

Snettisham Parish Council

Complaints Procedure

Introduction

This procedure deals with complaints from members of the public.

Complaints about Councillors or Staff from other Councillors, or Staff, are to be dealt with using the Council's internal grievance procedures. This document therefore deals only with complaints from members of the public.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by members of the public about the Council's action, or lack of action, or about the standard of a service provided by the Council. It also deals with complaints regarding any person or other third party, acting on behalf of the Council.

STAGE 1

It is expected that members of the public will make complaints informally to the Parish Office or to individual Councillors. Ideally these can be solved informally and quickly.

STAGE 2

Should stage 1 prove unsatisfactory, or inappropriate, members of the public are advised to write to or email the Clerk (or Chair) as soon as possible, stating clearly that they wish to make a formal complaint using the complaints procedure.

- The Council will as soon as possible reply, acknowledging receipt of the complaint, and give some indication of how it will be handled, and a timescale within which a response is to be expected. Ideally this acknowledgment should be no more than 7 working days.
- The Council should investigate and ascertain whether the complaint is valid. At this stage, an explanation or apology should be issued as appropriate, and the complainant be asked if they wish to pursue the matter further.

STAGE 3

Should this not resolve matters, a formal procedure should be instituted, as follows:

Snettisham Parish Council

- A meeting shall be arranged with Councillors and the complainant. Ideally, if possible, this should not any Councillors who are the subject of the complaint. The complainant may be accompanied by a representative.
- 7 clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence relied on about the complaint. The Council shall provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which the Council intends to rely at the meeting, and shall do so promptly, allowing the complainant the opportunity to read the material before the meeting.
- Such meetings shall take place in private, but a report on the outcome must be made at the next Council meeting.

At the meeting:

- The Chairman should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
- The complainant should outline the grounds for complaint after which questions may be asked by the Clerk and then Councillors.
- The Clerk will have an opportunity to explain Council's position and questions may be asked by the complainant and then Councillors.
- The Clerk and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their positions.
- The Clerk and complainant should be asked to leave the room while Councillors 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.
- The Clerk and complainant should be given the opportunity to wait for the decision. 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.
- The decision should be confirmed in writing within 7 working days together with details of any action to be taken.

Notes:

- Any individuals who are the subject of complaints should be informed of the fact.
- Working days apply as related to Council meetings.
- In the absence of the Clerk, another non-Councillor should be invited to take his/her role.
- The complainant's representative may speak on the complainant's behalf.
- Whatever the outcome of the complaint, relevant procedures should be reviewed to see if improvement is required.
- At any meeting it is expected that 3 Councillors will be present, who should be members of the panel set up relating to the Grievance Procedure. One of these may be replaced with an independent person outside of the Council.

Snettisham Parish Council

Contacting the Council about complaints

- Telephone or Message the Clerk: Mobile 07916 177 196
- Write to us at: 73 Lynn Road, Snettisham, PE31 7QA
- Email: clerk@snettishamparishcouncil.gov.uk
- Website: www.snettishamparishcouncil.gov.uk