

ECCLESHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Code of Practice for handling Complaints

This Code of Practice is aimed at those situations where a complaint has been made about the administration of the Council or its procedures. Complaints about the Clerk should be dealt with as an employment matter and resolved internally.

When a complaint is made against a local council, member(s) of the Council or staff are likely to be mentioned, or complained about. However, a complaint against a council should be treated as a complaint against the body corporate of the council, not as a complaint against individual employees or member(s) of the Council.

A council's complaints procedure is not a means of redress for its members or staff. Members and staff are expected to work together professionally even if they hold differences of opinions and views.

A complaint which involves the conduct of the council's employee(s) must be handled in accordance with its complaints procedure. If, following the outcome of the complaint, the council decides that there may be a need to take disciplinary action, this should be in accordance with its internal disciplinary procedure.

This Code of Practice is intended as an efficient way of dealing with any complaints received and a means of preserving the good reputation of the Council. This procedure is designed for those complaints that cannot be satisfied by less formal measures or explanations provided by the Clerk or Chairman. The Parish Council must settle a complaint, as it has no power to refer it to another body for settlement.

The complainant must be asked at the outset to confirm if he wants the complaint to be treated confidentially and the council must comply with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 or any superceding legislation to safeguard against the unlawful disclosure of personal data.

- 1) The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the council's procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk. Mrs S. Worden, 16, Newport Road Great Bridgeford, Stafford ST18 9PR. Email: eccleshallpc@gmail.com.
- 2) If the complaint concerns the Clerk it should be sent to the Chairman of the Council or relevant committee.
- 3) Should the complainant refuse to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk, then he/she may be advised to put it in writing to the Chairman of the Council.
- 4) The Clerk shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 7 days and advise the complainant when the matter would be considered by the Council.
- 5) The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring along a representative.
- 6) The complainant shall provide copies of documentation or other evidence 7 days prior to the meeting, similarly, the Council shall provide copies of any relevant documentation to the claimant.
- 7) The Council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public.
- 8) At the meeting the Chairman should carry out the necessary introductions and explain the procedure.
- 9) The complainant should be asked to outline the complaint and members be allowed to ask questions of both the complainant and the Clerk.
- 10) The complainant and the Clerk (if necessary) should be asked to leave the room and return to hear the decision.
- 11) The decision of the Parish Council, together with details of any impending action to be confirmed in writing to the complainant within 7 working days.