

WOMERSLEY PARISH COUNCIL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE JANUARY 2021.

Complaints are expressions of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the Parish Council's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service, whether the action was taken or the service provided by the Council itself or a person or body action on behalf of the Council.

This procedure is to cover action required by Womersley Parish Council in the case of a complaint being received.

1. In the event of serial facetious, vexatious or malicious complaints from a member of the public the council should consider taking legal advice before writing any letters to the complainant.

2. On receipt of a complaint, the Parish Clerk in consultation with the chair will ascertain the nature of the complaint and take the relevant action within 20 working days.

3. Complaint regarding Financial Irregularity

The Parish Clerk/RFO should endeavour to provide an explanation of the item. The Parish Clerk/RFO may need to consult the Auditor. If the complainant is not satisfied, the PARISH CLERK should advise the complainant of the local elector's statutory right to object pursuant to S16 Audit Commission Act 1998 to the external auditors currently PKF Littlejohn. Should it be alleged that Criminal Activity is the nature of the complaint then the Parish Clerk should refer the complainant to the Police

4. If the complaint relates to Member Conduct due to a failure to comply with the Parish Council's Code of Conduct, the complainant should be advised to submit the complaint to the Parish Council's Standards committee.

5. A complaint regarding employee conduct is an internal disciplinary matter, this should be dealt with under the council's disciplinary procedure.

6. Other complaints will be dealt with under the following complaints procedures.

Before the Meeting of the Complaints Committee

1. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the Council's procedures or administration in writing to the Parish Clerk or other nominated officer.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Parish Clerk or other nominated officer, he or she should be advised to address it to the chairman of the committee.
3. The Parish Clerk or other nominated officer, in consultation with the appropriate chairman, shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and attempt to address the complaint. The complainant will be advised of this action; if they still wish to pursue the matter it will be considered by the committee established for the purposes of hearing complaints. The complainant should also be advised whether the complaint will be treated as confidential or whether, for example, notice of it will be given in the usual way on the committee agenda.
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend a meeting of the committee and to bring with them a representative if they wish.
5. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence relied on. The council

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- shall provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting and shall do so promptly, allowing the claimant the opportunity to read the material in good time for the meeting.
6. At the meeting, the Parish Council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the committee meeting in public.
 7. The chairman of the committee should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
 8. The complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by (i) the clerk or other nominated officer and then (ii), members.
 9. The Parish Clerk or other nominated officer will have an opportunity to explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant and (ii), members.
 10. The Parish Clerk or other nominated officer and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
 11. The Parish Clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant should be asked to leave the room while members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties shall be invited back.
 12. The Parish Clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant should be given the opportunity to wait for the decision but if the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day they should be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.
 13. After the Meeting. The decision should be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.

ADOPTED AT THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 31ST JULY 2017