



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The procedure is designed for those complaints that cannot be satisfied by less formal measures or explanations provided to the complainant by the Clerk or other proper officer or Chairman.

It may be that the Clerk or other proper officer at the meeting represents the position of the Council. If the Clerk or other proper officer is putting forward the justification for the action or procedure complained of, he or she should not advise the Council or committee.

At all times, the rules of natural justice will apply. In other words, all parties should be treated fairly and the process should be reasonable, accessible and transparent.

Before the meeting:

1. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the Council's procedure or administration in writing to the Clerk or other nominated proper officer.
2. If the 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 and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Council or by the committee established for the purposes of hearing complaints.
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representatives 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.

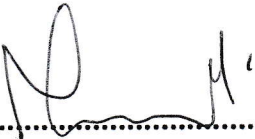
At the meeting:

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. Chairman to introduce everyone.
8. Chairman to explain procedure.
9. Complainant (or representative) to outline grounds for complaint.
10. Members to ask any questions of the complainant.
11. If relevant, Clerk or other proper officer to explain the Council's position.
12. Members to ask any questions of the Clerk or other proper officer.

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13. Clerk or other proper officer and complainant to be offered opportunity of last word (in this order)
14. Clerk or other proper officer and complainant to be asked to leave room while Members 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. Clerk or other proper officer and complainant return to hear decision, or to be advised when decision will be made.
16. Decision confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.

Signed.....
Date.....12.5.12.....
Chairman – Earls Barton Parish Council