FORDHAM PARISH COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

What is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the council's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service, whether the action was taken or the service provided by the council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the council.'

When is this procedure not appropriate?

The following types of complaint should be dealt with as follows:-

Financial Irregularity	Local elector's statutory right to object Council's audit of Accounts pursuant to. 'The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)', On other matters, the council may need to consult their auditor / Audit Commission.
Criminal Activity	The Police
Member Conduct	If the complaint relates to a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct, this must be submitted to the Monitoring Officer at East Cambridgeshire District Council.
Employee Conduct	Internal disciplinary procedure

Procedure.

1. If a complaint about procedures or administration is notified orally to a councillor or the clerk and they cannot satisfy the complainant fully forthwith the complainant shall be asked to put the complaint in writing to the clerk and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.
2. If a complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the clerk he or she shall be advised to put it to the chairman.
3. On receipt of a written complaint the clerk or chairman, as the case may be, shall try to settle the complainant directly.
4. The clerk or chairman shall report to the next meeting of the council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.
5. If the complaint cannot be settled the clerk shall acknowledge 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. The complainant should also be advised whether the complaint will be treated as confidential or whether, for example, notice of it will be given in the usual way (if, for example, the complaint is to be heard by a committee).
6. The complainant shall be invited to attend a meeting and to bring with them a representative if they wish.
7. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence relied on. The council shall provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting

and shall do so promptly, allowing the claimant the opportunity to read the material in good time for the meeting.

At the Meeting

8. 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.
9. The chairman should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
10. The complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by (i) the clerk or other nominated officer and then (ii),members.
11. The clerk or other nominated officer will have an opportunity to explain the council's position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant and (ii), members.
12. The clerk or other nominated officer and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
13. The clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant should be asked to leave the room while members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. If a point of clarification is necessary, *both* parties shall be invited back.
14. The clerk or other nominated officer and the complainant should be given the opportunity to wait for the decision but if the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day they should be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.

After the Meeting

15. The decision should be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.

Date Adopted: ……

Signed: ……...

Print Name: ……

Policy to be reviewed on: ……