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COMPLAINTS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

If you have a complaint or a compliment about Bramerton Parish Council we would like to hear from you. This document tells you how to complain and what happens when we receive a complaint. It tells you who will deal with your complaint, how you can be represented, when a decision is made and how you will be notified of this.

Your feedback is important as it helps us improve our services.

We aim:

- to make it easy for anyone to make a complaint
- to solve problems as quickly as possible
- to prevent problems from happening again, and
- to encourage good practice.

These complaints procedures are for dealing with complaints about the Council's administration or its procedures. Complaints about a Council policy or decision will be referred back to the Council for consideration.

How to contact us with your compliment or complaint

You can contact the Council in writing. If you wish you can use the form which is included at the end of this policy. A list of contact details is also included.

What we will do when we hear from you

We will investigate your complaint fully and deal with comments about the Council as quickly as possible. We will contact you within 15 working days of us hearing from you and either give you a full answer or give you a progress report and explain why we need more time to investigate further. We will also tell you when we expect we can provide a full response.

In the first instance your complaint will be investigated by the Parish Clerk. If you remain dissatisfied your complaint will be considered by a panel of councillors. If your complaint is about the work of the Clerk, it should be addressed to the Chair for investigation. In such circumstances the Clerk will be advised of the matter and given an opportunity to comment. The aim of any investigation will be to find out what went wrong and take steps to make sure it won't happen again.

It is not appropriate for all complaints from members of the public to be handled using this complaints procedure. For example, complaints listed in the table below require special consideration and may involve other procedures or bodies. If this is the case, then we will advise you accordingly.

Type of complaint	Send to
Financial irregularity	External auditor PKF Littlejohn LLP, SBA Team, 15 Westferry Circus, Canary Wharf, London E14 4HD Email: sba@pkf-l.com Tel 020 7516 2200
Criminal activity	Norfolk police Tel 101
Council member's conduct	The Monitoring Officer, South Norfolk Council, Horizon Centre, Peachman Way, Broadland Business Park, Norwich NR7 0WF Tel 01508 533701 Email council@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk
Parish clerk's conduct	Internal disciplinary procedure The Chair, Duncan Butler, The Anchorage, Hill House Road, Bramerton NR14 7EE
Data protection breach	Information Commissioner's office Tel 0303 123 1113. Website https://ico.org.uk/

Persistent complaints

We will do our best to answer your complaint within the terms detailed in this policy. In the unfortunate circumstance where we consider a complaint has already been answered fully but further correspondence is received covering the same matter the Council will issue only one further acknowledgement.

Confidentiality

We will take care to maintain confidentiality where necessary (e.g. where matters concern commercially sensitive information or where third parties are concerned). Details will only be given to those councillors or members of staff directly concerned.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

Informal Complaints

The Council expects most complaints will be resolved easily and amicably through this route. Complaints should be made directly to the Clerk, or the Chair if the complaint is about the Clerk. The Clerk/Chair will carry out an initial investigation into the complaint and will, within 15 days, provide the complainant with an update on progress, or a suggested resolution. If the complainant is satisfied with the resolution the complaint is closed. The Clerk/Chair will report to the Council at the next meeting.

If this informal approach does not resolve the issue, or the complaint is deemed particularly serious, the formal complaints procedure outlined below will be followed.

Formal Complaints

The Council will appoint a Complaints Panel of at least three councillors to consider any formal complaint. One member of the Panel will be the Chair of the Council, except when the subject of the complaint is the Chair. The Panel has delegated authority from the Parish Council to review and decide on complaints. A written notice will be sent to the

complainant with the date of the Panel Meeting which will be held within 15 working days of a complaint being received by the Clerk/Chair. If the Panel is unable to meet within this time all parties will be notified of the date of the meeting and the reason for the delay.

The complainant shall be invited to attend the Panel meeting and to bring with them a representative if they wish. Likewise, the Council may bring a representative to give advice should this be considered necessary.

At least seven clear working days prior to the Panel meeting the complainant shall provide the Council with copies of any documents or other evidence they intend to rely on and the Council shall provide the complainant with copies of any documents or other evidence on which they wish to rely.

At the Panel Meeting

The Council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press.

The Chair shall introduce everyone and explain the procedure.

The complainant (or representative) shall be invited to outline the grounds for complaint and may then be questioned by the Clerk and Panel members.

The Clerk will have an opportunity to explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by the complainant and Panel members.

The Clerk and then the complainant will have the opportunity to summarise their positions and the Panel will then review all the evidence.

In most circumstances the Panel will consider the evidence and reach a conclusion at its first meeting. However, during this or any further meeting the Panel may call an adjournment (for example to seek further advice) and should then reconvene without delay (usually no more than 15 working days later). Panel members and the complainant should be given at least seven working days' notice of any subsequent meeting.

Before concluding the final meeting, the Panel will decide whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint. Where a complaint is upheld or partially upheld the Panel should decide on a suitable apology and decide what change(s) are necessary to avoid a repeat of any failing.

After the Meeting

The decision will be confirmed in writing within 10 working days together with details of any apology and actions to be taken.

The announcement of any decision will be made public at the next full Council meeting.

Policy reviewed and updated 24/11/25

Formal Complaint Form – Bramerton Parish Council

Complaints will be treated in the strictest confidence. Please refer to the accompanying procedure before completing this form.

Your name (block capitals please):

Address:

Email address:

Telephone number (day):

Telephone number (evening):

When is the best time for us to contact you?

Please give details of your complaint here (if necessary, continue over the page):

Have you spoken with, emailed or written to anyone at the Council? Yes/No If yes please give their name:

What happened as a result of this contact?

What outcome are you looking for, i.e. what would be the best way for the Council to resolve your complaint?

Please return this form to the Parish Clerk

Email clerk@bramertonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Post 1 Meadow Cottages, Gull Lane, Framingham Earl, Norwich NR14 7PN