

Sowerby Parish Council

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. Aim of the Complaints Procedure

- 1.1 The Council aims to learn from complaints and, where they are found to be justified, to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to improve services.
- 1.2 It will:
- ensure that anyone who wishes to make a complaint knows how to go about it;
 - respond to a complaint efficiently and within a reasonable time;
 - ensure that service users are satisfied that the complaint has been taken seriously and, where possible, reasonable measures have been taken to improve services.
- 1.3 All complaints will be dealt with in confidence and the name of the complainant will not be revealed by the Parish Council, except where it is the wish of the complainant.

2. What is a Complaint

- 2.1 The Parish Council will investigate a complaint from a person, or their nominated representative, if it is one of the following:
- An expression of dissatisfaction about the failure to provide or meet the expected standard of a service.
 - Neglect or delay in responding to a contact with the Council.
 - Failure to observe the Parish Council's policies or procedures.
 - Discourteous or dishonest conduct by a member of staff.
 - Harassment, bias or discrimination.
- 2.2 The Complaints Procedure does not cover:
- Complaints about the conduct of Councillors. These should be reported to the Monitoring Officer at Hambleton District Council.
 - Where a person wishes to disagree with a Council decision or policy.
 - Anonymous complaints.

3. To make a Complaint

- 3.1 A formal written letter of complaint must be sent to the Clerk or, if the complaint involves the Clerk, the letter should be sent to the Chairman/Vice Chairman of the Parish Council.

4. Complaint handling

- 4.1 Within five working days of receipt of the complaint, the recipient will give written acknowledgement of it, provide a copy of this complaints procedure and ascertain whether the complainant wishes the matter to be treated confidentially.
- 4.2 The formal complaint will be brought to the next meeting of the Council.
- 4.3 At the meeting, the Council will include on the agenda the appointment of three members to a committee with delegated power to handle the complaint. The committee will have full delegated power to bring the complaint to a conclusion. The Council will also resolve which member will be the Chairman of the Committee.
- 4.4 The Council (and/or Committee with delegated power) may appoint an independent person to the committee if it resolves to do so, as an independent impartial arbitrator.

- 4.5 Notice of the committee meeting will be advertised in the usual way to members of the committee, ie a summons and with three clear days' notice. A public notice will also be displayed in the usual way, ie posted in a conspicuous place in the parish and giving three clear days' notice.
- 4.6 Complainants will be asked by formal letter to attend the committee meeting and will be informed that they may be accompanied by another person.
- 4.7 At the commencement of the meeting, the committee Chairman will explain how the meeting will proceed.
- 4.8 Complainants will be asked to provide any new information or supporting evidence to the committee and will be invited to make a verbal representation to the meeting.
- 4.9 Members of the committee will be invited by the Chairman to ask questions of the complainant.
- 4.10 The Chairman of the Complaints Committee and then the complainant will summarise their respective positions
- 4.11 The complainant will then leave the meeting and the committee will consider the further findings.
- 4.12 The complainant will be informed by formal letter of the conclusions of the process within five working days of the committee meeting.
- 4.13 The committee Chairman will report the outcome of the process to the next meeting of the Parish Council.
- 4.14 Minutes of the committee meeting will be kept and will be available to all parties involved in the complaint.