# ASHINGDON PARISH COUNCIL

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## CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

**Complaints about an Employee of Ashingdon Parish Council**

Complaints about an employee of the Parish Council (i.e. the Clerk) should be dealt with as an employment matter. The complainant can be assured that the matter will be dealt with internally as such and appropriate action taken as required.

**Complaints about a Councillor of Ashingdon Parish Council**

Complaints about a Councillor are subject to the jurisdiction of the Standards Committee, Rochford. Complainants should be advised to contact the appropriate body directly or the Monitoring Officer for further information. Contact details can be given to the complainant.

**Complaint has been made about the administration of the Parish Council or about its procedures**.

Ashingdon Parish Council adopts a standard and formal procedure for considering complaints either made by complainants direct or which have been referred back to the council from other bodies.

If the Parish Council fails to deal with complaints directly, they may have to utilise other resources in dealing with outside bodies, which the complainant has engaged to further highlight their dissatisfaction.

**CODE OF PRACTICE**

In the first instance complaints will be dealt with by less formal measures or explanations will be provided to the complainant by the Clerk or Chairman. If the Complainant is not satisfied then the following procedure will be taken.

**Before the Meeting**

1. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the Parish Council's procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk, as the Proper Officer.

2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk, they may be advised to put it to the Chairman of the Parish Council.

Adopted at the meeting held on: 08.5.17
Reviewed by Ashingdon Parish Council: 1.9.25, 7.9.25
Minute Ref : 25/263(a) 26/99 b)

3. The Clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Parish Council for the purposes of hearing complaints.

4. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish.

5. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Parish Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The Parish Council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

**At the Meeting**

6. The Parish 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.

7. Chairman to introduce everyone.

8. Chairman to explain procedure.

9. Complainant (or representative) to outline grounds for complaint.

10. Members to ask any question of the complainant.

11. If relevant, Clerk or other proper officer to explain the Parish Council's position.

12. Members to ask any question of the Clerk or the Proper Officer.

13. Clerk or the Proper Officer and complainant to be offered opportunity of last word (in this order).

14. Clerk or the Proper Officer and complainant to be asked to leave room while Members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made, (If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties to be invited back).

15. Clerk and complainant return to hear decision, or to be advised when decision will be made.

**After the Meeting**

16. Decision confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.

**Notes**

It may be that the Clerk or the Proper Officer at the meeting represents the position of the Parish Council. If the Clerk or the Proper Officer is putting forward the justification for the action or procedure complained of, he or she should not advise the council.

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All parties should be treated fairly and the process should be reasonable, accessible and transparent.

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