

# WHADDON PARISH COUNCIL

## Complaints Procedure

Whaddon Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service to our residents. Our preference is to deal with any complaints amicably and orally, directly with you. If you have a complaint please contact our Clerk or, if the matter concerns our Clerk, our Chairman. The Clerk (or Chairman) will try to resolve the matter directly with you in a timely manner (wherever possible within 20 working days). However, should it not be possible to resolve your complaint informally then we will follow the complaints procedures shown below.

### 1) Complaints about Procedures, Services or Administration

1. Any complaint about procedures, services or administration, should be put in writing (either letter or email) to the Clerk. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk (e.g. where the matter relates to the Clerk) they should put it to the Chairman\*.
2. The Clerk or the Chairman\* should acknowledge receipt of any written complaint within 10 working days of receipt and advise the complainant how it is intended to deal with the complaint.
3. The Clerk or Chairman\* should, in the first instance, try to resolve the complaint directly with the complainant. This shall not be done without first notifying any person whose actions have been complained about and giving them the opportunity to comment. The Clerk or Chairman\* shall report at the next full meeting of the Parish Council any written complaint resolved by direct action with the complainant. Due consideration shall be given to whether the confidentiality of the complainant and nature of the complaint should be maintained.
4. If it is not possible to resolve the complaint by direct action, or the complainant wishes to use the formal resolution process, then the Clerk or Chairman\* shall report the matter at the next full Parish Council meeting. The Parish Council will decide when the complaint will be considered and the Clerk will notify the complainant of the date. The complainant (or their representative) will be invited to attend and given the opportunity to explain the complaint to the Parish Council verbally.
5. The Parish Council may consider whether the circumstances of the complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public but any decision on the complaint will be announced at the Parish Council meeting in public.
6. The Parish Council may defer dealing with any complaint if it is of the opinion that issues arise on which further advice is necessary. Such advice will be considered and the complaint dealt with at the next Parish Council meeting after the advice has been received. The complainant will be informed in writing of any delay due to deferral.
7. As soon as possible after the decision has been made and no later than 10 working days after the meeting the complainant will be notified in writing of the decision and any action to be taken.

## 2) Complaints about individual councillor or employee conduct

Written complaints from members of the public in relation to the conduct of an individual employee or member of the Parish Council should be addressed to the Clerk or (if it relates to the Clerk) the Chairman\*. The complaint will be dealt with by referral to the following procedures/bodies:

Complaint Type	Refer to
Member Conduct	If the complaint relates to a failure to Comply with the Code of Conduct (as adopted on 13 <sup>th</sup> August 2012) the 'Complaints Procedure for Complaints relating to a breach of the Code of Conduct for Members' will apply.
Financial Irregularity	Local electors have a statutory right to object to the Parish Council's audit of accounts under s.16 Audit Commission Act 1998.  On other financial matters the Parish Council may need to contact their auditor or the Audit Commission.  The Parish Council's auditors are currently:  Littlejohn LLP, 1 Westferry Circus, Canary Wharf, London E14 4HD Tel 020 7516 2200
Criminal Activity	The Complaints Procedure for Complaints relating to a breach of the Code of Conduct for Members <u>or</u> referral to the Police (depending on severity of complaint).
Employee Conduct	Internal Disciplinary & Grievance Procedure

This procedure will be reviewed annually at the Annual Parish Council Meeting or sooner should it be necessary due to a change in legislation or NALC Best Practice guidance.

This procedure was adopted at the Parish Council meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> January 2012 and subsequently amended on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

\* or in the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman