



# EAST PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

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## COMPLAINTS POLICY

East Preston Parish Council has adopted a standard procedure to provide a transparent process for dealing with complaints made about the administration of the council or its procedures, either directly to the council or referred on by another body.

Every effort should first be made by the Clerk or Chairman to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of the complainant by less formal measures or explanations provided before resorting to the formal complaints procedure.

In such circumstances the Finance & General Purposes Committee will meet with the complainant in an attempt to resolve the matter to mutual satisfaction and will report its conclusions to the next full council meeting.

The Code of Practice below will be employed to ensure that any complaint is properly and fully considered.

It should be noted that the procedure is not appropriate for a complaint made against an individual.

Complaints about a member of the Parish Council's staff will be dealt with as an employment matter. The matter will initially be reviewed by the Finance & General Purposes Committee, which will refer it to the Personnel Sub-Committee, which will take appropriate action as required.

Complaints regarding Parish Councillors are now subject to the jurisdiction of the Standards Board for England. In the first instance complaints should be addressed to the Monitoring Officer, Arun District Council, Civic Centre, Maltravers Street, Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 5LF.

### **Code of practice for dealing with complaints about the administration of the council or its procedures**

#### ***Before the Meeting***

1. The person making the complaint (complainant) should be asked to put the complaint about the council's procedures or administration in writing to the Parish Clerk.

2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Parish Clerk, they may be advised to put it to the Chairman of the Council.
3. The Parish Clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant that the matter will be brought to the attention of the full council, which will determine when the matter will be considered by the Finance & General Purposes 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 of other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The Parish Council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely on at the meeting.

### ***At the Meeting***

6. The Finance & General Purposes Committee must consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and press. However, any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Parish Council meeting in public.
7. Chairman to introduce everyone.
8. Chairman to explain procedure.
9. Complainant (or representative) to outline grounds for complaint.
10. Members to ask any question of the complainant.
11. If relevant, the Parish Clerk to explain the council's position.
12. Members to ask any question of the Parish Clerk.
13. Parish Clerk and complainant to be offered opportunity of last word (in this order).
14. Parish Clerk and complainant to be asked to leave room while Members decide whether or not the grounds for complaint have been made. (If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties to be invited back).
15. Parish Clerk or other proper officer and complainant return to hear decision, or to be advised when decision will be made.

### ***After the meeting***

16. Finance & General Purposes Committee to report its conclusions and any action recommended to the next full meeting of the Parish Council.
17. Decision confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.

**Policy adopted at the Full Council meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2009, and recorded in Minute 425/09, resolution 0235.**