be investigated, but it is easier to deal with if it is.
3. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk of the Council (because the matter relates to the Clerk, for example), he or she should be advised to write to the Chairman.
4. On receipt of a written complaint, the Clerk to the Council (except where the complaint is about is or her own actions) or Chairman of the Council (if the complaint relates to the Clerk), will seek to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This will not be done without first notifying any person complained about and first giving him or her an opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to resolve the complaint at this stage.
5. Where the Clerk to the Council or a councillor receives a written complaint about the Clerk's actions, he or she shall refer the complaint to the Chairman of the Council. The Clerk to the Council will be formally advised of the matter and given an opportunity to comment.
6. The Clerk to the Council (or Chairman, if appropriate) will report any complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant, to the next meeting of the Council.
7. The Clerk to the Council (or Chairman, if appropriate) will report any complaint that has not been resolved to the next meeting of the Council. The Clerk will notify the

complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered and the complainant will be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint to the Council orally.

8. Seven days prior to such meeting, the Complainant will provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence relied on. Council will do likewise, although such information may already be readily available from its website or upon request from the Clerk.
9. The Council may consider whether the circumstances of any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press or public.
10. During the meeting (which may take place at the end of a Parish Council meeting) the complainant should outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by the Clerk or Councillors. The complainant may be asked to leave the room so Council can consider the grounds for complaint in private, although if any clarification is required the complainant may be asked back into the room.
11. If the decision is unlikely to be finalised during that meeting the Complainant should be advised when the decision is likely to be made (and in any event not later than 10 working days after the meeting, whether or not the complainant was in attendance) and will receive notification in writing of the decision and any action to be taken.
12. Any decision on the complaint will be announced at the next available Council meeting in public.
13. The Council may consider in the circumstances of any particular complaint, whether to make any without liability payment or provide other reasonable benefit to any person who has suffered loss as a result of the Council's maladministration. Any payment may only be authorised by the Council after obtaining legal advice and advice from the Council's auditor on the propriety of such a payment.
14. The Council may defer dealing with any complaint if it is of the opinion that issues arise upon which further advice is necessary. The advice will be considered and the complaint discussed at the next meeting after the advice has been received.
15. The Council will not acknowledge or consider any informal or formal complaints that are submitted anonymously.

Signed *R Jones*
Chairman

Dated *09/05/2022*

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