



SOMPTING PARISH COUNCIL

POLICY ON: COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE v2

Sompting Parish Council is committed to providing the best service it can for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality.

This Complaints Procedure sets out what to do in the case of any dissatisfaction regarding the standard of service received from the Council. This document shows how complaints regarding any action (or lack of action) can be reported, and the steps the Council will take to try to resolve any issues. In the text the use of the male gender is to be treated as including the female gender.

This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how council employees have dealt with your concerns.

This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:-

- Complaints from one Council employee against another Council employee, or between a Council employee and the Council as an employer. These matters are dealt with under the Council's disciplinary and grievance procedure.
- Complaints against Councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members. If a complaint against a Councillor is received by the Council, it will be referred to the Monitoring Officer of Adur District Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against Councillors may be obtained from the Monitoring Officer.
- Complaints concerning financial irregularities should be directed to the Parish Council's external auditors. Contact details may be obtained from the Clerk.
- Complaints concerning criminal activity should be reported to the Police.

In the first instance a complaint should be notified to the Parish Council office or a Councillor. This can be orally or written. On receipt of a complaint, the Clerk, Chairman of Committee or Chairman of the Council, whichever is applicable, shall (except where the complaint is against his own actions) try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant in a timely and efficient manner. If the complainant is not satisfied with the action taken, the complainant will be asked to put the complaint officially in writing to the Clerk. This may be by letter or by e-mail. The Clerk will usually acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five working days.

Should the complainant indicate that he would prefer not to put the complaint to the Clerk he shall be advised to put it in writing to the Chairman of the relevant Committee or the Chairman of the Council.

The Clerk or the Council (as appropriate) will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from the complainant and/ or staff or members of the Council.

The Clerk or Chairman shall bring any written complaint which cannot be 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.

The Council shall consider whether the circumstances surrounding any complaint should be discussed in the absence of press and public, but any decision on a complaint dealt with in this way shall be announced at the next Council meeting in public session.

The Clerk or Chairman of the Council will notify the complainant of the outcome of the complaint and of what action (if any) the Council proposes to take. The time frame for this is usually 20 working days but, in exceptional cases, this may need to be extended. The complainant will be notified of the extension.