

COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. Introduction

Not all queries or concerns raised are treated as 'complaints' and Eastington Parish Council is keen to ensure that any problems are resolved in an honest and effective way in order that they do not develop into complaints. If you are not satisfied with any of the Parish Council's services or the way in which your concern or query was handled you have the right to complain.

All complaints received by the Parish Council will be dealt with confidentially.

2. Purpose

The Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service to all its customers. However there are instances when the public have complaints about the administration or procedures that are used by the Parish Council. As Councils are not subject to the jurisdiction of the local Ombudsman there is no independent body to which the complainant can turn to for an independent formal assessment of the position. This Parish Council has adopted a standard Complaints Procedure to provide a transparent, fair and confidential process for dealing with complaints made by members of the public.

3. Scope

The Complaints Procedure is applicable to complaints made by members of the public about the Parish Council's administration or procedures.

The Complaints Procedure does not apply to:

- Complaints about a member of the Parish Council's staff - these will be dealt with internally as an employment matter;
- Complaints made about individual Parish Councillors – breaches of the Members Code of Conduct should be reported to the Monitoring Officer of Stroud District Council;
- Complaints about the unlawfulness of the Parish Council – the complainant may apply to the courts for a judicial review;
- Accusation of financial wrong doing – should be reported to the Parish Council's external auditor;
- Any matter which raises suspicion of criminal wrong doing may be referred to the local Police authority.

4. Code of Practice

- a) If a complaint about the procedures or administration of the Parish Council is notified orally to a Parish Councillor or the Parish Clerk and it is not possible to satisfy the complainant fully at that time, the complainant shall be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Parish Clerk;
- b) If the complainant does not wish to address the complaint to the Parish Clerk they will be advised to address it to the Chair of the Parish Council;
- c) Acknowledgement of receipt of the written complaint will be provided within 7 days. The Parish Council aims to fully respond to the complaint within 28 working days, if this is not possible you will be advised of actions taken to date;
- d) The Parish Clerk shall report at the next full Parish Council meeting any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant;
- e) The Parish Clerk shall bring any written complaint which cannot be resolved to the next full Parish Council meeting and the complainant will be informed of the date in which the complaint will be considered
- f) The Parish Council shall consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of press and public, but

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any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Parish Council meeting in public;

- g) As soon as the decision has been made the result will be communicated to the complainant in writing.
- h) The Parish Council will not consider complaints made anonymously.