

HORDEN PARISH COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the Council or its staff affecting a customer or a group of customers.

This procedure covers complaints about the administration or procedures of the Council (taking note of Standing Order 77).

Complaints about individuals are a separate matter; complaints about an employee would be dealt with as an employment issue and where applicable, covered under the Council's Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure.

Complaints about a Councillor should be made to the Standards Board for England. Complaints about policy decisions made by the Council shall be referred back to the Council for their consideration (taking note of Standing Order 36).

Horden Parish Council takes the views of local people very seriously and needs to be aware when there is dissatisfaction in the services which the Council delivers. The outcome of a complaint will assist the Council in reviewing and where necessary changing the way services are delivered.

Formal complaints shall be dealt with by the Governance Committee, which shall be made up of all Members of the Council and convened as necessary.

The Governance Committee shall report its conclusions to the next Parish Council meeting following any hearing.

Making a Complaint

1. Complainants should make complaints about the Council's decisions, procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk.
2. Within two working days of receipt of a complaint, the Clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint in writing, to the complainant. The Clerk will try to achieve a positive outcome to the complaint informally.
3. The Clerk or other officer shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of informally with the complainant.
4. Where a complaint cannot be settled informally, within five working days of receipt of a complaint, a date shall be set for a Governance Committee meeting and the complainant advised in writing of this date.
5. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish.
6. Not less than five clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting.
7. The Council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

At the Meeting

1. The 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 Council meeting in public.
2. The Chairman of the meeting shall introduce everyone.
3. The Chairman of the meeting shall explain the procedure.
4. The complainant (or their representative) shall outline the grounds for complaint.
5. The members of the committee may ask any question of the complainant.
6. If relevant, the Clerk or other officer shall explain the Council's position.
7. Members may ask any question of the Clerk or other officer.
8. The Clerk, or other officer and the complainant shall be offered the opportunity of last word (in this order).
9. The complainant shall 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, the complainant shall be invited back).
10. The complainant shall return to hear the decision, or to be advised when the decision shall be made.
11. The decision of the Council shall be final.

After the Meeting

12. The decision shall be confirmed in writing within five working days together with details of any action to be taken.

Reviewed 28th May 2009
Paul Davison
Clerk to the Council