



Ingleby Arncliffe Parish Council Complaints Procedure.

This Parish Council strives to be open and approachable. It hopes that anyone who is dissatisfied with any part of the service the council works hard to deliver, will feel confident in expressing their issues informally. The Council, as a Corporate Body and as individual councillors will make every effort to listen with compassion, patience and with integrity. However, should a complainant wish to make a formal complaint, the procedure is set out in this policy.

Introduction

Ingleby Arncliffe's Parish Council's Complaints Committee is made up of members from the Parish Council. They are committed to handling all concerns and expressions of dissatisfaction in confidence unless otherwise instructed by the complainant. The Committee will not be judgemental, and they will show respect and empathy and will work to ensure an easy and accessible procedure is offered. They will respond within the time frames as stated and give regular updates.

This procedure covers routine complaints; however, some types of complaints will be handled outside of this procedure. These include financial irregularities, criminal activities, member conduct and employee conduct. Advice can be offered as follows as to how these would proceed as necessary.

Making a Formal Complaint

A formal complaint must be made in writing to the clerk or if the complaint involves the clerk then it should be sent to the chairman of the council. Assistance will be offered and given to the complainant if requested.

How your complaint will be handled

1) Before the meeting.

Within 7 clear days of the receipt of the complaint, the clerk or the chairman give a written acknowledgement of it, along with a copy of this complaint's procedure. It is at this point the complainant will be asked if they wish the matter to be treated confidentially. The complainant will also be advised who from the complaint's Committee will be dealing with the complaint.

The complainant will be invited to attend a complaints committee meeting and invited to bring a representative if they wish.

No less than 7 clear days before the agreed meeting the complainant and the committee will exchange any relevant documentation or evidence that will be relied on.

Prior to the meeting two members of the complaints committee will be nominated to abstain from the initial meeting. This would permit them to handle an appeal should it be necessary. The clerk will be present throughout the proceedings, however, should it be necessary a nominated councillor may act instead. The council may appoint an independent person if it wishes to do so as an impartial arbitrator.

2) At the Council Meeting

The chairman will introduce everyone present and explain the purpose the procedure. The complainant or their representative should start by outlining the grounds of the complaint before any questions are asked by the chairman or committee members. The chairman of the meeting will then have the opportunity to explain the committee's position. Any questions may be asked by the complainant or other committee members at this point. Firstly, the complainant will summarise their position, then the chairman is given the same opportunity. The complainant will then be asked to leave the room whilst members decide if there are grounds for the complaint to have been logged. The complainant may be invited back into the room if clarity on any point is necessary. Once clarified they will be requested to leave the room again.

If a conclusion is reached by the committee, the complainant will be advised of the decision, if it is appropriate to do so at that point, plus the next action to be taken if any are necessary. The decision and action if appropriate will be confirmed in writing within seven clear days. However, if it is not possible to finalise a decision on that date, an estimated date will be given. If the issues are complex and the research lengthy, the complainant will be advised of this fact. Regular updates will be offered as to when a decision would be made.

3) After the meeting

The committee will confirm the decision reached in writing within seven clear days of it being made, together with full details of any action to be taken. At this point the complainant will be advised of the right to appeal as set out in this complaint's procedure. The result of the proceedings and the outcome will be reported at the next Parish Council meeting, ensuring full confidentiality at all times as requested by the complainant.

4) Appeals

Should the complainant disagree with the decision made they are entitled to appeal. This must be in writing giving detail of the complainant's reason/reasons to request this process. This request must be within fourteen days of the receipt of the written decision from the committee.

The councillors nominated to handle the appeal must act within twenty-one days of the receipt of the appeal. They will examine the way in which the complaint was handled. Where the complaint was deemed to be incorrectly handled it will be referred back for consideration as at point 2. The appellant will be notified in writing of the result of the appeal process within seven clear days of the decision being made.

Agreed and signed off 30th October 2024 -
Chairman, David Cook

Councillors
Barbara Funnell

Hazel Warhurst

Jenny Sedgwick