

Stanwick Parish Council

Complaints Procedure

1. This Policy sets out the procedures for dealing with any complaints that anyone may have about the Parish Council's **administration and procedures**. It applies to the Parish Council employees. Councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council in May 2012. Complaints against policy decisions made by the Council shall be referred back to the Council but it should be noted that paragraph 7 to the Council's Standing Orders state that a Council decision cannot be reversed for six months.
2. The complainant will be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk to the Council and this will be acknowledged within seven working days of receipt.
3. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk to the Council, then they will be asked to put it to the Parish Council Chairman.
4. On receipt of a written complaint the Chairman or Clerk to the Council (except where the complaint is about his or her own actions), will try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This will not be done without first notifying the person complained against and giving him or her an opportunity to comment.
5. Where the Clerk to the Council receives a written complaint about the Clerks own actions, the complaint will be referred to the Council Chairman. The Clerk will be notified and given the opportunity to comment.
6. The Clerk to the Council or the Chairman will report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint resolved of by direct action with the complainant.
7. Any unresolved written complaints will be considered by next meeting of the Council. The Clerk will notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered and the complainant will be invited to attend, bringing a representative if they wish, and offered opportunity to explain the complaint.
8. 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 claimant the opportunity to read the material in good time for the meeting.
9. At the meeting the Council will 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 Council meeting in public.
10. The Chairman will introduce everyone and explain the procedure.

11. The complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by (i) the Clerk and then (ii), members.
12. The Clerk will have an opportunity to explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant and (ii), members.
13. The Clerk followed by the complainant will be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
14. The Clerk, and other relevant councillors if appropriate, and the complainant will 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.
15. The Clerk and the complainant will be given the opportunity to wait for the decision but if the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day they will be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.
16. The decision will be confirmed in writing within seven working days of that meeting together with details of any action to be taken.
17. The Council may defer dealing with a written complaint only if it is of the opinion that issues of law or practice arise on which advice is necessary. The complaint will be dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.