

FISKERTON PARISH COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS AND VEXACIOUS COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

This complaints procedure is designed to deal with complaints concerning clear dissatisfaction about the standard of service, action or lack of action by the council or its staff affecting an individual or group". This information is designed to help you make your complaint. It tells you who to get in touch with and what we will do to put things right.

Any complaint can only be processed by the Council at a properly convened meeting of either the full Council or of a Committee tasked with investigating the matter.

Any complaint that involves a Council employee will be dealt with in the first instance via this complaints procedure, and if any further action is required, then in accordance with the Council's internal employment processes.

If you wish to make a complaint about a Councillor then you must write to:

The Monitoring Officer

West Lindsey District Council
Guildhall
Marshall's Yard
Gainsborough
Lincs.
DN21 2NA

Step 1 – Informal complaint

If you wish to make an informal complaint regarding services offered by the Parish Council or a member of staff, please contact the Clerk at clerk@fiskerton-lincs.org.uk who may be able to resolve your complaint there and then.

If you are not happy after this, or you do not wish to deal with the clerk, you can put your complaint to the Chairman at adrian.walker@fiskerton-lincs.org.uk who will look into matters.

The Clerk/Chairman will, wherever possible, acknowledge your informal complaint within five working days. We hope that most informal complaints can be resolved at this stage.

Step 2 – Formal complaint

However, if you are still not happy with the outcome from the informal stage you can make a formal complaint. There are a number of ways to do this:

- By e-mailing the Parish Clerk at clerk@fiskerton-lincs.org.uk
- In writing to the Parish Clerk via Fiskerton Village Hall
- You may wish to contact a Councillor to assist you in making a complaint (Councillor's names and contact details are available on the Council website (click on the Declarations of Interest tab), or you can contact the Clerk for details).

Formal complaints will be investigated by the Council or a nominated Committee working on behalf of the Council at a properly convened meeting. Please be aware that any complaint will be treated as confidential, and that the council is obliged to comply with its duties under GDPR at all times to safeguard against the unlawful disclosure of personal data.

Before the meeting

Wherever possible the Clerk will normally try to acknowledge your complaint within five working days. The clerk will advise when the matter will be considered by the Council or a nominated Committee working on behalf of the Council. Further information will be requested as necessary to aid the Council in its investigation of a complaint.

You will be invited to attend the meeting. You should provide the Council with copies of any documentation or evidence which you wish to refer to at the meeting 7 clear working days prior to the meeting and the Council will similarly provide you with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

At the meeting

The council shall exclude the public and press whilst discussion of the matter takes place. Any decision on a complaint shall subsequently be announced at the next possible Council meeting, whilst considering any duties to safeguard personal data under GDPR.

At the meeting, the Chairman will introduce everyone, explain the procedure and outline the grounds of the complaint.

The complainant and Members may ask questions of each other and if relevant, the Clerk and Proper Officer may also ask questions.

Both the complainant and the Chairman will have opportunity of final comments and to summarise their position.

The Clerk and complainant will be asked to leave the room while Members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. Should points of clarification be necessary, then both parties will be invited back into the room. Both will then be invited to return to hear the decision or be advised when a decision will be made.

Following the meeting you will be advised within seven working days of the decision made with details of any action to be taken.

After the meeting

Any decision will be confirmed to the complainant within seven working days, together with details of any further action to be taken.

The Council's decision on the matter will be final, and no further appeal process will be offered.

Vexatious Complainants

The Council recognises that on occasions there are a small number of complainants who, because of the frequency of their contact with the Council, hinder our consideration of their or other people's complaints.

In all cases where the Council decide to treat someone as a vexatious complainant, we will write to tell the person why we believe his or her behaviour falls into that category, what action we are taking and the duration. The situation will be reviewed in three months and if there are no issues for two clear reviews (i.e. six months) then they will no longer be classed as a persistent complainant.

If a vexatious complainant whose case is closed persists in communicating with the Council about it, the Council may decide to terminate contact with them. In such cases, we will read all correspondence from that complainant, but unless there is fresh evidence which affects our decision on the complainant we will simply place it on file with no acknowledgement.

New complaints from people who have come under the persistent complainant's policy will be treated on their merits.