

HOCKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Complaints Procedure

1. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the council's procedures or administration in writing to the clerk or other nominated proper officer. A complaints form is to be provided however any form of written complaint is acceptable.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the clerk, they may be advised to put it to the chairman of the council.
3. If the complaint is about the conduct of a specific councillor, the matter is to be referred to the Standards Officer at Breckland District Council.
4. If the complaint is in reference to the conduct of the clerk, the matter is to be referred to the chairman to be investigated as an employment matter.
5. The clerk or chairman shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint within 10 working days and if possible, provide a resolution to the matter. If the matter cannot be resolved by the individual, the matter will be put forward to full council at the subsequent monthly meeting. Based on the information given, the full council will decide on a resolution or whether the matter should be considered by a complaints panel established for the purposes of hearing complaints. The complainant will be advised of the council's decision within 5 working days of the relevant council meeting.
6. The complaints panel shall consist of three councillors, one of which shall be the chairman or vice chairman.
7. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish.
8. 7 clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

At the Meeting

1. The 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 council meeting in public.
2. Chairman/Vice Chairman to introduce everyone.
3. Chairman/Vice Chairman to explain procedure.
4. Complainant (or representative) to outline grounds for complaint.
5. Members to ask any question of the complainant.

6. If relevant, clerk to explain the council's position.
7. Members to ask any question of the clerk.
8. Clerk and complainant to be offered opportunity of last word (in this order).
9. Clerk and complainant to be asked to leave 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).
10. Clerk and complainant return to hear decision, or to be advised when decision will be made.

After the Meeting

1. Decision confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.
2. Decision reported to full Council at the next available meeting.
3. If the Complainant feels the Councils decision is unacceptable and wishes to take the complaint to a higher authority, the next port of call will be the Breckland Council Standards Officer.

Agreed by Hockham Parish Council on 23/07/21

Chairman [REDACTED]

Clerk [REDACTED]