

LITTLE WALDINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. This Policy sets out procedures for dealing with any complaints that anyone may have about Little Waldingfield Parish Council's (LWPC) **administration and procedures** and it applies to the LWPC's employees. Councillors are covered by **Suffolk Local Code of Conduct** which has been adopted by the council and any complaint against a councillor should be addressed to Babergh District Council's Monitoring Officer. Complaints against **policy decisions** made by LWPC shall be referred back to the Council.
2. If a complaint about procedures or administration as practised by LWPC's employees is notified orally to a Councillor or the Parish Clerk, they should seek to satisfy the complaint fully. If that fails, the complainant should be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Parish Clerk and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.
3. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Parish Clerk he or she should be advised to put it to the Chairman or Vice Chairman.
4. On receipt of a written complaint the Chairman, Vice Chairman or the Parish Clerk (*except where the complainant is about the Clerk's own actions*), shall try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This shall not be done without first notifying the person complained against and giving him or her an opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to attempt to settle the complaint at this stage.
5. Where the Chairman or Vice Chairman receives a written complaint about the Parish Clerk's own actions, the Parish Clerk shall be notified and given an opportunity to comment.
6. The Parish Clerk, Chairman or Vice Chairman shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.
7. The Parish Clerk, Chairman or Vice Chairman shall bring any written complaint that has not been settled to the next meeting of the Council. The Parish Clerk shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered and the complainant shall be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint orally. (Unless such a matter may be related to Grievance, Disciplinary proceedings that are taking, or likely to take place when such a hearing may prejudice those hearings when the complaint will have to be heard under Exempt Business to exclude any member of the public or the press, or deferred on appropriate advice received).
8. LWPC shall consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public but any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.
9. As soon as may be after the decision has been made it and the nature of any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.
10. LWPC shall defer dealing with any written complaint only if it is of the opinion that issues of law or practice arise on which advice is necessary. The complaint shall be dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.

This policy was adopted by Little Waldingfield Parish Council at its meeting on 22nd September 2015.