

# Greatham Parish Council

## Complaints Procedure

Adopted: 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018

Review due: October 2020

Greatham Parish Council strives to provide an excellent service to all residents. However, on occasions residents may be dissatisfied and this procedure sets out how we will deal with any complaint. The procedure relates to services provided by us, our staff and our Councillors.

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

The 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 against Councillors**

Complaints relating to the activity of individual or groups of Parish Councillors should be directed to:  
The Monitoring Officer  
East Hampshire District Council  
Penns Place  
Petersfield  
Hampshire  
GU31 4EX

The Council has adopted a Code of Conduct contained within our Standing Orders based on the seven Nolan principles of public life which are: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

### **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 does not give a satisfactory response, or the complaint is so serious, that a formal complaint will be raised.

#### **Formal complaint**

The Council requests that at any formal complaints are directed to the Chairman 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 Chairman you may direct your complaint to any other Councillor or to the Clerk.

All complaints should be sent to:  
The Chairman (or Vice Chairman 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 Chairman (or Vice Chairman 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. You will be invited to speak to those representatives of the Council at a meeting so that we can try to reach an amicable resolution to your complaint. You are, of course, at liberty to bring a friend/representative with you to the meeting. However, you if no resolution is reached, or if you wish your complaint to be further investigated, then the following procedure will apply.

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

All 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. However, the Council will endeavour to resolve all complaints as quickly as possible.

The Chairman will lead the investigation into the complaint along with two other Councillors appointed by the Chairman (“the investigating panel”). If the complaint is about the Chairman then two Councillors will be appointed by the Vice Chairman. In some cases, the Chairman/Vice Chairman 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.

The Clerk will report the complaint to the next meeting of the Council but your identity will be redacted from any documents or minutes.

### **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 2 weeks and the Council will again be notified at the next Council meeting.

A complaint against a member of staff may result in disciplinary action which could ultimately lead to dismissal. To protect the employment rights of staff, the Council will not enter into any correspondence with you regarding any confidential staffing matters.