

# SHINCLIFFE PARISH COUNCIL

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This procedure covers complaints about the administration or procedures of the Council.

Complaints about individuals are a separate matter, complaints about an employee would be dealt with as an employment issue and complaints about a Councillor should be made to the Standards Board for England. Complaints against policy decisions made by the Council shall be referred back to Council (taking note of Standing Order 14).

Shincliffe Parish Council takes the views of local people seriously and need 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.

Complaints shall be dealt with by the Complaints Committee, which shall be made up of 4 Members of the Council (quorum of 3) and convened as and when necessary. The Complaints Committee shall report its conclusions to the next Parish Council meeting following any hearing and any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.

### **Making a Complaint**

1. Complainants should make complaints about the Council's procedures or administration in writing (letter **not email**) to the Clerk. This letter must be signed and addressed.
2. Within three working days of receipt of a complaint, the Clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint in writing to the complainant and try to settle the complaint directly.
3. The Clerk shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.
4. Where a complaint cannot be settled directly, within seven working days of receipt of a complaint, a date shall be set for a complaints 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 seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Clerk/Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The Clerk/Council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

### **At the Meeting**

7. The Committee shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press.
8. The Chairman of the meeting shall introduce everyone.
9. The Chairman of the meeting shall explain the procedure.
10. The complainant, (or their representative) shall outline the grounds for complaint.
11. The members of the committee may ask any question of the complainant.
12. If relevant, the Clerk shall explain the Council's position.
13. Members may ask any question of the Clerk.
14. The Clerk and the complainant shall be offered the opportunity of last word (in this order).
15. The Clerk and 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, both parties shall be invited back).
16. The Clerk and the complainant shall return to hear the decision, or to be advised when decision shall be made.

### **After the Meeting**

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

### **Right of Appeal**

18. If the complainant is not satisfied with how a complaint has been dealt with they can appeal in writing to the Council, setting out what they are unhappy with and the grounds.
19. The appeal will be considered by 3 Councillors who were not previously involved in the investigation of the original complaint. This will consist of a review of the original investigation and outcome, together with any action taken as a result.
20. The complainant will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review.

21. Appeals received more than one month after the date of the decision letter will not be considered.

**Adopted - 18th April 2017**

**Last Reviewed – 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

**To be reviewed – 21<sup>st</sup> May 2020**