

SPROUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

Complaints About an Employee

If a member of the public has a complaint about an employee of the Parish Council, they should contact the Chairman of the Parish Council. The matter will be dealt with internally as an employment matter and appropriate action taken as required.

Complaints About a Councillor

Councillors are bound by the Suffolk Code of Conduct, and complainants are advised to contact the Monitoring Officer at Babergh District Council for further information.

Before the Meeting

1. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the Council's procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk, they may be advised to put it to the Chairman of the Council.
3. The Clerk shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint, within 3 working days and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Council. A full written response will normally be issued within 10 working days. If this is not possible, the Clerk will inform the complainant why not and will arrange another target. The Clerk shall confirm to the complainant if the complaint will be treated as confidential. The Clerk shall confirm the next steps in the complaints procedure.
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representation as they wish.
5. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The Council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

At the Meeting

6. The Council shall 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.
7. Chairman to introduce everyone.
8. Chairman to explain procedure.

9. Complainant (or representative) to outline the grounds for complaint.
10. Members to ask any questions of the complainant.
11. If relevant, the Clerk is to explain the Council's position.
12. Members to ask any questions of the Clerk.
13. Clerk and complainant to be offered opportunity of last word (in this order).
14. Clerk 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 are to be invited back).
15. Clerk and complainant return to hear decision, or to be advised when a decision will be made.

After the Meeting

16. The Clerk shall write to the complainant to confirm whether or not the complaint has been upheld. The Council should give reasons for its decision, together with details of any action to be taken by the Council, if appropriate. If relevant, the complainant should be advised in writing of their right to appeal the Council's decision.