



Freshwater Parish Council

Complaints Procedure

2023



Freshwater Parish Council

Working For The Community

FRESHWATER PARISH COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. This Policy sets out procedures for dealing with any complaints that anyone may have about the Freshwater Parish Council's administration and procedures. It applies to the Freshwater Parish Council's employees. Parish Councillors are covered by the Parish Council Code of Conduct, revised 2021. Complaints against policy decisions made by the Parish Council shall be referred back to the Parish Council (but note Section 7 of the Council's Standing Orders which relates to the reversion of decisions within 6 months).
2. If a complaint about procedures or administration as practised by the Parish Council's employee is notified orally to a Parish Councillor or the Parish Clerk, they should seek to satisfy the complaint fully. If that fails, the complainant should be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Parish Clerk and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly.
3. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Parish Clerk, he or she should be advised to put it to the Chair of the Parish Council by appointment in writing.
4. (a) On receipt of a written complaint the Parish Council Chair or the Parish Clerk (*except where the complaint is about his or her own actions*), shall try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This shall not be done without first notifying the person complained against and giving him or her an opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to attempt to settle the complaint at this stage.

(b) Where the Parish Clerk or the Parish Council Chair receives a written complaint about the Parish Clerk's own actions, he or she shall refer the complaint to the Parish Council Chair. The Parish Clerk shall be notified and given an opportunity to comment.
5. The Parish Clerk or Parish Council Chair shall report to the next Meeting of the Parish Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the Complainant.
6. The Parish Clerk or Parish Council Chair shall bring any written complaint that has not been settled to the next meeting of the Parish Council. The Parish Clerk shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered, and the complainant shall be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint orally. (Unless such a matter may be related to Grievance, Disciplinary or Code of Conduct proceedings that are taking, or likely to take place when such a hearing may prejudice those hearings when the complaint will have to be heard under Exempt Business to exclude any member of the public or the press, or deferred on appropriate advice received).
7. The Parish 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 Parish Council meeting in public.

8. 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 within 15 working days.
9. A Parish Council shall defer dealing with any written complaint only if it is of the opinion that issues of law or practice arise on which advice is necessary. The complaint shall be dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.