

Fleggburgh Parish Council

Complaints Procedure

Fleggburgh Parish Council strives to provide a high standard of service to the public. In the interests of openness and the desire to seek continuous improvement, the Council encourages anyone who feels dissatisfied with the service provided to bring this to the attention of the Council.

In some instances it will be appropriate for an explanation to be given and/or remedial action taken.

Where a formal complaint is submitted in writing, a proportionate investigation will be conducted and the outcome communicated back to the complainant in writing.

How to make a complaint about the Council

Enquiries or observations about the Council services can be made by e-mail to fleggburghpc@gmail.com, or by telephoning the Clerk (see Fleggburgh Parish Council website for telephone number).

Formal complaints must be submitted in writing to the Clerk (see Fleggburgh Parish Council website for address of the Parish Clerk).

Or e-mailed to fleggburghpc@gmail.com

If the matter relates directly to the Clerk, the complaint should be addressed to the Chairman of the Council.

Anonymous complaints will be disregarded. All complaints will be deemed to be information unless a written complaint states that it is a formal complaint.

Informal Complaints

An informal complaint may be made by telephone, email, in person or in writing to the Clerk. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk (because the matter relates to the Clerk, for example) he or she should be advised to write to the Chair of the Parish Council. If a complaint is made to a Councillor, it is their duty to notify the Clerk or the Chair of the Parish Council immediately to avoid any delay in dealing with the complaint. The Clerk or the Chair will communicate directly to the complainant and will attempt to resolve the matter and to ensure that the complainant feels satisfied that their complaint has been fully considered, taken seriously and acted upon accordingly. If the Clerk or the Chair cannot satisfy a complaint in an informal way, the complainant will be invited to escalate the matter to a formal complaint.

Acknowledgment of a formal complaint

The complainant will be asked to put their complaint about the Council's procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk, or Chair if necessary.

The letter should contain:

- Name, address and telephone number of the complainant
- Details of the complaint about the Council's procedures or administration
- How the issue has affected the complainant
- Copies of any relevant documents or other evidence
- Details of third parties and their involvement
- What action the complainant believes will resolve their complaint

Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged within 10 working days, specifying:

- Who is dealing with the complaint
- Whether the complainant will have an opportunity to make verbal representations, accompanied by a friend if desired
- Timeframe for receipt of a formal response

Investigation

It will usually be appropriate for the circumstances leading to the complaint to be investigated by the Clerk on behalf of the Council. Complaints of a serious nature or any that relate directly to the Clerk will be dealt with by the council.

Where appropriate, the complainant will be invited to make verbal representations to the council.

In normal circumstances, the complainant will be notified in writing (e-mail if appropriate) of the outcome within three months of lodging the complaint. This will include whether or not the complaint is upheld, reasons for the decision, details of any action taken and information about the right of appeal.

Appeals

If the complainant is not satisfied with how a complaint has been dealt with they can appeal in writing to the Council, setting out what they are unhappy with and the grounds.

The appeal will be considered by the council or if appropriate an independent person (for example, the Chair of another parish council). This will consist of a review of the original investigation and outcome, together with any action taken as a result.

Appeals received more than one month after the date of the decision letter/e-mail will not be considered.

Complaints involving members of staff or councillors, etc.

Where a complaint against the Council includes reference to the actions or conduct of staff or councillors, the complaint will be treated as a complaint against the body corporate, as opposed to the individual(s). If after the complaint has been looked into the Council considers there may be a need to take disciplinary action against a member of staff, this will be dealt with in accordance with its disciplinary procedure.

This procedure does not cover complaints about the conduct of a member of the Parish Council. Any complaint that a councillor may have breached the Council's adopted Code of Conduct should be referred to Great Yarmouth Borough Council.

Allegations that a member has breached the Code of Conduct should be forwarded to the Monitoring Officer of Great Yarmouth Borough Council in writing (on-line form available: <https://www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/complaint-about-a-councillor>).

Councillors are free to raise matters of concern in respect of council business by the submission of motions on the agenda of the relevant meeting(s).

Where a member of staff has a complaint about the workplace, these should be raised in accordance with the Council's grievance procedure.

Unreasonable and Vexatious Complaints:

There will be circumstances when a complainant persists in wishing to pursue a complaint when it clearly has no reasonable basis, or when the Council has already taken reasonable action in response, or where some other process, whether through the courts or some other recognised procedure, should, or has been taken. These matters will be referred to the Parish Council by the Clerk with a summary of the issues and of the attempts made to resolve the complaint. The Parish Council may, in such circumstances, decide that no further action can usefully be taken and will inform the complainant making it clear that only new and substantive issues will merit a response.

What to do if you are still not satisfied?

The decision of the Parish Council is final with no appeal process as the Local Government Ombudsman does not consider complaints in respect of Parish Councils.

Adopted by Fleggburgh Parish Council: 22nd November 2018

Reviewed: August 2021

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