

# Highnam Parish Council



## Code of Practice for Handling Complaints

If a complaint about procedures or policies, administration is notified orally to a councillor or the Clerk and it is not possible to satisfy the complainant fully, the complainant shall be asked to put his complaint in writing to the Clerk and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.

If a complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk, he or she should be advised to put it to the Chairman.

On receipt of a written complaint the Clerk or Chairman, shall (except where the complaint is about his or her own actions) try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This shall not be done without first notifying the person complained against and giving him or her an opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to attempt to settle the complaint at this stage.

Where the Clerk or the Chairman receives a written complaint about the Clerk's or any councillor's actions, he or she shall refer the complaint to the Chairman for consideration. The Clerk or councillor the subject of the complaint shall be notified and given an opportunity to comment. In the event a complaint is made against the chairman this shall be referred to the vice chairman for action in accordance with this policy.

The Clerk or Chairman shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.

The Clerk or Chairman shall bring any written complaint which cannot be settled to the next meeting of the Council and the Clerk shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered. The complainant will be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint orally.

The Council shall consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public but any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.

As soon as possible after the decision has been made it and the nature of any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.

A Council shall defer dealing with any written complaint only if it is of the opinion that issues of law or practice arise on which advice is necessary. The complaint shall be dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.

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Approving committee: Highnam Parish Council

Date of committee meeting: 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022

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Supersedes: New Policy

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