

# HARLING PARISH COUNCIL

## Complaints Policy

### Introduction

1. This policy sets out procedures for dealing with any complaints received about the administration or procedures of Harling Parish Council.
2. It applies to the Council's employees. Councillors are covered by the Member Code of Conduct last reviewed March 2019
3. Complaints against policy decisions made by the Council shall be referred back to full Council.
4. If a complaint about procedures or administration as practised by the Parish Council is notified orally to the Clerk to the Parish Council, they should seek to satisfy the complaint fully. If that fails, the complainant should be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk to the Parish Council and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.
5. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk to the Parish Council, he or she should be advised to put it to the Chairman of the Parish Council or the Vice Chairman.
6. On receipt of a written complaint the Chairman of the Parish Council or the Clerk to the Parish Council (except where the complainant is about his or her own actions), shall try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This shall not be done without first notifying the person complained against and giving him or her opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to attempt to settle the complaint at this stage.
7. Where the Clerk to the Parish Council or the Chairman of the Parish Council receives a written complaint about the Clerk to the Parish Council's own actions, he or she shall refer the complaint to the Chairman of Council. The Clerk to the Parish Council shall be notified and given an opportunity to comment.
8. The Clerk to the Parish Council or Chairman of the Parish Council shall report to the next meeting of the Parish Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.
9. The Clerk to the Parish Council or Chairman of the Parish Council shall bring any written complaint that has not been settled to the next meeting of the Parish Council. The Clerk to the Parish Council shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered and the complainant shall be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint orally. (Unless such a matter may be related to Grievance, Disciplinary or Standard Board proceedings that are taking, or likely to take place when such a hearing may prejudice those hearings when the complaint will have to be heard under Exempt Business to exclude any member of the public or the press, or deferred on appropriate advice received).

10. The Parish Council shall consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public but any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Parish Council meeting in public.
11. As soon as may be after the decision has been made it and the nature of any action to be taken
12. Shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.
13. The Council shall defer dealing with any written complaint only if it is of the opinion that issues of law or practice arise on which advice is necessary. The complaint shall be dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.
14. Complaints regarding Data Protection concerns should be made to the Clerk of Harling Parish Council in writing either by e-mail [clerk@harlingpc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@harlingpc.org.uk) or by post to 5 The Bailiwick, East Harling, NR16 2NF
15. Depending on the nature of the complaint the complainant may be required to provide proof of identity.
16. A complaint will be dealt with during the 30 days following a validated complaint.
17. If the complainant is not satisfied with the solution offered by Harling Parish Council then he/she can take the complaint regarding Data Protection directly to the Information Commissioner's Office.
18. Adopted 2004 and reviewed May 2020