



## Complaints Procedure

Reviewed and Re-Adopted at the Meeting of 4 May 2021

Wivelsfield Parish Council believes a complaints procedure demonstrates that the Council:

- wishes to provide a good service;
- is committed to listen to and act upon residents' views;
- undertakes its business in an open and honest manner;
- wishes to deal with complaints fairly and expeditiously.

The Council believes that complaints and suggestions provide a valuable opportunity for improving its services and performance.

### What is a Complaint?

For the purposes of this procedure, a complaint is defined as:

*An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the Council or its staff affecting an individual, group or organisation.*

This definition covers most complaints – such as:

- dissatisfaction with the administration of policy and decisions;
- delays in responding to service requests;
- failure to achieve standards of service;
- failure to fulfil statutory responsibilities;
- employees' behaviour or attitude.

### Complaints about Members of Wivelsfield Parish Council

All Councillors have signed an undertaking that they will observe the Council's Code of Conduct. The Code – which is that also used by East Sussex County Council and Lewes District Council – specifies a Councillor's obligations. Reports of alleged breaches of the Code should be made to the Clerk of the Parish Council for investigation.

### Complaints against a Member of Staff

This type of complaint would normally be dealt with as an employment matter and pursued, as necessary, in the light of the Council's disciplinary procedure. The complainant should be advised accordingly that the matter is being dealt with internally and that appropriate action will be taken as appropriate. Details of that action will be communicated to the complainant.

### **Complaints about the Council's Procedures or Administration**

Most complaints, whether oral or in writing, will be reviewed by the Clerk whose responsibility it is to investigate, as necessary, and respond as quickly as possible. In normal circumstances, a response should be sent within 10 working days. Where this is not possible an interim response should be sent giving an indication of when a full reply can be expected. If a complainant is dissatisfied with the full response, this fact should be drawn to the attention of the Chair of the Council. In consultation with other Members, as necessary, and after obtaining any further relevant information, the Chair will issue a further response.

### **Complaints about Services Provided by Other Public Organisations**

Given that some public services in Wivelsfield are provided by either Lewes District Council or East Sussex County Council – and that the division of responsibilities between public bodies can often be confusing – Wivelsfield Parish Council will advise and, if appropriate, assist those wishing to pursue complaints against other public organisations providing services in the Parish.