

STOKE FERRY PARISH COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Last Reviewed: February 2019

Next Review: Feb 2023

1 Introduction

Stoke Ferry Parish 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 Policy sets out how you may complain to the Council and how we shall try to resolve your complaint.

2 Applicability

This Policy applies to complaints about Parish Council administration, procedures and service. It also includes complaints about how the council has dealt with your concerns.

It does not apply to complaints between a council employee and the council as an employer.

3 Complaints against a Councillor

All Councillors are bound by the rules within the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

Firstly, the complaint will be acknowledged in writing within 15 working days after it is received by the Clerk.

The Parish Councillors will be advised of the Complaint by the Clerk via email at the point of acknowledgement.

After acknowledgement the Clerk and Chair (or Vice Chair in their absence), will investigate the Complaint for up to 25 working days (after the date of acknowledgement). The Complainant will be advised that the investigation findings will be presented to the Parish Council in a closed to the public meeting for decision on whether their complaint is upheld or not. Normal quorum rules apply.

The Chair (or Vice Chair in their absence or if a complaint about the Chair) will raise any complaint received about a Councillor preferably in person or on the phone initially. If the Councillor does not wish to be present a closed meeting to discuss the complaint, it will still be held with as many of the Parish Councillors as possible keeping to normal quorate meeting rules, it must include the Chair or Vice Chair and the Clerk must also be present to take a record of the meeting.

The person who made a complaint against a Councillor will be informed in writing of the outcome following the closed meeting of the Parish Council and will be advised of its findings.

4 General Complaints

The Parish Council provides the opportunity to raise concern(s) through the public participation section included at the end of each Parish Council Meeting. These generally are comments that the Parish Council can resolve through the powers that it has, and therefore will not be judged as a complaint.

Your complaint may be about the Council's services, procedures or administration and should be made to the Parish Clerk in writing giving the reasons why you wish to complain and what resolution is hoped for.

Each complaint will be investigated obtaining further information as necessary. If it is felt that the issue raised is not a complaint and is an issue/query/comment instead, then it won't be covered by this policy. The decision of whether it is a complaint will be at the discretion of the Clerk and Chair (Vice Chair in their absence).

Step 1 – First Contact Complaint Resolution

- Where a member of the public expresses a wish to make a complaint this must be done firstly via the Parish Clerk.
- The Clerk will send an acknowledgement within 15 working days of receipt of the Complaint.
- If it is the first time that the issue has been raised with the Parish Council, the Parish Clerk and Chair (Or Vice Chair in their absence) will make steps to resolve within 25 working days.
- This resolution will be confirmed in a closed session of the Parish Council as soon as practicable after.
- If the complaint is something that is not within the Parish Council's powers to resolve the person will be directed to the appropriate authority.
- It may be possible that after investigation the Clerk and Chair (Vice Chair in their Absence) do not agree that the complaint should be upheld, and the person will be notified in writing within 25 working days.

Step 2 – Complainant Still Not Satisfied – after initial outcome

- Once a response is received at step 1, and the member of public is still not satisfied after outcome they may go this second step.
- The person must put in writing to the Clerk why they feel they are not satisfied with resolutions or responses to step 1 and what they feel should be done to resolve this.
- Upon receipt of this information the Clerk will acknowledge within 15 working days.
- The Parish Council will arrange to meet under a closed meeting to discuss the complaint and will look to either uphold or not uphold their complaint.
- If there are agreed resolutions these will be carried out within 25 working days after the closed meeting via the Parish Clerk.
- The Complainant will be notified of the outcome in writing after the closed session by the Parish Clerk.
- Due to GDPR regulations it is not deemed appropriate to discuss the issue outside a closed meeting of the Parish Council.

5 Resolution

If the complainant is unhappy with a Council decision or action taken to resolve at step 2, the complainant may raise your concerns with the Council. However, the Council will not re-open issues for six months from the date of the decision, unless there are exceptional grounds.

Should the Parish Council it feel necessary, they will instigate their Policy on Dealing with Abusive, Persistent or Vexatious Complaints.

6 Contact Details

Parish Clerk: H. Richardson

stokeferrypc@gmail.com

07795006811

Issue 3 Dated February 2019

STOKE FERRY PARISH COUNCIL – COMPLAINT FORM

Complaint made by:

Name	
Address	
Postcode	
Home Phone	
Work Phone	
E-Mail Address	

Complaint Category

Code of Conduct Yes/No Other Yes/No

Complaint

Provide a description of the complaint indicating how long the problem has been going on for:
Attach any supporting information

<u>Date of Incident</u>		<u>Police Crime Number if Applicable</u>
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Agreement and Signature

I confirm that the facts set forth above are true and a complete record

Name (printed)	
Signature	
Date	

Our Policy

Thank you for completing and submitting this Complaints Form which will receive our prompt attention under our Complaints Policy Issue : Feb 2019

Please return to the Clerk as soon as possible – stokeferrypc@gmail.com