

Woodplumpton Parish Council

Code of Practice for Handling Complaints

It was RESOLVED on the **20th June 2011 (Min 33/2011)** that every duly-made complaint should be dealt with in accordance with the following Code of Practice, regardless of however trivial it might appear to be at first sight.

The Code of Practice was reviewed and amended in **June 2018** as part of the review into Standing Orders and was also examined and put in to practice during a complaint investigation in **Jan 2019**.

Code of Practice

- 1) If a complaint about procedures or administration is notified orally to a councillor or the clerk and they cannot satisfy the complainant fully forthwith the complainant shall be asked to put the complaint in writing to the clerk and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.
- 2) If a complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the clerk he or she shall be advised to put it to the chairman.
- 3) a) On receipt of a written complaint the clerk or chairman, as the case may be, shall (except where the complaint is about his or her own actions) try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant but shall not do so in respect of a complaint about the behaviour of the clerk or a councillor without first notifying the person complained of and giving an opportunity for comment on the manner in which it is intended to attempt to settle the complaint.
b) Where the clerk or chairman receives a written complaint about his or her own actions he or she shall forthwith refer the complaint to the council.
- 4) The clerk or chairman shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.
- 5) The clerk or chairman shall bring any written complaint which has not been settled to the next meeting of the Council and the clerk shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered, and the complainant shall be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint orally.
- 6) 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.
- 7) As soon as possible after the decision has been made, the decision and the nature of any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.
- 8) A Council shall defer dealing with any written complaint only if advice is necessary from the Society of Local Council Clerks or the Lancashire Association of Councils. The complaint shall be dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.
- 9) If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint he may contact the City Council's Standards Committee as detailed in the attached leaflet.

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