

Complaints Procedure

Introduction

From time-to-time members of the public may have complaints about the administration or procedures of Cantley Parish Council. Local councils are not subject to the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman therefore this complaints procedure sets out how Cantley Parish Council will deal with such a complaint.

It should be noted that complaints about the Clerk to the Council will be dealt with as an employment matter and as such the matter should be referred to the Chairman of the Council. Appropriate action will be taken as required, in accordance with the disciplinary procedure laid out in the Clerk's Contract of Employment.

Complaints about an individual Councillor should be submitted to:

The Monitoring Officer
Broadland District Council,
The Horizon Centre,
Peachman Way,
Broadland Business Park,
Norwich
NR7 0WF

At all times, all parties will be treated fairly and the process will be reasonable, accessible and transparent.

Cantley Parish Council will bear in mind the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 as well as the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in dealing with complaints.

Complaints Procedure

1. If a complaint about procedures or administration is notified orally to a Councillor or the Clerk to the Council and it is not possible to satisfy the complainant in full immediately, the complainant shall be asked to put their complaint in writing to the Clerk to the Council and receive an assurance on receipt that the matter will be dealt with promptly.
2. If a complainant indicates that they would prefer not to put the complaint to the Clerk to the Council then they should be advised to put it to the Chairman of Council.
3. The Clerk or Chairman, as the case may be, shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Council or by a committee established for the purpose of hearing the complaint. The complainant should also be advised whether the complaint will be treated as confidential or whether, for example, notice of it will be given in the usual way (if, for example, the complaint is to be heard by a committee).
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 council with copies of any documentation or other evidence relied on. The council shall provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting and shall do so promptly, allowing the claimant the opportunity to read the material in good time for 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. The chairman should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
3. The complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by the clerk and/or Councillors.
4. The clerk or nominated Councillor will have an opportunity to explain the council's position and questions may be asked by the complainant and remaining Councillors.
5. The clerk or nominated councillor and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
6. The clerk or nominated councillor and the complainant should be asked to leave the room while the remaining councillors decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties shall be invited back.
7. The clerk or nominated councillor and the complainant should be given the opportunity to wait for the decision but if the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day they should be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.

After the Meeting

1. The decision should be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.
2. In the event of serial facetious, vexatious or malicious complaints from a member of the public the council should consider taking legal advice before writing any letters to the complainant.

Adopted: February 2016

Next Review: February 2024