

# Greatham Parish Council

## Complaints Procedure

Adopted: 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019

Review due: 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020

Greatham Parish Council strives to provide an excellent service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality. However, if you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from the Parish Council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to us and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.

### **Scope of the Complaints Procedure**

This Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about Council administration and procedures in line with the Local Government Ombudsman's definition of a complaint: "A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the 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." The Complaints Procedure does not deal with grievance issues from staff nor with any matters relating to third parties that do not relate to action taken by the Council.

Complaints made against the Council, members of the Council, or staff, will be treated as a complaint against the body corporate of the Council, not as a complaint against individual employees or members of the Council.

The Complaints Procedure is not appropriate in the following circumstances:

<b>Alleged financial irregularity</b>	Local electors have a statutory right to object to a Council's audit of accounts (s.16 Audit Commission Act 1998)
<b>Alleged criminal activity</b>	These type of complaints should be reported to the Police
<b>Members' conduct alleged to breach the code of conduct adopted by the Council</b>	These type of complaints should be reported to the Monitoring Officer, East Hampshire District Council

### **Personal injury, damage to property, financial loss or legal claims**

Should a complaint relate to personal injury, damage to property, financial loss or in the event of a legal claim it will immediately be referred to the Council's insurers for resolution.

### **Who can complain?**

Anyone who lives in or near Greatham who is affected by decisions made by the Council has a right to complain.

### **How to complain?**

#### **Informal complaint**

An informal complaint can be made to the Clerk or any Councillor by telephone, email or in person. The complaint will be dealt with by the most appropriate person depending on the nature of the complaint.

We hope that most complaints can be dealt with informally. However, we appreciate that at times an informal complaint might not result in a satisfactory response, or the complaint might be so serious that a formal complaint is considered to be more appropriate. To avoid misunderstanding, this should be clearly identified as a complaint.

#### **Formal complaint**

The Council requests that any formal complaints are directed to the Chair in writing giving full details of the complaint. If possible the complaint should include details of any dates/times, references to Council minutes, details of staff or councillors concerned and your contact details. If the complaint is about the Chair you may direct your complaint to any other Councillor or to the Clerk.

All complaints should be sent to:  
The Chair (or Vice Chair or Clerk)  
Greatham Parish Council  
c/o 75 Headley Road  
Liphook  
Hampshire  
GU30 7PS

A complaint may also be submitted by email addressed to the Chair (or Vice Chair or Clerk) to [clerk@greatham-hants.org.uk](mailto:clerk@greatham-hants.org.uk)

The receipt of your complaint will be acknowledged in writing within 7 days along with the names of those who will be investigating your complaint.

### **How will the Council deal with a formal complaint?**

All formal complaints will be fully investigated within 4 weeks with a written response then being sent. If the complaint is particularly complicated or there is insufficient time to gather information needed then the Council reserves the right to extend the 4 week period but will notify you of this in writing. We will also contact you during this 4 week period should we require more information from you, however, the 4 week period will be extended should we require a longer period to investigate any new information provided by you. In all cases, the Council will endeavour to resolve all formal complaints as quickly as possible.

The Chair will lead the investigation into the complaint along with two other Councillors appointed by the Chair ("the investigating panel"). If the complaint is about the Chair then two Councillors will be appointed by the Vice Chair. In some cases, the Chair/Vice Chair may choose to delegate the Clerk to lead the investigation depending on the nature of the complaint.

In all cases the Council will treat your complaint in confidence and adhere to current Data Protection Guidelines so your identity will not be disclosed unless you choose to waive your right to anonymity.

Once the investigation is complete we will write to you to advise whether your complaint has been upheld or dismissed. We will give you reasons for the decision along with details of any action the Council will take. We will also outline the appeals procedure to you.

### **What happens next?**

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint you should put your concerns in writing to the Council and it will be considered by 3 Councillors ("the appeal panel") who were not involved in the original complaint. The Clerk may be asked to investigate if appropriate.

The appeal panel will look at all the information relating to your complaint and may contact you for further information or invite you to attend a meeting for further discussion. You will be invited to bring a friend/representative with you to this meeting.

The appeal panel will notify you of its decision within 4 weeks.