



## Coughton Parish Council

# Complaints Procedure

(May 2018)

## Introduction

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public. This could be regarding action or lack of action, the standard of service, or the conduct of a Councillor or employee.

Some complaints should be referred and dealt with by other more appropriate bodies:

- Financial irregularities might have to be dealt with by the Council's auditor or by The Audit Commission.
- Criminal activity should be dealt with by the police.
- Conduct of Councillors should be referred to the Standards Committee of Stratford District Council.
- Employee misconduct should reported then dealt with through an internal disciplinary procedure.

## Confidentiality

The identity of the complainant will only be made known to those who will consider the complaint.

## The Procedure

All complaints should be submitted via the Clerk in the first instance, unless the complaint relates to the Clerk, in which case the complaint should be directed to the Council Chairman.

Three or more Councillors shall consider the complaint, drawn from the members of the Council.

The Clerk or chairman will acknowledge receipt of the complaint **within 3 working days**, advising the complainant how the complaint will be reviewed and if it is to be treated as confidential.

Depending on the seriousness of the complaint, the complainant may be invited to attend a meeting in person, at which they may be accompanied by a representative if they so wish.

The complainant must provide the Clerk or Chairman with copies of any documentation

or other evidence to be relied on and the Clerk or Chairman shall promptly respond to the complainant, supplying copies of any documentation upon which Council wish to rely, so that if Councillors and the complainant are to meet all will be able to read the material in good time for the meeting.

If a meeting is not called, Councillors will consider the complaint against any evidence to determine its merit and any action required. The Clerk or Chairman will communicate the subsequent decision and report the outcome at the next full Council meeting.

### **If a meeting is convened:**

Councillors must decide whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press.

The Clerk or Chairman shall introduce everyone and explain the procedure.

The complainant (or representative) shall outline the grounds for the complaint and answer any questions from the Clerk, Chairman or Councillors.

The complainant and then the Clerk or Chairman shall be offered the opportunity to summarise their case.

The complainant and the Clerk or Chairman will then leave the meeting while Councillors decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint are justified. If a point of clarification is necessary both the clerk and the complainant shall be called back into the meeting.

The complainant and the Clerk or Chairman shall be given the opportunity to wait for a decision but if the decision is unlikely to be finalised immediately they will be advised as soon as possible by a previously agreed method.

The decision shall be confirmed to the complainant in writing within seven days of being made, together with details of any action to be taken.

This Complaints Procedure was adopted by the Council at its meeting on \_\_\_\_\_ and should be reviewed every three years.