

## Geldeston Parish Council

# COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the Parish Council handles any complaints about its practices or procedures or conduct of any employee or volunteer while on Council business in a fair, open manner and as expeditiously as possible with due regard to the resources available.



## Scope of this policy

1. Council welcomes feedback and constructive criticism about its work at all times. This policy covers those unusual circumstances where a member of the public feels it is necessary to complain formally about what the Council collectively has done or the way in which it reached an opinion or decision. It also covers complaints about individuals when acting as a Council volunteer or any Council employee.
2. This procedure does not cover complaints about the conduct of an individual member of the Parish Council. Any complaint that a Councillor may have breached the Council's adopted code of conduct should be directed to South Norfolk District Council [<http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/democracy/654.asp>].
3. 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.

## Procedure for responding to complaints

4. Complaints should be received in writing by the Council either electronically or on paper as soon as possible after the meeting at which the decision was taken or event in question occurred.
5. Anonymous complaints will not be considered or circulated further unless the matter is of a criminal nature in which case the communication will be passed to the police.
6. Receipt of any complaints will be acknowledged in writing. Additional information without prejudice may be given to the complainant at this time to help resolve the issue.
7. Complaints about a procedure or decision made by the Council will normally be referred to the Council, or relevant Committee as appropriate, at its next meeting for consideration.
8. Requests for confidentiality or for suppression of complaint details will normally be refused. In exceptional circumstances the Council will consider the request alongside the substance of the complaint. If a request for confidentiality is not accepted, the Council will allow complainant the option of withdrawing the complaint before discussing it at a meeting. The complainant will be informed accordingly.
9. 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. The complainant will be asked to write to the Council.

10. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk (for example, because the matter relates to the Clerk) he or she should be advised to write to the chair person.
11. Where the Clerk or a Councillor receives a written complaint about the Clerk's actions, he or she shall refer the complaint to the chair person of Council. The Clerk will be given an opportunity to comment.
12. On receipt of any complaint the Clerk will notify the complainant of the date of the meeting on which the complaint will be considered and the complainant will be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint to the Council in person at that meeting.
13. The Council may consider whether the circumstances of any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public, but any decision will be announced publicly at the Council meeting.
14. The Council may defer dealing with any complaint if it considers that further advice is necessary. The advice will be considered and the complaint addressed at the next meeting after the advice has been received.
15. As soon as possible after the decision has been made (and in any event not later than 10 days after the meeting) the complainant will be notified in writing of the decision and any action to be taken.
16. This policy will be reviewed annually and/or as new legislation requires.

Signed:

Alison Norman, Chair person

Date: 19 July 2016

Date of review: July 2017