

Glington Parish Council

Complaints Policy

(incorporating process for dealing with complaints)

Introduction

1. This Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from this council, or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by this council, this Complaints Policy and Procedures sets out how you may complain to the council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.
2. The Council will not acknowledge or consider, under any circumstances, informal or formal complaints that are submitted anonymously.
3. In the event of serial facetious, vexatious or malicious complaints from a member of the public the council should consider taking legal advice before writing any letters to the complainant.
4. The Parish Council will not reconsider a complaint, which it has already investigated, and for which no new information or factors are submitted
5. The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There may also be the opportunity to raise your concerns in the public participation section of Council meetings. If you are unhappy with a Council decision, you may raise your concerns with the Council, but Standing Orders prevent the Council from re-opening issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds to consider this necessary and the special process set out in the Standing Orders is followed.
6. This Complaints Policy applies to complaints about council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how a council employee has dealt with your concerns.
7. This Complaints Procedure does NOT apply to:
 - a. complaints between a council employee and the council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.
 - b. complaints against councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct (England) 2012 adopted by the Council on 17 July 2012 and, if a
 - c. complaint against a councillor is received by the council, it will first in the first instance try to resolve the issue at a local level. This does not prevent the complainant from directly contacting the Monitoring Officer at Peterborough City Council. Further information on the process of dealing with complaints against councillors may be obtained from:

The Monitoring Officer
Town Hall,
Bridge Street,
Peterborough PE1 1HG
8. You should make your complaint about the council's procedures or administration to the Clerk as the Proper Officer of the Council. You may do this in person, by phone, or by writing to or emailing the Clerk. The addresses and numbers are set out below.

9. Wherever possible, the Clerk will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible, the Clerk will acknowledge your complaint within three working days and advise you of the time required to investigate your complaint.
10. If you do not wish to report your complaint to the Clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the Chairman of the Council who will report your complaint to the Council.
11. The Clerk or in exceptional circumstances, a Councillor, will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you and/or from staff or other members of the Council.

Informal Complaint

It is hoped that most complaints can be resolved quickly and amicably through this route. Informal complaints can be made by telephone or email to the Clerk. Complaints should always be directed through the Clerk or Chairman, NOT through individual Councillors.

A complainant may advise a Councillor of the details of a complaint, but individual Councillors are not in a position to resolve complaints. It is expected that most complaints can be resolved through this informal route. However, the Council appreciates that on occasions if an informal approach had not resolved the complaint, or that the initial complaint is so serious, then the formal complaints process should be followed.

Formal Complaint

The Clerk to the Council is responsible for managing the formal complaints process. The Clerk is the "proper officer" of the Council, effectively its General Manager. The Council encourages contact by email and telephone, but as a formal complaint is a serious matter it will only accept these in writing.

The complaint should contain as much detail as possible and enclose any relevant supporting documentation. The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within three working days. The Clerk will carry out an initial investigation into the complaint and will within ten working days provide the complainant with an update on progress, or a suggested resolution. If the complainant is satisfied with the resolution the complaint is closed.

The Clerk will report to the Council, at its next meeting summary details of the complaint and a brief summary of its resolution. This summary report will exclude the names of the complainant.

If you are dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you may ask for your complaint to be referred to the Parish Council (as appropriate) and (usually within eight weeks) you will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint.

Before the Meeting

1. The person making the complaint (complainant) will be asked to put the complaint about the council's procedures or administration in writing to the Parish Clerk.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Parish Clerk, exceptionally they will be advised to put it to the Chairman of the Council.
3. The Parish Clerk (or chairman) shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant that the matter will be brought to the attention of the Parish Council at the next available meeting.
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting, with a representative if they so wish. The complainant shall forward the name of the representative to the Council prior to the meeting.
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 Parish Council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely on at the meeting.

At the Meeting

6. The Parish Council must first, consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and press (within the legal constraints contained in the “*Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960*” and the “*Local Government Act 1972 ss100 & 102*”
7. Chairman to introduce everyone.
8. Chairman to explain procedure.
9. Complainant (or representative) to outline grounds for complaint.
10. Parish Councillors to ask any question of the complainant.
11. If relevant, the Parish Clerk (or the designated councillor investigating the complaint) to explain the Council’s position.
12. Parish Councillors to ask any question of the Parish Clerk (or the designated councillor)
13. Parish Clerk and complainant to be offered opportunity of last word (in this order).
14. Parish Clerk and complainant to be asked to leave room while Councillors decide whether or not the grounds for complaint have been made. (If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties to be invited back).
15. Parish Clerk and complainant return to hear decision, or to be advised when decision will be made.

After the meeting

16. Conclusions and any action recommended will be reported to the next full meeting of the Parish Council.
17. Decision confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.

Policy Adoption

This policy was adopted by Glinton Parish Council as its meeting on the 19th July 2016

Contacts

The Clerk of Glinton Parish Council

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Email: clerk@glintonparishcouncil.org

The Chairman of Glinton Parish Council

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