



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR USE IN COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE COUNCIL (NOT FOR COMPLAINTS ABOUT INDIVIDUALS)

The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) has no jurisdiction over parish or town councils and therefore the following procedure was agreed at a meeting of the Parish Council on **20 June 2018.**

Introduction

1. This procedure is for all complaints to the Council applying to procedures or administration provided by Selborne Parish Council.
2. For complaints regarding financial irregularity please refer to Local elector's statutory right to object to Council's audit of accounts pursuant to s.16 Audit Commission Act 1998. On other financial matters council's may need to consult their internal auditor/Audit Commission.
3. For criminal activity please contact the Police.
4. For complaints about an employee of the Council please refer to the Chairman of the Council for the council's internal disciplinary procedure.
5. For complaints regarding Councillors please refer to East Hampshire District Council's code of conduct policy adopted by Selborne Parish Council on 11/07/2012 and contact the Monitoring Officer at East Hampshire District Council, Penns Place, Petersfield, Hampshire, GU31 3EX Tel: 01730 266 551

Aim

6. To investigate complaints as quickly as possible and to find a solution to the satisfaction of both parties.

Definition of Complaints

7. For the purposes of this procedure the LGO definition will be used namely that 'a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public 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.'



Confidentiality

8. The name of any complainant will only be provided to those who need to consider a complaint. The Parish Council will take care to maintain confidentiality where circumstances demand and in accordance with GDPR 25 May 2018.

Procedure for Making a Complaint

9. Any complaint about the council's procedures or administration should first be put in writing by either e-mail or postal letter to: clerk@selborneparishcouncil.gov.uk; or Selborne Parish Council, PO Box 324, Alton, GU34 9HT. If the complaint is specifically in respect of the work or actions of the Parish Clerk, the complaint should be directed to the Chair of the Parish Council, contact details for which are available on www.selborneparishcouncil.gov.uk
10. It may be possible that the complaint can be dealt with straight away and the source of the complaint resolved immediately.
11. For more complex complaints, the clerk or other nominated officer or Chairman shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint within seven working days and advise when the matter will be considered by the Council or by the committee established for the purposes of hearing complaints.
12. The Complaints Committee shall be a Working Group consisting of no more than four elected members of the Parish Council that may include either the Chair or Vice Chair but not both.
13. The complainant will be invited to attend an initial meeting within two months of the original complaint and to bring with them a representative if they wish.
14. 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.

At the Meeting with the Complainant

15. The meeting Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.
16. The Chair of the Complaints Committee should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.



17. The complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by (i) the clerk or other nominated officer and then (ii), committee members.
18. The clerk or other nominated officer will have an opportunity to explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant and / or their representative and (ii), committee members.
19. The clerk or other nominated officer and then the complainant or their representative should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
20. The clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant and their representative should be asked to leave the room while committee 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.

After the Meeting

21. The committee will make a recommendation to the Council for a final decision. The complainant will be advised of that decision, together with the reasons, within seven working days of the Parish Council meeting at which the decision is made. The complainant will be advised of the date of that meeting.

Appeal

22. There is no automatic right to appeal. However, the Council will try to direct the complainant to an appropriate body in the event that they are dissatisfied with the decision.