

## **Saxby All Saints Parish Council Complaints Procedure**

This procedure has been adopted by Saxby All Saints Parish Council for dealing with complaints about the Council's administration or its procedures. Complaints about a policy decision made by the Council will be referred back to the Council for consideration. Please note that the Council's Standing Orders state that matters shall not be re opened until a period of 6 months has elapsed.

Complaints about the conduct of a Councillor shall be referred to the North Lincolnshire Council's Monitoring Officer and will not be dealt with by the Parish Council.

Complaints about the conduct of the Clerk will be dealt with under the Parish Council's Employment Policy.

Saxby All Saints Parish Council does not consider anonymous communications.

In the event of serial facetious, vexatious, or malicious complaints from a member of the public, the Council should consider taking legal advice before responding.

### **Before the meeting**

1. If a complaint about procedures or administration is notified orally to the Clerk, or a Councillor, and they cannot satisfy the complainant fully, the complainant should be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk, or the Chairman of the Council.
2. The Clerk shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint, and the Council aims to deal with the complaint within 21 working days following its receipt. If this is not possible the Clerk will inform the complainant when a response should be expected.
3. On receipt of a written complaint the Clerk (except where the complaint is about his/her actions), or the Chairman (if the complaint relates to the Clerk), will seek to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This will not be done without first notifying any person complained about, and giving him/her the opportunity to comment. Every effort should be made to resolve the complaint at this stage.
4. The Clerk, (or Chairman), will report any complaint disposed of by direct action to the next meeting of the Council.
5. The Clerk (or Chairman) will report any unresolved complaints to the next meeting of the Council. The Clerk will notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered, and the complainant will be offered the opportunity to explain the complaint to the Council orally at the Council meeting.
6. Seven clear working days before the meeting the complainant shall provide to the Council, copies of any documentation or other evidence relied upon. The Council shall provide the complainant with copies of documentation on which it wishes to rely, and shall do so promptly, allowing the complainant ample time to read the material before the meeting.

**At the meeting**

1. The Council will first consider whether the circumstances of the complaint warrant the matter to be discussed in the absence of the press and public, but any decision on the complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.
2. The Chairman will introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
3. The complainant should outline the complaint, and thereafter questions may be asked by the Clerk, and then by Councillors.
4. The Clerk will have the opportunity to explain the Council's position, thereafter questions may be asked by the complainant, and then by Councillors.
5. The Clerk will summarise the Council's position, then the complainant shall summarise his/her position.
6. Councillors must consider the complaint, and make a decision. The complainant may wait to hear the decision.

**After the meeting**

7. The Clerk will write formally to the complainant within 10 working days of the meeting to confirm the decision and any action to be taken.

The Council may defer dealing with a complaint if it is of the opinion that issues arise on which further advice is required. The advice will be considered and the complaint dealt with, at the next meeting after the advice has been received.

This Complaints Policy is reviewed annually at the Annual Meeting held in May each year.

This policy was adopted by Saxby All Saints Parish Council at its meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2016.

Next review date May 2019.