

STORRINGTON & SULLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE.

The provision of excellent service is of paramount importance to Storrington & Sullington Parish Council. It is committed to listening and acting upon residents' views, undertaking all aspects of its business in an open, honest and transparent manner and dealing with all complaints fairly and efficiently.

Definition of a complaint. *A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made and whether justified or not.*

Complaints covered by this procedure.

- Dissatisfaction with the administration of policy and decisions.
- Failure to achieve standards of service.
- Failure to fulfil statutory responsibilities.
- Delays in responding to service requests.
- Dissatisfaction with employees' behaviour or attitude.

Upon receipt of a complaint.

- The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of and review the complaint, commencing investigations where necessary.
- A full response should be sent within 10 working days or if this is not possible, a holding letter should be sent indicating when a full response can be expected.
- If the complainant is unhappy with the response, he may ask that the complaint be escalated to the Chairman who, in consultation with other members, will undertake a separate investigation and issue a further response.

Complaints against Councillors.

All Councillors have signed an undertaking that they will adhere to the Council's Code of Conduct, as approved by Parliament. The Code specifies a Councillor's obligations and any alleged breaches of the Code should be made to Horsham District Council Standards Committee. Further information is available from the District Council website.

Complaints against Officers of the Parish Council

A complainant may request that his complaint be investigated and dealt with by the council.

In these circumstances:

- The complaint should be made in writing, addressed to the Chairman.
- A full response should be sent within 10 working days or if this is not possible, a holding letter should be sent indicating when a full response can be expected.
- If the complainant is unhappy with the response, he may be invited to attend a meeting and may be accompanied by a representative if they wish.
- Seven clear days prior to the meeting, both parties should provide each other with copies of any documentation or other evidence that shall be relied upon.
- During the meeting, the Chairman should introduce all attendees, explain the procedure and outline the grounds for complaint. Each party shall be given sufficient time to present their case and then the complainant will be asked to leave the meeting so that Members can consider the complaint.
- A full response must be sent to the complainant within 7 working days of the meeting taking place.

Complaints about services provided by other public organisations.

Some public services in Storrington & Sullington are provided by either Horsham District Council or West Sussex County Council and it is accepted that the division of responsibilities between public bodies can often be confusing. Storrington & Sullington Parish Council will advise and if appropriate, assist those wishing to pursue complaints against other public organisations providing services in the Parish.