



Little Maplestead Parish Council

Complaints Procedure

Adopted (Month/Year)



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Complaints Procedure

1. General

The Parish Council should consider referring to other bodies/procedures in respect of the following types of complaint:

Type of conduct:	Refer to:
Financial Irregularity	Local elector's statutory right to object to Council's audit of accounts pursuant to s.16 Audit Commission Act 1998. On other matters, the Council may need to consult its auditor/ Audit Commission
Criminal Activity	The Police
Member Conduct	In England a complaint relating to a member's failure to comply with the Code of Conduct must be submitted to the standards committee of the relevant principal authority.
Employee Conduct	Internal disciplinary procedure

2. Dealing with Complaints

2.1. Communicating with Complainant

- a. 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.
- b. 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 Chair of the Council.
- c. 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).
- d. The complainant shall be invited to attend a meeting and to bring with them a representative if they wish.
- e. 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.

2.2. Procedure for Complaints Meeting

- a. The Council 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 Council meeting in public.
- b. The Chair should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
- c. 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. the members
- d. 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 then
 - ii. the members
- e. The Clerk or other nominated officer and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
- f. 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.
- g. The Clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant should be given the opportunity to wait for the 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.

2.3. Action Following Complaints Meeting

- a. The decision of the meeting should be confirmed in writing within seven working days, together with details of any action to be taken.

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