

RINGSFIELD AND WESTON PARISH COUNCIL
COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Complaints about an employee of the Parish Council (i.e. the Clerk) should be dealt with as an employment matter. The complainant should be assured that the matter will be dealt with internally as such and appropriate action taken as required.

Complaints about a Councillor are subject to the jurisdiction of the Standards Board. Complainants should be advised to contact the appropriate body directly or the Monitoring Officer for further information.

The following code of practice is to cover those situations where a complaint has been made about the administration of the Parish Council or about its procedures. The Complaints Procedure is for considering complaints either made by complainants direct or complaints which have been refereed back to the Parish Council from other bodies. The procedure is designed for those complaints that cannot be satisfied by the Clerk or other Proper Officer or Chairman. A committee may be established to deal with complaints in which case it should report its conclusions at the next Parish Council meeting.. If the Clerk or other Proper Officer at the meeting represents the position of the Parish Council and is putting forward the justification for the action of procedure complained of, he or she should not advise the Parish Council or committee.

Code of Practice

Before the Meeting

1. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the Parish Council's procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk or other nominated Proper Officer.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk or other Proper Officer, they may be advised to put it to the Chairman of the Parish Council.
3. The Clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Parish Council or by the committee established for the purpose of hearing complaints.
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish.
5. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Parish Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The Parish Council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

At the Meeting

6. The Parish 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 Parish Council meeting in public.
7. The Chairman to introduce everyone.
8. The Chairman to explain procedure.

9. The complainant (or representative) to outline grounds for complaint.
10. Members to ask any question of the complainant.
11. If relevant, Clerk or other Proper Officer to explain Parish Council's position.
12. Members to ask any question of the Clerk or other Proper Officer.
13. Clerk or other Proper Officer and complainant to be offered opportunity of last word (in this order).
14. Clerk or other Proper Officer and complainant to 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 to be invited back.)
15. The Clerk or other Proper Officer and complainant return to hear the decision, or to be advised when a decision will be made.

After the Meeting

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