

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Introduction

1.1 Whissendine Parish Council believes that complaints can provide useful information and feedback on the quality of our services, procedures and practices. The effective handling of complaints will help us to improve.

1.2 Specific arrangements, prescribed in law, are in place in relation to complaints about the actions of Councillors. These arrangements are referred to in more detail below (paragraph 5 refers).

1.3 The complaints procedure is to be implemented in relation to all complaints received by the Council, whether these seem of a minor or serious nature or whether they are informal or formal. However, the Parish Council will reserve the right not to act upon or consider, complaints that are submitted anonymously.

1.4 The following procedure will be adopted for dealing with complaints about the Council's services, administration or its procedures.

1.5 The aim of the policy is to swiftly investigate all complaints in an impartial manner and to find a solution locally, whenever possible, to the satisfaction of both the complainant and the Council

2. Description of Complaints

2.1 A complaint may relate to activities or actions where:-

- The Council has not done something it has a duty to do or normally does;
- The Council has done something it has no right to do or does not normally do as a matter of course;
- The conduct or behaviour of The Clerk is unsatisfactory;
- A person does not understand or is not informed of why or how a situation arose or exists;
- An adopted procedure is not followed;
- Maladministration is alleged.

3. What to do if you have a Complaint

3.1 Complaints should always be directed in the first instance to the Clerk of the Council. Complaints may be submitted by e-mail or letter to the contact points detailed at the end of this document.

3.2 It is expected that most complaints can be resolved quickly and amicably through this route. However, the Council appreciates that on occasions if an informal approach has not resolved the complaint, or that the initial complaint is regarded as particularly serious, then the formal complaints process should be followed.

3.3 In case that an informal resolution has not resolved the issue then a formal process may be used. Formal complaints must be writing, giving details of dates and times of incidents so that a thorough investigation can be undertaken. Investigations will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

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3.4 If the complaint relates to the actions of the Parish Clerk personally, the complaint should be addressed directly to the Chairman of the Parish Council whose contact details can be found in the Grapevine or on whissendine.net (alternative they can be posted C/O 33 Ashwell Rd, Whissendine – marked FAO Chairman Personally).

4. How the Council will respond to Complaints

4.1 If following investigation into the complaint the Council is found to be at fault, every effort will be made to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant.

4.2 If following investigation into the complaint the Council does not agree with or support the substance of the complaint, the complainant will be advised accordingly and also advised what further action, if any, may be available.

4.3 If the complainant is not satisfied with action taken by the Parish Clerk, then s/he should write to the Chairman (c/o 33 Ashwell Rd, Whissendine – marked FAO the Chairman Personally). The Chairman will review the complaint and any relevant paperwork and, if s/he believes it appropriate, will submit the complaint to the Council or a relevant sub-Committee for consideration.

4.4 In order to preserve any confidentiality issues, the Council will normally consider such complaints in private session so that details of individual complainants will not be released publicly. Such complaints will be dealt with as quickly as possible but may have to wait for final response until after a scheduled council meeting.

5. Complaints against Councillors

5.1 The above process does not cover complaints about the actions or activities of an individual Councillor which are felt to be in breach of the adopted Code of Conduct. Should you wish to make a complaint about the behaviour of an individual Councillor you must write to: The Monitoring Officer at Rutland County Council or complete the online form at rutland.gov.uk or follow the link at the bottom of the Parish Councillors' page on whissendine.net. The Monitoring Officer is only able to deal with complaints about the behaviour of a Councillor. S/he will not deal with complaints about matters that are not covered by the Councillors' Code of Conduct. Complaints must be about a Councillor's failure to follow the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct is accessible from rutland.gov.uk and whissendine.net (Parish Councillors page)

5.3 The Monitoring Officer will not look into complaints that are about:

- Employees of Whissendine Parish Council.
- Incidents that happened before a councillor was elected or chosen to serve on the council.
- The way the Parish conducts or records its meetings.
- Any allegation that the Parish has or has not done something.
- Decisions of Whissendine Parish Council.
- Any services provided by the Whissendine Parish Council.