

EAST BERGHOLT PARISH COUNCIL

Complaints Policy/Procedure

East Bergholt Parish Council considers all complaints seriously and deals with any matters within this formal Policy/Procedure in order to demonstrate fairness, openness and transparency.

The Council endeavours to provide a quality service for the benefit of the people who live, work or visit the Village. If you are dissatisfied with the standard or are unhappy about something, this Policy/Procedure sets out how you complain to the Council and how we shall try to resolve the complaint. Anonymous complaints are not dealt with.

If a complaint is received, a reply will be sent to the complainant by the relevant Council Officer. If this response is not considered satisfactory, a meeting will be offered to the complainant.

The meeting will be arranged by the Council's Strategy, Policy and Finance Committee to consider any complaint. The procedure follows:

First Steps:

- The Complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the Council's service, procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk.
- 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.
- The Clerk (or Chairman) shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the Complainant when the matter will be considered by the Strategy, Policy and Finance Committee for the purposes of hearing the complaint/s.
- The Clerk will prepare a response to the complaint, liaising with the appropriate Council Officers.

If the complaint remains unresolved:

- The Complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish.
- 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 Committee/Council shall similarly provide the Complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

At the Meeting

- The Committee 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 next available full Statutory Parish Council meeting).

- The Chairman of the Committee will introduce everyone.
- The Chairman of the Committee will explain the procedure.
- The Complainant (or representative) to outline the grounds for the complaint.
- Members of the Committee to ask any question of the Complainant.
- If relevant, the Clerk will explain the Council's position.
- Members of the Committee to ask any question of the Clerk.
- The Clerk and the Complainant to be offered the opportunity of the last word (in this order).
- The Clerk and the Complainant to be asked to leave the room whilst Members of the Committee decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. (If a point of clarification is necessary, then both parties will be invited back).
- The Clerk and Complainant return to hear the decision or be advised when the decision will be made.

After the Meeting

- A decision will be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.

Approved and adopted by East Bergholt Parish Council: 9 March 2023

Next review: June 2024