



Waldringfield

Parish Council

Parish Clerk: David Lines
43 Fourth Avenue, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex CO13 9DY
E: pc.waldringfield@googlemail.com
T: 01255 678888 (with voicemail)
www.waldringfield.onesuffolk.net/parishcouncil

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

Waldringfield Parish Council is committed to open and transparent governance, having put into place the necessary safeguards to ensure that its activities are conducted in a lawful, open and prudent manner.

However, there may be occasions that the Council's actions will be the subject of a complaint. It is important, therefore, that the Council provides proper and fair mechanisms for handling those complaints.

The Parish Council has looked to the National Association of Local Councils for guidance in this matter and has chosen to adopt a Code of Practice based on NALC Legal Topic Note 9E issued in June 2014. A copy of that document is published alongside this one on the Parish Council section of the Waldringfield website.

Drawing from the recommendations in that document, the following procedures will apply to all complaints addressed to the Council.

Before the Meeting

1. The Complainant shall be asked to put the complaint about Waldringfield Parish Council's procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk or other nominated officer. The Clerk's contact information is listed at the top of the first page of this document and published on the Parish website.
2. If the Complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk or other nominated officer, he or she shall be advised to address it to the Chairman of the Council.
3. The Clerk or other nominated officer shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 10 working days and advise the Complainant when the matter will be considered by the Council or by the committee established for the purposes of hearing complaints. The Complainant shall also be advised that the complaint will be treated as confidential unless otherwise agreed by the Complainant and that the Council will comply with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998.
4. The Complainant shall be invited to attend a meeting and to bring with them a representative if 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 Complainant the opportunity to read the material in good time for the meeting.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE (Continued)

At the Meeting

6. The Council shall consider, subject to Para 3 above, 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.
7. The Chairman shall introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
8. The Complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by (i) the Clerk or other nominated officer and then (ii), members.
9. The Clerk or other nominated officer will have an opportunity to explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by (i) the Complainant and (ii), members.
10. The Clerk or other nominated officer and then the Complainant shall be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
11. The Clerk or other nominated officer and the Complainant shall be asked to leave the room while members 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.
12. The Clerk or other nominated officer and the Complainant shall 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

16. The decision shall be confirmed in writing within ten working days together with details of any action to be taken.

Adopted by Waldringfield Parish Council at its meeting of2016

Signed.....Chairman