



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The purpose of a complaints procedure is to resolve differences as quickly as possible to the satisfaction of all concerned.

1. Introduction
This procedure is for dealing with complaints other than alleged "Code of Conduct" breaches which will initially be dealt with by East Staffordshire Borough Council Monitoring Officer in accordance with procedures set out on the East Staffordshire Borough Council website.
2. In All Cases
 - i. the complainant should be informed of the process that will be followed to deal with their complaint, kept informed of progress and formally given a final decision.
 - ii. a formal record is to be kept of all complaints, the evidence, discussion at any meetings or interviews that take place and the final outcome.
3. If you as a Councillor receive a complaint from a parishioner about Council policy or actions, you should:
 - i. Check that you have correctly understood what the complaint is about.
 - ii. If you can answer the complaint yourself to the satisfaction of the parishioner making it, do so; and then inform the Clerk and Chair of the nature of the complaint, and your response.
 - iii. If you cannot answer the complaint yourself (eg because it concerns a committee you are not a member of) it should be referred to the Clerk and Chair of the Council.
 - iv. If the parishioner is not satisfied with an oral response, they should be asked to make the complaint in writing to the Clerk.
 - v. If the subject of the complaint is the responsibility of a Committee, the Chair shall call a meeting of the Committee to consider the complaint, and to respond to the parishioner.
 - vi. If this does not resolve the matter, the Chair of the Council will call a meeting, within 14 days, of the Council to decide on a response. The complainant may be asked to attend this meeting (with a companion of his/her choice if they wish).
4. If you as a Councillor receive a complaint from a parishioner about the clerk, or another councillor, or work done on behalf of the Parish Council, you should:
 - i. Inform the Clerk and Chair of the nature of the complaint, and he/she will decide what action should be taken.
 - ii. If the Chair's action does not resolve the complaint, the Chair or Vice-Chair should attempt to arrange a meeting, being present themselves as a third party.
 - iii. If this still does not resolve the situation, the parishioner should be asked to send their complaint in writing to the Clerk and Chair, who will then call a meeting as above. Both sides may be invited to attend.
5. If the complaint is about the Chair, then the Vice-chair should be informed.
6. If the clerk receives a complaint, it will be referred to the Chair of the appropriate Committee, or of the Council, to be dealt with as above.

7. The Clerk or Chair of Council shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.
8. 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.
9. 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.