

# Kersey Parish Council Complaints Policy and Procedure

## Introduction

The following procedure should be followed by anyone wishing to make a complaint against Kersey Parish Council.

Parish Councillors are bound by the Code of Conduct for members which has been adopted by Kersey Parish Council. Any complaints against a Parish Councillor should be referred directly to the Monitoring Officer at Babergh District Council, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich IP1 2BX.

Complaints against an employee of the Parish Council should be addressed to the Chair of the Parish Council.

If you have any other complaint about the Parish Council you should write to the Parish Clerk.

The purpose of this complaints procedure is to put things right if things go wrong. Any complaints about the Council's procedures or administration will be dealt with fairly, in a timely fashion and the process will be reasonable, accessible and transparent. The following procedure is designed for those complaints which cannot be satisfied by less formal measures or explanations provided to the complainant by the Clerk or Chair of the Council.

## Stage One

1. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the Council's procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk, or if the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk then it should be addressed to the Chair of the Council.
2. The Clerk (or Chair) shall acknowledge receipt within 14 days.
3. The Clerk (or Chair) shall respond to the complaint with the intention of resolving the complaint. The Clerk shall also inform the Chair or another appropriate Councillor of the complaint and the resolution offered to the complainant within 21 days.
4. If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution offered then the complainant should be asked to make a written request to the Clerk (or Chair) for a meeting, confirming the grounds of the complaint.

## Stage Two – Before the meeting

5. The Clerk (or Chair) shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and request for a meeting and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered at a meeting by the Council. The complainant shall be advised whether the complaint will be treated as confidential.
6. The complainant shall be invited to attend the meeting and to bring with them a representative if they wish.
7. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence relied on. The Council shall provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting and shall do so promptly, allowing the complainant the opportunity to read the material in good time for the meeting.

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## **At the meeting**

8. The Council shall consider whether the circumstance of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.
9. The Chair should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
10. The complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint and thereafter questions may be asked by a) the Clerk and then b) Councillors.
11. The Clerk will have the opportunity to explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by a) the complainant and then b) Councillors.
12. The Clerk and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
13. The Clerk and the complainant should be asked to leave the room while Councillors 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.
14. The Clerk and the complainant should be given the opportunity to wait for the decision but if the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day they should be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.

## **After the meeting**

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

This Policy was adopted by Kersey Parish at a meeting on 4 March 2019

Minute reference: 42/19