



Complaints Policy

Version Number	Date	Author	Notes
1.0	Jan 2019	M Saunders	Approved at DPC meeting January 2019
2.0	16 May 2024	M Harper	For review and approval at the Resources Committee meeting 28 May 2024 for recommendation to Parish Council meeting to be held on 29 May 2024
2.1	29 May 2024	M Harper	Adopted by Parish Council at its meeting on 29 May 2024 – minute ref 24/25.14.7.3

Complaints Policy

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the Parish Council's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service whether the action was taken or the service provided by the council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the council.

It will not be appropriate to deal with all complaints from members of the public under this complaint's procedure.

Financial Irregularity Refer to Local elector's statutory right to object to Council's audit of accounts pursuant to S. 16 Audit Commission Act 19987. where the complaint has a specific remedy, the following should be used instead.

Criminal Activity Refer to the Police.

Member Conduct. A complaint relating to a member's failure to comply with the Code of Conduct must be submitted to the standards committee of the relevant principal authority which is through the Chelmsford City Council Monitoring Officer, Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford CM1 1JE for Danbury Parish Council.

Where the matter cannot be resolved by the Clerk, or when the complainant wishes to appeal against the Clerk's initial decision, the matter will be considered by a Complaints Panel convened by the Resources Committee and their decision will be in accordance with Danbury Parish Complaints Procedure. The Panel decision is final unless further authority is required from Full Council.

Procedure

- 1 The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the council's procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk or other nominated proper officer.
- 2 It is expected that most complaints can be resolved quickly and amicably through this route. However, the Council appreciates that on occasions if an informal approach has not resolved the complaint, or that the initial complaint is regarded as particularly serious, then the formal complaints process should be followed
- 3 If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk or other proper officer, they may be advised to put it to the Chairman of the Council or nominated deputy.
- 4 The Clerk or other nominated proper officer shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Council or by the Panel established for the purposes of hearing complaints.
- 5 The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representatives as they wish. The Panel or Parish Council must be informed of who the representative will be and in what capacity they are attending.
- 6 Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Panel or the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The Panel or Council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely on at the meeting.

AT THE MEETING

- 7 The Panel or Council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Parish Council meeting in public.
- 8 Chairman or nominated deputy to introduce everyone.
- 9 Chairman or nominated deputy to explain procedure.
- 10 Complainant (or representative previously identified to the Panel or Parish Council) to outline grounds for complaint.
- 11 Members to ask any question of the complainant.
- 12 If relevant, Clerk or other proper officer to explain council's position.
- 13 Members to ask any question of the Clerk or other proper officer.
- 14 Clerk or other proper officer and complainant to be offered opportunity of last word in this order.
- 15 Clerk or other proper officer and complainant to 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 to be invited back.
- 16 Clerk or other proper officer and complainant return to hear decision, or to be advised when a decision will be made.

AFTER THE MEETING

- 17 Decision confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.