

Complaints Procedure of Hannington Parish Council

1. Written complaints may be sent to Cllr Simon Taylor, Chairman, Hannington Parish Council at 7, Oakley Road, Hannington, Tadley, Hampshire. RG265TU or by e-mail at simon@sbtproperty.co.uk. Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 01635 299629.
2. If the complaint is against the Chairman, the complainant may send the complaint to the Clerk, Wayfarers Cottage, White Lane, Hannington, Tadley. Hampshire; chrisspottinger@live.co.uk; 01256 780136 .

Receiving Complaints

3. Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.
4. Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded. The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:
 - Write down the facts of the complaint
 - Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
 - Note down the relationship of the complainant to the Parish Council (for example: client, member)
 - Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
 - Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
 - Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

Resolving Complaints

Stage One

5. In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.
6. Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the Chairman of the Parish Council within one week.
7. On receiving the complaint, the Chairman records it in the complaints log. If it has not already been resolved, they delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action.
8. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.
9. Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within a week. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached.
10. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.
11. Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Stage Two

12. If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Council level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Clerk if it has been dealt with by the Chairman, or by the Chairman, if it has been dealt with by the Clerk
13. The request for Council level review should be acknowledged within a week of receiving the Stage Two complaint. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.
14. The person who receives Stage Two complaints will investigate the facts of the case. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.
15. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.
16. The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.
17. Ideally complainants at Stage Two should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, or there is not a suitable Council meeting within that time span, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.
18. Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.
19. **The decision taken at this stage is final**, unless the Council decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

Reporting of the Complaint

20. In addition to the Complaint being formally logged, the nature of the complaint, the outcome and any 'lessons learned' will be formally minuted at the next appropriate meeting of the Council, taking into account the need for confidentiality etc.

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

21. The Council may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chair should not also have the Chair as the person leading a Stage Two review (see suggestion above re Clerk).

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

22. Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

On a related matter, the Parish Council is reminded that Standing Order 25 deals with "Allegations of Breaches of the Code of Conduct". This Standing Order applies to Councillors.

Chris Pottinger,
Clerk, Hannington Parish Council

24th August 2016

Approved by Council Sept 2016