

## **Wickham Parish Council**

### **Procedure for handling complaints**

**Adopted 19<sup>th</sup> July 2010**

**Reviewed 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2015 with no amendments**

#### **Introduction**

This procedure is to deal with complaints made about the administration of the council or about its procedures. Complaints about an employee of the council should be dealt with as an employment matter; complaints about a councillor are subject to the jurisdiction of the Standards Board. The Code of Practice is based on the recommendations received from NALC 30<sup>th</sup> July 2003.

#### **Code of practice**

##### **Before the meeting**

1. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the council's procedures or administration in writing to the clerk or other nominated proper officer.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the clerk or other proper officer, they may be advised to put it to the chairman of the council.
3. The clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the council or by the committee established 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 council with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The 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 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 council's position.
12. Members to ask any question of the clerk or other proper officer.
13. Clerk or other proper officer and complainant to be offered opportunity of last word (in this order.)
14. Clerk or other 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 or other proper officer and complainant return to hear decision, or to be advised when decision will be made.
16. Should the need arise an independent arbitrator acceptable to both parties will be appointed

**After the meeting**

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