COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Date Adopted	Minute Ref	Review Cycle
01/09/25	25/77	Annually

1. Councillors

1.1 This procedure does not cover any complaints made regarding the conduct of a Parish Councillor which are dealt with under the Code of Conduct in place at the time of the complaint.

2. Complaints

2.1 Complaints to Councillors concerning Parish Council business must be taken seriously and, if given verbally to the Councillor, should be requested to be put in writing by the complainant and addressed to the Clerk.

2.2 Any complaint received by the Parish Council must be clearly marked as a complaint otherwise it will be dealt with as a standard communication and will not come under the scope of a complaint. However, the unreasonable complainant behaviour section will still apply.

2.3 Any written complaint received from a Parishioner by a Parish Councillor, or the Clerk should be passed to the Clerk and promptly copied to all councillors for consideration. Receipt of the complaint should be acknowledged by the Clerk within seven days.

2.4 The complaint will be investigated by the Clerk within 21 days taking into account considered input from councillors and a response prepared for the next Council meeting.

2.5 Any complaint regarding a third party will be passed to the third party and they will be given the opportunity to make any comments.

2.6 The Clerk, or the Chairman where the complaint is in respect to the Clerk, will report the outcome of any complaints resolved by direct action with the complainant to the next available meeting of the Council explaining the reason for the need to take direct action.

2.7 As with any monthly Parish Council meeting the public, including any complainant, will have the right to talk to the complaint during the public session to the time limit enforced at such meetings.

2.8 The Parish Councillors will consider the content of the complaint and agree appropriate action and response.

2.9 The Parish Council may consider that the circumstances of a complaint warrant the matter being discussed without the presence of the press and the public. In such a case the result will be communicated to the complainant directly and to the general public through the minutes of the meeting.

2.10 The complainant will be informed of any actions and response within 14 days of the meeting.

2.11 The Parish Council may defer dealing with any complaint if it is of the opinion that any of the issues arising from the complaint require further advice being obtained. Any advice received will be referred to the next available meeting of the Parish Council.

3. Management of unreasonable complainant behaviour

3.1 The Parish Council is committed to dealing with all complaints and other correspondence fairly and impartially, and to making its services as accessible as possible.

3.2 Because of the nature or frequency of their contact with the Parish Council a small number of complainants or other correspondents may hinder the normal workings of the Council. This may

be because of unacceptable behaviour in their dealings with the Parish Council, or because of unreasonably persistent contacts that distract staff from carrying out the day-to-day work of the Council.

Unacceptable Behaviour

3.3 The Parish Council will not tolerate deceitful, abusive, offensive, threatening or other forms of unacceptable behaviour from complainants or correspondents. When it occurs, the Parish Council will take proportionate action to protect the wellbeing of staff and the integrity of our processes.

3.4 Any unacceptable behaviour at a Council meeting is covered by the relevant Standing Orders for the Parish Council.

Unreasonably Persistent Behaviour

3.5 The Clerk manages a wide range of work on behalf of the Parish Council at any one time, using time and resources to best effect. (S)he cannot do so if an individual or group attempts to dominate attention with frequent, lengthy contacts and repetitive information. This hinders the consideration of other aspects of the day-to-day work of the Parish Council. When necessary, the Parish Council will take action to restrict access to our service or associated initiatives when unreasonable behaviour of this nature persists.

3.6 An individual or group as referenced relates to a single individual using alternative identities, such as using a different email address, or a set of individuals that appear to have a common or connected unreasonable behaviour pattern.

Warnings

3.7 In most instances when behaviour is considered to be unreasonable the Parish Council will explain why and ask the individual or group to change it. This may take the form of offering a face-to-face meeting with the Chairman or other member of the Parish Council. They will be warned that if the behaviour continues action will be taken to restrict their contact with the Parish Council.

3.8 Where the behaviour is so extreme that it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of the Parish Council's staff or Councillors the matter may be reported to the police. Legal action will also be considered. In such cases, the Parish Council may not give the complainant or correspondent prior warning.

Restricting access to the Parish Council

3.9 The Parish Council will decide whether the circumstances justify any restriction of access. They will record the reason for their decision and explain it to the person or group concerned. They will state for how long any restriction will apply before it is reconsidered, and how the decision can be challenged.

3.10 The sort of restrictions imposed could include:

(a) restricting e-mails / telephone calls to specified days and limited times
(b) limiting contacts to one form only (for example, a maximum of one letter in advance of each Parish Council meeting)
(c) requiring contact to take place only with the Clerk and/or a named

3.11 Other suitable options will be considered in the light of the complainant or correspondent's circumstances. The objective of the Parish Council, wherever possible, is to ensure that any decisions to restrict access are dealt with in a managed way.

3.12 If a complainant or correspondent attends the public meetings of the Parish Council and is deemed by those Councillors present to be affecting the normal running of the meeting then the Chairman will have the right to request the individual concerned to leave the meeting.

3.13 The Parish Council will review any restrictions imposed every six months or at the meeting following expiry of such a restriction order to determine whether they are still necessary and should remain in place or be extended.

Terminating access to the Parish Council

3.14 If a complainant or correspondent continues to behave unreasonably, and overrides the restrictions placed on access to the Parish Council, the Parish Council may decide to terminate all contact with them.

Adopted by the council on: 7/10/2024