

Darsham Parish Council

Procedure for Dealing with Complaints against the Council

Before processing a complaint

1. All formal complaints against the Council must be communicated in writing. A form for this purpose is available on the Council's website under the link 'Making a Complaint'.
2. The complainant must be asked at the outset to confirm if he/she wants the complaint to be treated confidentially. This is included as a question on the complaint form. It is unlikely that the complainant will waive confidentiality but, even if they do, the Council must comply with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 to safeguard against the unlawful disclosure of personal data.
3. The complaints procedure is not a means of redress for members or staff. If you have a complaint against a Parish Councillor you should write to:

The Monitoring Officer East Suffolk Council
East Suffolk House
Melton
Woodbridge
IP12 1RT

If you have a complaint against an employee of the Parish Council, you should write to the Chair:

Chairman Mrs Jasmine Backhouse
Private & Confidential
c/o Darsham Parish Council
21 Ferry Road
Orford
Woodbridge
IP12 2NR

jasbackhouse@gmail.com

If you have any other complaint you should write to the Proper Officer to the Council:

Mrs Marie Backhouse
Darsham Parish Council
21 Ferry Road
Orford
Woodbridge
IP12 2NR

clerkdarshampc@gmail.com

To allow your complaint about the Parish Council's procedures or administration to be dealt with, the Parish Council has adopted the following procedure which will be followed where complaints cannot be resolved less formally by the Clerk to the Council or the prevailing Chairman. The Parish Council will not deal with anonymous complaints.

Receipt of the complaint

4. Receipt of a complaint will be acknowledged in writing within seven days, indicating the following information:-
 - Who will be dealing with the complaint (e.g. title of member of staff, a particular committee or sub-committee)
 - The timeframe for investigating the complaint
 - Whether there will be an opportunity for the complainant to make verbal representations (and bring a friend when doing so) and when this will occur
 - The timeframe for determining the complain
 - Whether there is an opportunity to appeal the outcome of the complaint and an explanation of the appeal process
 - Whether the complaint will be treated as confidential (most likely)
 - Confirm the next steps in the complaints procedure

Investigating the complaint

5. The Council will investigate the facts of the complaint and collate relevant evidence.
6. If the complainant is to be invited to make verbal representations they will be invited to a meeting with the Clerk (or other nominated officer). Before the meeting, and within a specified period, the complainant shall provide the Clerk or nominated officer with any new information or other evidence relevant to the complaint, and the Clerk (or nominated officer) shall provide the complainant with new information or evidence relevant to the complaint.

Meetings with the complainant (if applicable)

7. If the complainant is invited to a meeting, the Clerk, nominated officer or chairman of the meeting should explain how the meeting will proceed.
8. The complainant should outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by the Clerk (or other nominated officer).
9. The Clerk (or other nominated officer) will have an opportunity to explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by the complainant.
10. The Clerk (or other nominated officer), and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their respective positions.
11. The complainant should be advised when a decision about the complaint is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.

After the complaint has been decided

12. Within four weeks of receipt of the complaint, the Council should write to the complainant with the outcome of the complaint, to include the following:-

- Whether it has upheld the complaint, together with reasons for the decision
- Details of any action to be taken
- That there is no right of appeal

To be adopted July 2023. Review date July 2024.

Signed Chair _____

Date _____