



## **Burston and Shimpling Parish Council**

### **Complaints Policy**

#### **1. General**

- 1.1. 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 back to the Council, or relevant Committee, as appropriate, for consideration.
- 1.2. This procedure does not cover complaints about the conduct of a Member of the Parish Council, which will be referred to South Norfolk Council.

#### **2. Making a Complaint.**

- 2.1. 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, a written record of the complaint will be made, noting the name and contact details of the complainant and the nature of the complaint, and the vice record will be passed to the Clerk, or to the Chairman if the complaint relates to the Clerk, or to the Vice Chairman.
- 2.2. The complainant will be asked to put the complaint in writing (letter/email/standard form) to the Clerk, refusal by the complainant to put the complaint in writing does not necessarily mean that the complaint cannot be investigated.
- 2.3. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk (because the matter relates to the Clerk, for example) he or she should put the complaint to the Chairman or Vice Chairman.

#### **3. Processing a Complaint**

- 3.1. 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), or the Vice Chairman (if the complaint relates to both the Clerk and the Chairman), 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 the opportunity to comment. Efforts should be made to resolve the complaint at this stage.
- 3.2. The Clerk (or Chairman or Vice Chairman) will report any complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant to the next meeting of the Council.
- 3.3. The Clerk (or Chairman or Vice Chairman) will report any complaint that has not been resolved to the next meeting of the Council for consideration. The clerk will notify the complainant of the date on which the complainant will be considered and the complainant will be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint to the Council verbally.

- 3.4. 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.
- 3.5. The Council may consider in the circumstances of any particular complaint whether to make any payment or provide other reasonable benefit to any person who has suffered loss as a result of the Council's maladministration. Any payment may only be authorised by the Council after obtaining legal advice and advice from Council's auditor on the propriety of such a payment.
- 3.6. 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.
- 3.7. The Council may defer deciding on 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.