

Rodborough Parish Council

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS AGAINST RODBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

PREFACE

From time-to-time members of the public may have complaints about the administration or procedures of a Rodborough Parish Council. Local councils are not subject to the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman. Other than that it is recommended for transparency in local government and for the benefit of good local administration that councils should adopt a standard formal procedure for considering complaints: either made by complainants directly or referred back to the council from other bodies to whom they have been made. The Code of Practice set out below is based on a recommended model, as a way of ensuring that complainants can feel satisfied that at the very least their complaint has been properly and fully considered.

Councils have been urged to do their utmost to settle complaints and satisfy complainants in the interest of the good reputation of the council.

Rodborough Parish Council will bear in mind the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 as well as the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in dealing with complaints.

MODEL CODE OF PRACTICE IN HANDLING COMPLAINTS

1. If the person receiving the complaint believes the complaint is about the behaviour of:
 - a. A member of staff the complaint should be passed directly to the Chair to determine whether it is a disciplinary matter;
 - b. A councillor, the appropriate procedure should be used.
2. If a complaint about procedures or administration is notified orally to a councillor or the Clerk to the Council and it is not possible to satisfy the complainant in full immediately, the complainant shall be asked to put his/her complaint in writing to the Clerk to the Council and receive an assurance on receipt that the matter will be dealt with promptly.
3. If a complainant indicates that he/she would prefer not to put the complaint to the Clerk to the Council then he/she should be advised to put it to the Chairman of Council.
4. On receipt of a written complaint, the Clerk to the Council or the Chairman, as the case may be, shall (except where the complaint is

about the actions of either the clerk or the chair or both) try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant within the existing policy of the council. Where the Clerk to the Council or Chairman receives a written complaint about his own actions, he/she shall immediately refer the complaint to the council.

5. The Clerk to the Council or the Chairman shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.
6. The Clerk to the Council or the Chairman shall bring any written complaint that cannot be settled to the next meeting of the council, and the Clerk to the Council shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered.
7. The council shall consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and the public. The matter before the council in this case will be to establish whether there is a factual basis to the complaint and the action that should then be taken.
8. After the decision has been made it shall be communicated in writing to the complainant within ten working days of the decision being made.
9. In the event of complaints or requests of a serial facetious, vexatious or malicious nature from a member of the public the matter should be referred to the council.
10. Complaints received from an individual on behalf of someone else cannot be processed unless the source has been corroborated and agrees to the complaint going forward.

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