

WOODHAM WALTER PARISH COUNCIL

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

Despite the Council's best intentions, there may be times when things can go wrong and need to be brought to our attention. This will enable us to investigate how the problem occurred and in resolving it, give us the opportunity to take steps to prevent it happening again.

Woodham Walter Parish Council has therefore adopted a standard and formal procedure for considering complaints. The code set out below has been developed by the National Association of Local Councils.

This Code of Practice is designed for those complaints that cannot be satisfied by less formal measures provided to the complainant by the Clerk, other proper officer or the Chairman or nominated deputy.

The Code is aimed at those situations where a complaint has been made about the administration of the council or about its procedures. It is not an appropriate procedure for a complaint against individuals; these should be dealt with by the local Monitoring Officer at Maldon District Council.

Code of Practice

1. If a complaint about procedures or administration is notified orally to a councillor or the clerk and it is not possible to satisfy the complainant fully forthwith the complainant shall be asked to put his complaint in writing to the clerk and be assured it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.
2. If a complainant indicated that he would prefer not to put the complaint to the clerk he shall be advised to put it to the Chairman or nominated deputy.
3. On receipt of a written complaint the clerk or chairman, as the case may be, shall (except where the complaint is about his own actions) try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant but shall not do so in respect of a complaint about the behaviour of the clerk or a councillor without first notifying the person complained of and giving him an opportunity to comment on the manner in which it is intended to attempt to settle the complaint. Where the clerk or chairman received a written complaint about his own actions he shall forthwith refer the complaint to the council.
4. The clerk or chairman shall report to the next meeting of the council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.
5. The clerk or chairman shall bring any written complaint which cannot be settled to the next meeting of the council and the clerk shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered.
6. The council 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.
7. 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.

Date: 3 May 2017. Updated 23 April 2018