

Funtington Parish Council

Complaints Policy and Procedure

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1 Introduction

Funtington Parish Council (the Council) aims to provide its users with the best possible service. However, we know that there may be times when we do not meet our own high standards. When that does happen we want to hear about it, deal with the situation as quickly as possible and put measures in place to try and ensure it doesn't happen again. We take complaints very seriously and see them as an opportunity to help see where our services or procedures might be improved.

Our policy is to:

- provide a fair complaints procedure, which is clear and easy to use;
- publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint;
- make sure everyone involved with the Council knows what to do if a complaint is received;
- make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely manner;
- make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and relationships are repaired; and
- gather information to help us improve what we do

2 Definition

A complaint or concern is an expression of dissatisfaction, either written or spoken and whether justified or not, which requires a response. A complaint may come from any person or organisation with a legitimate interest in the Council.

3 Confidentiality

All complaint information will be dealt with sensitively, telling only those that need to know and in line with any data protection requirements.

4 Process

If you have a complaint, you should tell us about it as soon as possible, as our aim is to resolve issues quickly so they do not escalate.

- a. Initially you should approach the Council member responsible for the area about which you wish to complain;
- b. Regardless of the outcome of this initial contact, the information will be passed on to the Parish Clerk (the Clerk) and registered in the complaint log;
- c. If you think the issue is more serious, or if you are not satisfied after raising it informally, you should raise it with the Clerk - clerk@funtingtonpc.org.
- d. Your complaint will be acknowledged as soon as possible and the Clerk will arrange with you the best way forward and time frame for responding to you;
- e. If the complaint refers to a specific person, they will be told and given an opportunity to respond;
- f. Ideally you will receive a response within four weeks. If this is not possible, a progress report will be sent with an indication of when you can expect a full response. The response will describe the action that has been taken to investigate, the conclusions and any action taken as a result;
- g. If you are still dissatisfied you may write to the Clerk, following which it will be heard by a panel, comprising at least three members of the Council. The panel will examine all the

evidence and decide, by a majority vote, whether your complaint is valid, or provide reasons by the complaint is not upheld;

- h. The decision of the panel will be final;
- i. If appropriate the panel Chair will send you a written apology and details of any further action necessary to prevent the issue arising again; and
- j. All formal complaints and responses will be recorded and filed securely, along with any action taken.

5 Learning

- a) The Clerk will report to the next available Council meeting the number, nature and actions taken, in respect of any complaint.
- b) The Council will take any action necessary to prevent a recurrence of the complaint and/or improve our practices and procedures.