

## **Complaints Procedure**

### **Aim of the complaint's procedure.**

Shedfield Parish Council ('The Council') aims to learn from complaints and, where they are found to be justified, to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to improve services.

It will:

- Ensure that anyone who wishes to make a complaint knows how to go about it.
- Respond to a complaint efficiently and within a reasonable time.
- Ensure that service users are satisfied that the complaint has been taken seriously and, where possible, reasonable measures have been taken to improve services.

All complaints will be dealt with in confidence, and the name of the complainant will not be revealed by the Parish Council, except where it is the wish of the complainant in compliance with data protection legislation and GDPR.

### **What is a complaint?**

The Parish Council will investigate a complaint from a person, or their nominated representative, if it is one of the following:

- An expression of dissatisfaction about the failure to provide or meet the expected standard of a service.
- Neglect or delay in responding to a contact with the Council.
- Failure to observe the Parish Council's policies or procedures.
- Discourteous or dishonest conduct by a member of staff.
- Harassment, bias or discrimination.

The Complaints Procedure does not cover:

- Complaints about the conduct of Councillors. These should be reported to the Monitoring Officer at Winchester City Council.
- Where a person wishes to disagree with a Council decision or policy or makes a request under the Freedom of Information Act, whereby there are alternative processes for representation in place.
- Anonymous complaints.

The complainant will be asked to put the complaint in writing (by letter or email) to the Clerk to the Council at the Parish Office or if the complaint concerns the Clerk, to the Chairman of the Parish Council. Complaints will only be considered if formally received in writing.

**Shedfield Parish Office, Upper Church Road, Shedfield, Southampton, Hampshire SO32 2JB**

Telephone: 01329 830060 Mobile: 07918 623009

Email: [clerk@shedfieldparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@shedfieldparishcouncil.org.uk)

[www.shedfieldparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.shedfieldparishcouncil.org.uk) reviewed P & P 12 April 2023 adopted 12 June 2023

The complaint will be acknowledged within seven (7) days of receipt. The acknowledgement will detail:

- That the complaint will be treated as confidential,
- Who will deal with the complaint,
- The timeframe for investigating the complaint,
- When and how the complainant can make verbal representations.
- Who will decide the complaint?
- The timeframe for decision.

### **How a complaint is dealt with.**

#### **Stage 1.**

- On receipt of a written complaint, the Clerk to the Council (except where the complainant is about his or her own actions) or Chair of Council (if the complaint relates to the Clerk) will notify the person complained about and give him or her an opportunity by negotiation to resolve the issue. Efforts should be made to resolve the complaint at this stage.
- If resolved, the Clerk to the Council (or Chair) will report any complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant to the next appropriate meeting of the Council.
- If the complaint has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant within 4 weeks from the date of receipt of the written complaint, Stage 2 of the process will commence.

#### **Stage 2.**

- Within 4 weeks of the commencement of this Stage of the process, a meeting of the Complaints Committee will be called. The complaints committee will consist of the Chair of the Council, the Clerk and at least two other members of the Council. If the complaint is against the Chair, at least three other members of the Council will attend.
- The Clerk will notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered, and the complainant will be offered an opportunity to attend the meeting and to explain the complaint to the Council orally. The complainant will be entitled to bring with them representatives and or individuals to support them.
- The public will be excluded from the meeting.
- At least seven (7) days prior to the meeting, the Complainant shall provide the Council with copies of documentation or other evidence which they wish to rely on at the meeting.
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### **Procedure at the meeting.**

- Chairman to introduce everyone.
- Chairman to explain procedure.
- Complainant (or representative) to outline grounds for complaint.
- Members to ask any question of the complainant.
- If relevant, Clerk or other Proper Officer to explain the Council's position.
- Members to ask any question of the Clerk or other proper officer.
- Clerk or another Proper Officer and complainant to summarise.
- The complainant will be asked to leave the room together with the Clerk or Chair if the complaint is against either of them, whilst members decide whether or not the grounds for complaint have been made. (If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties are to be invited back).
- The complainant to return to hear the decision (together with the Clerk or Chair if either have been excluded from the discussions) or to be advised when decision will be communicated.

### **What happens next?**

As soon as possible after the decision has been made (and in any event not later than seven (7) days after the meeting) the complainant will be notified in writing of the decision, the reasons for the decision and any action to be taken.

The Council may defer dealing with any complaint if it is of the opinion that issues arise on which further advice or information is necessary. The advice will be considered and the complaint dealt with at a meeting within 4 weeks after the advice has been received. The Complainant will be advised of the delay and reasons for such a delay. Unless there are exceptional circumstances (where the committee can refer the decision to the Full Council), the decision of the complaints committee will be final.

#### **Contact:**

Shedfield Parish Council

Shedfield Parish Office

Upper Church Road

Shedfield

SO32 2JB

Telephone: 01329830060

Mobile 07918623009

Email: Clerk - [clerk@shedfieldparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@shedfieldparishcouncil.org.uk)

: Chairman - [Cllrstuartdyne@shedfieldparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:Cllrstuartdyne@shedfieldparishcouncil.org.uk)

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