



**Odiham**  
Parish Council

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

**Adopted on 24 February 2014**

**Reviewed on 18 May 2015**

**Reviewed on 9 May 2016**

**Reviewed and Adopted on 8 May 2017**

**Reviewed and Adopted on 14 May 2018**

# COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Odiham parish council is committed to respond to and deal with complaints in a positive, timely and courteous manner; to resolve problems and conflicts effectively; and to promote effective working practices throughout the parish council

## **Making a complaint**

All complaints must be in writing and made within 12 months of notice of the matters which are subject to the complaint. The council will not consider anonymous complaints, unless there is independent evidence to substantiate the complaint.

## **Complaints procedure**

On receipt of a complaint, the clerk in consultation with the chairman will ascertain the category of the complaint and take the relevant action with reference to the following:-

Financial irregularity	The clerk/RFO should endeavour to provide an explanation of the item. The clerk/RFO may need to consult the auditor. If the complainant is not satisfied, the clerk should advise the complainant of the Local Elector's statutory right to object council's audit of accounts (s.16 Audit Commission Act 1998).
Criminal activity	The clerk should refer the complainant to the police.
Member conduct	If the complaint relates to a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct, the complainant should be advised to submit the complaint to the Monitoring Officer at Hart District Council.
Employee conduct	As an internal disciplinary matter, this should be dealt with under the council's disciplinary procedure.
Other	Complaints are expressions of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the council's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service, whether the action was taken or the service provided by the council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the council. Complaints should be dealt with under the following procedure.

If a meeting is required then the following procedure will so far as is practical be followed:-

## **Before the meeting**

1. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the council procedures or administration in writing to the clerk or other nominated officer.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the clerk or other nominated officer he or she should be advised to address it to the chairman of the council.
3. The clerk or nominated officer shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the council or by the committee established for the purpose of hearing complaints. The complainant should also be advised whether the complaint will be treated as confidential or whether for example notice of it will be given in the usual way (if for example the complaint is to be heard by a committee).

4. The complainant shall be invited to attend a meeting and to bring with them a representative if they wish.

5. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting the complainant shall provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence they relied on. The council shall provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting and shall do so promptly, allowing the claimant the opportunity to read the material in good time for the meeting.

### **At the meeting**

1. The council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public.

2. The chairman should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.

3. The complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint and thereafter questions may be asked by (i) the clerk or other nominated officer and (ii) members.

4. The clerk or other nominated officer will have an opportunity to explain the council's position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant and (ii) members.

5. The clerk or other nominated officer and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.

6. The clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant should 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 shall be invited back.

7. The clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant should be given the opportunity to wait for the decision but if the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day they should be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.

### **After the meeting**

1. The decision should be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.