

EFFINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

STATEMENTS OF GUIDANCE AND POLICY

5. Complaints Procedure

These notes give guidance to Effingham residents and others who wish to make a complaint about an alleged failure by Effingham Parish Council (EPC), its Officers or Councillors to conduct its business in accordance with its own policies and those laid out in Law. Such a complaint may cover unsatisfactory service, the behaviour of an Officer or Councillor, or failure to follow an agreed policy or procedure. We will deal with all complaints fairly using due process. We will make an initial reply within 15 working days, of the complaint being received, and update you regularly until the matter has been investigated and resolved.

MAKING A COMPLAINT ABOUT A PARISH COUNCILLOR

A complaint about a Parish Councillor should be sent directly to the Monitoring Officer at Guildford Borough Council (GBC), who has statutory authority to deal with misconduct complaints about Parish Councillors, the address is:

The Monitoring Officer,
Guildford Borough Council
Millmead House
Millmead
Guildford
Surrey, GU2 4BB

MAKING A COMPLAINT ABOUT EFFINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Complaints about an alleged failure by Effingham Parish Council should be sent to:

The Clerk,
Effingham Parish Council,
The Parish Room,
3 Home Barn Court,
The Street, Effingham,
Surrey, KT24 5LG.

Email – clerk2010@effinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk
Telephone – 01372 454911

MAKING A COMPLAINT ABOUT THE CLERK

Complaints about the Clerk should be sent to:

Chairman,
Effingham Parish Council,
The Parish Room,
3 Home Barn Court,
The Street, Effingham, Surrey, KT24 5LG.

All correspondence received by EPC is subject to the Freedom of Information Act [2000] and Environmental Information Regulations [2004] and may need to be made public. If we are legally obliged to disclose details of your correspondence under the Freedom of Information or Environmental Information laws, we will anonymise all documents (as far as lawfully possible) unless you have given us specific permission to reveal your identity.

EPC will respect legitimate expectations of confidentiality, but anonymous complaints may not be investigated, at the discretion of the Parish Council.

This Complaints Procedure is fully compliant with the Equalities Act 2010.

How the Parish Council will respond to complaints about an alleged failure of the Council to conduct its business in accordance with its policies.

The Chairman (or in the Chairman's absence, the Vice Chairman) and Clerk will undertake an initial investigation of the complaint and will contact you to understand the complaint more fully and if appropriate undertake an in-depth investigation.

The actions taken by the Parish Council will depend on the nature of the complaint and the matter may be:

- investigated internally, or
- referred to the Monitoring Officer, Guildford Borough Council

How the Parish Council will respond to complaints about the Clerk

The Chairman and Vice Chairman will undertake an initial investigation of the complaint and will contact you to understand the complaint more fully and if appropriate to undertake an investigation.

The actions taken by the Parish Council will depend on the nature of the complaint and the matter may be:

- investigated internally
- referred to the Police

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

The Parish Council understands that you need to be assured that your complaint is addressed properly. Subject to legal or contractual restraints, you will receive information about the outcomes of investigations.

Complaints about Councillors handled by the Monitoring Officer (GBC) will follow the process described in the GBC arrangements for investigating breaches of the Code of Conduct as they relate to Parish Councillors.

Complaints about an alleged failure of the Parish Council and complaints about the Clerk will be dealt with through the Parish Council's code of conduct or its disciplinary procedures.

On the rare occasion when a complaint is made in an unreasonable way (for example, repeatedly, obsessively or aggressively) the Parish Council will write to the complainant explaining what action we are taking to bring the matter to an end. This could include, but is not limited to, restricting contact between the complainant and the Parish Council to a named person at the Council or managing the situation with the help of a named intermediary. The decision to class a complainant as unreasonable will be made by the

Parish Council, which will write to the complainant to explain the reason for the decision to class the complaint as unreasonable. In this situation the complaint may not be investigated any further.

HOW THE MATTER CAN BE TAKEN FURTHER

The Parish Council will look into all reasonable complaints. It trusts that its investigations and outcomes will satisfy complainants. If you are not satisfied with the investigation or the outcome you may wish to take the matter further and contact:

- Monitoring Officer, Guildford Borough Council
- Police
- Professional Organisation
- Charity "Public concern at work" 0207 404 6609

Adopted by Effingham Parish Council at its meeting on 30.10.2018

Minute 336/18
