

WESTON WITH GAYTON PARISH COUNCIL

PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

Aims

The Local Government Ombudsman has no jurisdiction over Parish Councils. This Procedure is aimed to cover situations where a complaint has been made about the administration of the Council or its procedures which cannot be satisfied by less formal measures or explanations provided to the complainant by the Clerk or other proper officer or Chairman.

A complaint about an employee of the Parish Council should be dealt with as an employment matter and resolved internally with appropriate action taken as required. Complaints about Councillors are subject to the jurisdiction of the Standards Board.

This Procedure is a way of ensuring that complainants feel satisfied that their grievance has been properly and fully considered in an efficient way, therefore preserving the good reputation of the Parish Council through a reasonable, accessible and transparent process.

In response to a complaint, the Parish Council will convene an extraordinary Parish Council meeting to consider the matter.

If the Clerk, or other proper officer, is putting forward the justification for the action or procedure complained of, he or she should not advise the extraordinary meeting.

Before the Meeting

1. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the Parish Council's procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk, s/he will be advised to put it in writing to the Chairman of the Parish Council.
3. The Clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the extraordinary meeting convened by the Parish Council.
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant extraordinary meeting and bring along a representative.
5. The complainant shall provide the Parish Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence which s/he wishes to refer to at the meeting, seven clear working days prior to the meeting. The Parish Council shall, similarly, provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which it wishes to rely at the meeting.

At the Meeting

6. The Parish 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 Parish Council meeting in public.
7. At the meeting, the Chairman will carry out the necessary introductions and explain the procedure.
8. The complainant (or his/her representative) should be asked to outline the grounds of the complaint.
9. Members should be allowed to ask any questions of the complainant.
10. If relevant, the Clerk or other proper officer should be allowed to explain the Parish Council's position.
11. Members should be allowed to ask any questions of the Clerk or other proper officer.
12. The Clerk, or other proper officer, should be offered the opportunity of a last word.
13. The complainant should be offered the opportunity of a last word.
14. The Clerk, or other proper officer, and complainant should be asked to leave the room while the Parish Council makes its decision. If a point of clarification is necessary, **both** parties must be invited back into the room.
15. The Clerk, or other proper officer, and complainant will return to the room to hear the decision, or be advised when the decision will be made.

After the Meeting

16. The decision of the Parish Council, together with details of any action to be taken, must be confirmed in writing to the complainant within seven working days.

Weston with Gayton Parish Council
January 2007
Revised July 2011