

**HAWSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL
COMPLAINTS POLICY**

APPROVED ON: 17 Nov 2016

LAST REVIEWED: May 2023

NEXT REVIEW DATE: MAY 2027

Hawstead Parish Council will usually try and resolve complaints in an informal manner. However, if this is not possible, e.g. not acceptable to the complainant, the formal complaints procedure below will be followed and a copy of this policy provided to the complainant. On receipt of a formal complaint, it will be made clear that any complaints that refer to individual councillors, in relation to their conduct, will be referred to West Suffolk District Council's Standards Committee.

PROCEDURE FOR MAKING A COMPLAINT

The following procedure should be followed by anyone wishing to make a formal complaint against Hawstead Parish Council.

If you have a complaint against a Councillor or any other general complaint about the Council you should write to the Parish Clerk, Catherine Hibbert c/o Brokesbourne, Stanningfield Road, Great Whelnetham, Suffolk IP30 0TY.

If you have a complaint against the Clerk you should write to the Chairman of the Council, Cllr P Baker Cooks Farmhouse, Bury Raad, Hawstead, IP29 5NR.

In order for any complaint to be dealt with fully and properly, the following Code of Practice has been adopted. The Clerk is the Proper Officer of the Council and will represent and advise the Council at any meeting where the complaint will be aired unless the Clerk is putting forward justification for any action by the Council.

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

Before the meeting:-

1. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the Council's procedures in writing to the Clerk.
2. If the complainant does not want to put the complaint to the Clerk, they will be advised to put it to the Chairman.
3. The Clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Council.
4. The complainant will be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representatives as they wish.
5. Seven clear working days before the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documentation or other evidence to which they wish to refer at the meeting.

The Council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which it wishes 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 press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.
7. Chairman to introduce everyone and explain procedure.
8. Complainant (or representative) to outline grounds for complaint.
9. Members may ask any question of the complainant.
10. If relevant the Clerk will explain the Council's position.
11. Members may ask questions of the Clerk.
12. Complainant (and where appropriate the clerk) to be asked to leave the room while Members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made (Parties maybe invited back to clarify any points, if appropriate).
13. Complainant (and where appropriate Clerk) return to hear decision or to be advised when a decision will be made.

After the meeting:-

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