

WEST FARLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

Complaints about an employee

Complaints about an employee of West Farleigh Parish Council (ie the Clerk) should be dealt with as an employment matter and initially directed to the Chairman. The complainant should be assured that the matter will be dealt with internally and appropriate action taken as required.

Complaints about a councillor

Complaints about a councillor are subject to the jurisdiction of the Standards Board and complainants should be advised to contact the Standards Board direct or the Monitoring Officer of Maidstone Borough Council (Mr Paul Fisher 01622 602006) for further information.

Complaints against West Farleigh Parish Council

Before the meeting

1. The complainant should be asked to put complaint about the council's procedures or administration in writing to the clerk or other nominated proper officer.
2. If complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the clerk or other proper officer they may be advised to put it to the chairman of the council.
3. The clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint within 10 working days and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the council.
4. The complainant shall 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 shall provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

At the meeting

6. The council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public.
7. The Chairman to introduce everyone.
8. The Chairman to explain procedure.
9. The complainant (or representative) to outline grounds for complaint.
10. Councillors to ask any questions of the complainant.
11. If relevant, the clerk or other proper officer to explain the council's position.
12. Councillors to ask any questions of the clerk or other proper officer.
13. The clerk or other proper officer and complainant to be offered opportunity of last word (in this order).
14. The clerk or other proper officer and complainant to 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 to be invited back).
15. The clerk or other proper officer and complainant return to hear decision, or to be advised when decision will be made.

After the meeting

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