

Laxfield Parish Council
COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The following procedure should be followed by anyone wishing to make a complaint against the parish council's procedures or administration. If you have a complaint against a parish councillor you should write to: The Monitoring Officer Mid Suffolk District Council, Council Offices, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich IP1 2BX.

If you have a complaint against the clerk of the parish council, you should write to the Chair. If you have any other complaint you should write to the clerk to the council. To allow your complaint about the parish council's procedures or administration to be dealt with, the parish council has adopted the following Code of Practice that will be followed where complaints cannot be resolved less formally by the clerk to the council or the prevailing chair.

Before the meeting

1. The complainant shall be asked to put the complaint about the council's procedures or administration in writing to the council's proper officer, the clerk.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the clerk, they will be advised to put it to the chair of the council.
3. The clerk will acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant as to when the matter will be considered by the parish council.
4. The complainant will be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish.
5. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant will provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The council will similarly provide the complainant with copies of documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

At the meeting

6. The council will consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint will be announced at the council meeting in public.
7. The Chair will introduce everyone.
8. The Chair will explain the procedure.
9. The complainant (or their representative) will outline the grounds for complaint.
10. The council members will then ask any questions of the complainant.
11. If relevant or necessary the clerk will explain the council's position.
12. The council members will ask any questions of the clerk.
13. The clerk and the complainant will be offered the opportunity of the last word.
14. The clerk and the complainant will be asked to leave the room while the council members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. (Note: If a point of clarification is necessary then both parties will be invited back.)
15. The clerk and the complainant will return to hear the council's decision or will be advised as to when the decision will be made.

After the meeting

16. The decision will be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.

Appeals against decisions taken

17. If the complainant feels that it wishes to appeal against the process in which the decision was reached, they should appeal in writing, stating the full grounds of appeal, to the clerk to the council within one week of the date on which they were informed in writing of the decision.
18. If the parish council agrees to hear the complaint on this basis, the council will give written notice of the date, time and place of the appeal hearing. The appeal hearing will be limited to a review of the procedures that were followed and not a review of the original decision given.
19. Where possible the appeal hearing will be conducted by councillors who were not previously involved in the case.
20. Following the appeal hearing the parish council will confirm, in writing and within seven days, the outcome of the appeal.
21. The appeal stage is the final stage of this procedure.

Reviewed January 2023 and signed off at the Parish Council Meeting on 13 February 2023.
To be reviewed again January 2024.