



**Woodham Ferrers &
Bicknacre Parish Council**



Complaints Procedure

1. This procedure relates to complaints about the administration of the Council or about its procedures. A complaint about a Councillor should be made to the Standards Board, and a complaint about an employee of the Council (ie the Clerk) should be dealt with as an employment matter.
2. The Council may establish a committee to deal with complaints. The complaint will be invited to a meeting of the committee or the whole Council. If the Council establishes a committee to hear a complaint, its conclusions will be reported at the next Council meeting.
3. Before the meeting the following steps shall be taken:
 - (i). 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. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk or other proper officer, he or she may be advised to put it to the Chairman of the Council.
 - (ii). The Clerk shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Council or by the committee established for the purposes of hearing complaints. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with him or her such representative as desired.
 - (iii). Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documentation or

other evidence which is to be referred to at the meeting. The Council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which it wishes to rely at the meeting.

4. At the meeting the procedure will be as follows:
 - (i). The Council or the committee 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.
 - (ii). The Clerk shall be present to minute the meeting.
 - (iii). The Chairman shall introduce everybody present and explain the procedure to be followed.
 - (iv). The complainant (or representative) shall outline the grounds for complaint.
 - (v). Council or committee members may ask any question of the complainant.
 - (vi). If relevant, the Clerk or other proper officer will explain the Council's position. Council or committee members may ask any question of the Clerk or other proper officer.
 - (vii). The Clerk or other proper officer and the complainant shall be offered the opportunity of a last word (in this order).
 - (viii). The Clerk or other proper officer and the complainant shall be asked to leave the room while committee or Council members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties are to be invited back.

- (ix). The Clerk or other proper officer and the complainant will return to hear the decision, or to be advised when the decision will be made.
5. After the meeting the decision will be confirmed within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.

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