NORTH CLAINES PARISH COUNCIL – COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

July 2019

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. The following procedure will be adopted for dealing with complaints about the council's administration or its procedures. Complaints about a policy decision made by the council will be referred to the council, or relevant committee, as appropriate, for consideration.

2. This procedure does not cover complaints about the conduct of a member of the Parish council. If there is a complaint about the conduct of a member of the council, this should be referred to the principle council's monitoring officer.

3. If a complaint about procedures, administration, or the actions of any of the Council's employees is notified orally to a councillor, or to the clerk to the council, a written record of the complaint will be made, noting the name and contact details of the complainant and the nature of the complaint.

4. The complainant will be asked to put the complaint in writing to the clerk to the council. The clerk will acknowledge receipt and specify the date by which it will be dealt with. Refusal to put the complaint in writing does not necessarily mean that the complaint cannot be investigated, but it is easier to deal with if it is in writing.

5. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the clerk to the council (because the matter relates to the clerk, for example,) he or she should be advised to write to the chairman.

6. (a) On receipt of a written complaint, the clerk (except where the complaint is about his or her own actions) or chairman (if the complaint relates to the clerk), will seek to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This will not be done without first notifying any person complained about and giving him or her an opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to resolve the complaint at this stage.

   (b) Where the clerk to the council or a councillor receives a written complaint about the clerk's actions, he or she shall refer the complaint to the chairman of the council. The clerk to the council will be formally advised of the matter and given an opportunity to comment.

7. The clerk or chairman will report any complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant to the next meeting of the council.

8. The clerk or chairman will report any complaint that has not been resolved to the next meeting of the council. The clerk will notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered, and the complainant will be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint to the council in person.

9. Matters relating to grievance or disciplinary proceedings that are taking, or are likely to take place, should be dealt with in accordance with the council's grievance and disciplinary procedures.

10. The council may consider whether the circumstances of any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public, but any decision on the complaint will be announced at the council meeting in public. The council must bear in mind the necessity to maintain confidentiality if it has been requested, and to comply with the requirements of Data Protection legislation regarding personal information.

11. As soon as possible after the decision has been made (and in any event not later than 10 days after the meeting) the complainant will be notified in writing of the decision and any action to be taken.

12. The council may defer dealing with any complaint if it is of the opinion that issues arise on which further advice is necessary. The advice will be considered, and the complaint dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.