

## **LANE END PARISH COUNCIL**

### **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

Although we strive to provide the best service possible for all Parishioners, some may be disappointed or dissatisfied with the service we provide on occasion.

It is in our interests to deal as effectively as possible with any problems as soon as possible. The Clerk (proper officer) works part-time and will strive to respond as quickly as time will allow and normally no later than within 20 working days.

The Clerk will advise the Chairman on receipt of any complaints. Complaints may be against an individual councillor, the council as a whole or the Clerk. Different procedures apply.

1. Complaints about individual Councillors should be referred in writing to the Monitoring Officer at Wycombe District Council, Queen Victoria Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP11 1BB.
2. Complaints against the Council should be made in writing and addressed to The Clerk who is the legal officer of the Council. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint in writing to The Clerk, they shall be asked to address it to the Chairman. The complaint will be acknowledged in writing by the clerk. It may be that a letter of explanation or apology may be required. . If the complaint is of a more serious nature and could bring the conduct of Council into question, the following procedure should be followed:
  - i. The complainant will normally be invited to attend a meeting with a Group of Councillors (The Group) nominated by the Council or, in exception circumstances as determined by Council, to a full meeting of the Council.
  - ii. 7 clear days before the date of the meeting the complainant shall provide Council with copies of any documentation or evidence they wish to refer to at the meeting.
  - iii. At the meeting The Group/Council will consider whether it would be appropriate to exclude the press and public from the meeting before the complaint is heard. Any decision on the complaint will be announced at a full Council meeting where the press and public are invited to be present.
  - iv. At the meeting the Chairman will introduce everyone and explain the procedure. The Clerk will take minutes.
  - v. The complainant or their representative will outline the basis of their complaint.
  - vi. Members of The Group/Council may ask questions of the complainant.
  - vii. The complainant and their representative will be asked to leave the room whilst The Group/Council makes its decision regarding the complaint.
  - viii. The complainant and their representative will be invited back into the room to hear the decision.
  - ix. The Clerk will write to the complainant to confirm the decision.
3. Complaints against the Clerk should be submitted in writing to the Chairman of the Council.
  - i. The Chairman will invite the complainant to submit further information and possibly to attend a meeting. The Clerk will not need to be present at this meeting.
  - ii. The Chair and 2 other nominated Councillors will consider the complaint, if upheld, a remedy will be applied accordingly .The Clerk is an employee of the council and the matter will be handled according to their Employment Contract and Employment Law and their rights to privacy with regards to their employment will be maintained.

- iii. The complainant will receive a written response to their complaint indicating steps taken to remedy the situation.
4. The Parish Council reserves the right to refuse to deal with a complaint if it considers it to be vexatious or frivolous and this decision is at its sole discretion.
- i. It will refuse to accept a complaint if it is apparent that the complainant is pursuing a complaint that is without merit and intends to cause inconvenience, harassment or expense to the Parish Council.
  - ii. It will also refuse to accept a complaint that it considers has no serious purpose or value. Such complaints, for example, may have little merit and be trivial and investigating them would be out of proportion to the seriousness of the issues complained about.

Approved at the Full Parish Council Meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> April 2018.