



BENEFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Complaints Procedure

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE CODE OF PRACTICE

Introduction

1. The Local Government Ombudsman has no jurisdiction over parish councils. Complaints against an employee (i.e. the Clerk) will be dealt with as an employment issue involving the Council's Grievance and Disciplinary Committee.

Complaints about a Councillor should be directed to East Northamptonshire District Council Monitoring Officer on 01832 742108, (mo@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk). There is a downloadable form available to complete at the Council's website www.eastnorthamptonshire.gov.uk

2. This procedure will outline the way the Council will deal with complaints made about its administration practices or procedures. The process is designed to be an efficient and effective way of dealing with complaints whilst providing a fair and transparent resolution of the complaint.
3. At the meeting following receipt of a complaint, an Internal Standards committee will be formed consisting of the Chairman and two members of the Parish Council. The intention is that proceedings will be more expeditious if dealt with by the Internal Standards committee rather than the full council and less overwhelming for the complainant. The Internal Standards committee will report its findings to a full meeting of the Parish Council.
4. If the Clerk or other Proper Officer is to represent the position of the Council at the committee meeting, s/he will be unable to advise the Committee during its deliberations
5. All parties will be dealt with fairly and equally and the process will be reasonable, accessible and transparent
6. If the Committee or Council is unable to deal with a particular complaint directly, it will take proper advice to bring about satisfactory resolution of the complaint.
7. On adoption of these procedures, a copy will be supplied to the East Northamptonshire District Council Monitoring Officer.

Before the meeting

8. If you want to make a complaint about administration practices or procedures, this should be made in writing to the Clerk or the Proper Officer
9. If you do not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk, you may write to the Chairman of the Council.
10. The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of the complaint, in writing, and will advise you that the Internal Standards committee will meet to consider the matter.
11. You will be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring such representatives as you wish

12. Seven clear working days before the date of the meeting, you, as the complainant, shall provide the Council with copies of documentation or other evidence to which you wish to refer during the meeting.

At the meeting

13. 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 next Parish Council meeting, in public.
14. The Chairman will introduce everyone
15. The Chairman will explain the procedure
16. You, as the complainant, or your representative will outline the grounds for the complaint
17. Committee members will ask any questions of you, as the complainant
18. If relevant, the Clerk or the Proper Officer will explain the Council's position
19. Committee members will ask questions of the Clerk or Proper Officer
20. The Clerk, or the Proper Officer, and you, as the complainant (in this order) will be offered the opportunity of a last word
21. The Clerk or the Proper Officer and you, as the complainant, will be asked to leave the room while the Committee members decide whether or not the grounds for a complaint have been made. (If a point of clarification is necessary, BOTH parties will be invited back into the meeting)
22. The Clerk or the Proper Officer and you, as the complainant, will return to the meeting to learn the decision or, if it is not possible to make the decision at the meeting, when the decision will be made

After the meeting

23. Within seven working dates of the meeting, you will be informed in writing of the decision together with details of any remedial or other action to be taken

Approved by Benefield Parish Council:		
Signature of Chairman		Date: 21st May 2018
Signature of the Clerk		Date: 21st May 2018