

HARTBURN PARISH COUNCIL

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Approved 12th October 2020

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Hartburn Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality.
- 1.2 If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this council, or unhappy about an action, or lack of action by this Council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the Council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.
- 1.3 This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about Council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how Council employees have dealt with your concerns.
- 1.4 This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:
 - (i) Complaints between a Council employee and the Council as an employer. These matters are dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure adopted by the Council.
 - (ii) Complaints against Councillors. These are covered by the Code of Conduct (NALC Model 2012) adopted by the Council. If a complaint against a Councillor is received by the Council, it will be referred to the Monitoring Officer of Northumberland County Council.

2. Procedure

- 2.1 If a complaint about procedures or administration is notified orally to a Councillor or the Clerk and they cannot satisfy the complainant fully, the complainant shall be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk and the complainant assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.
- 2.2 If a complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk, they will be advised to put it in writing to the Chairman of the Council.
- 2.3 On receipt of a written complaint, the Clerk or Chairman, as the case may be, shall (except where the complaint is about his/her own actions) try to settle the complaint directly. If the complaint is about the actions of another Councillor or Clerk, they must be informed and given an opportunity for comment on the manner in which it is intended to settle the complaint.
- 2.4 Where the Clerk or Chairman receives a written complaint about their own actions, they shall forthwith refer the complaint to the Council and a Councillor will be nominated to deal with it.
- 2.5 The Clerk, Chairman or nominated Councillor shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.
- 2.6 The Clerk, Chairman or nominated Councillor shall bring any written complaint which has not been 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. The complainant will be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint orally.

- 2.7 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.

3. Decisions

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 The complainant must be made aware of the Code of Conduct that both the Clerk and Councillors have adopted and the official complaints procedure through the Monitoring Officer at Northumberland County Council.
- 3.3 The Council shall defer dealing with any written complaint only if it is of the opinion that issues of law or practise arise on which advice is necessary from National Association Local Councils or other source of legal advice. The complaint shall be dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.