

PAULERSPURY PARISH COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE CODE OF PRACTICE

Introduction.

The Local Government Ombudsman has no jurisdiction over Parish Councils.

- Complaints about employees will be dealt with as an employment matter and will be dealt with internally.
- Complaints about a councillor are subject to the jurisdiction of the Standards Board and should be referred to the Monitoring Officer at South Northants Council or the Standards Board for England and Wales.
- Complaints about the council as an employer should be dealt with in accordance with current advice issued by ACAS and in line with the Disciplinary and Grievance procedure as laid down in the employee's current Contract of Employment.

All complaints received by Paulerspury Parish Council on whatever grounds shall be considered initially by the appointed Council's Complaints Panel. This panel consists of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman and one other member.

The procedure is designed to provide a transparent, fair, effective and prompt resolution of all complaints. The panel will treat all parties equally and aim to reach a conclusion which is mutually satisfactory. The council also acknowledges that this procedure can be a positive exercise.

If the clerk is to represent the position of the council at the meeting he/she may not advise the committee in its discussions.

Should the council be unable to resolve the matter it will take appropriate advice.

A copy of this code has been supplied to South Northants Council Monitoring Officer.

PROCEDURES

Prior to the meeting.

1. The complaint should be made in writing to the clerk.
2. If the complainant is unwilling to write to the clerk then the chairman should be written to.
3. The letter will be acknowledged in writing and state that the matter will be considered by the Complaints Panel. The complainant will be invited to attend the meeting and to bring along a second party if they desire.
4. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting the complainant shall provide the Panel with copies of any documentation or other evidence they wish to refer to at the meeting. The Panel will likewise supply the complainant with copies of any documentation to which they would refer to at the meeting.

At the meeting.

5. The Panel will consider whether the circumstances of the complaint warrant the exclusion of the public and press. Any decision shall be announced in public at the next Parish Council meeting.
6. The Chairman will introduce everybody in attendance.
7. The Chairman will explain the procedure.
8. The complainant or their representative will outline the grounds for the complaint.
9. Members of the Panel will address questions to the complainant (or representative).
10. If relevant the clerk will clarify the Council's position.
11. Panel members will ask questions of the clerk.
12. The clerk and the complainant (in that order) will be offered the opportunity to make a final comment
13. The clerk and complainant shall be asked to leave the room while Panel Members consider the matter before them. Should clarification of any point be required then both parties will be temporarily invited back into the room.

- I4. The clerk and complainant will be invited to return to the meeting to hear the decision or to be advised when the decision will be arrived at and the reason for deferral.

After the meeting

- I5. The decision reached will be confirmed in writing to the complainant within seven working days together with any action taken. The recommendations of the Panel shall be put before the next full meeting of the Parish Council.