



**Withyham Parish Council Complaints Procedure for Use in Complaints Against the Council
(not for Complaints About Individuals)**

Responsibility: Staffing Committee/Full Council
Review Cycle: Annually or earlier in the event of legislative changes

Date of Adoption/Renewal	Date for review
May 2020	May 2021

Before this procedure is utilised there should be an acknowledgement of any concerns and an invitation to an informal meeting with the Chair and the Clerk in the hope that the issue can be resolved. Should the complainant wish to take the matter further, a meeting of the Complaints Committee should be called comprising of the Chair or Vice Chair and a Councillor representing each ward:

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 or other nominated officer.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the clerk or other nominated officer, he or she should be advised to address it to the chairman of the council.
3. The clerk or other nominated officer shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the council or by the committee established for the purposes of hearing complaints. The complainant should also be advised whether the complaint will be treated as confidential or whether, for example, notice of it will be given in the usual way (if, for example, the complaint is to be heard by a committee).
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend a meeting and bring with them a representative if 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 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

6. The council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press for part or all of the meeting. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public save for that part or all which has been held in private. Any decision made in private shall be announced to the Council following the exclusion of the public from that part of the meeting.
7. The chairman should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
8. 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) , members.

9. 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 (ii), members.
10. The clerk or other nominated officer and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
11. The clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant should 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 shall be invited back.
12. The clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant should be given the opportunity to wait for a decision but if the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day they should be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.

After the meeting

13. The decision should be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.

Last adopted at Council ASM 21 May 2018