

# GREAT YELDHAM PARISH COUNCIL

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE



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The Local Government Ombudsman provides the following definition of a complaint:

Adopted by Great Yeldham Parish Council on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2014

*“A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the council’s action or lack of action about the standard of service, whether the action was taken or the service provided by the council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the council.”*

**The Clerk (Proper Officer) must advise the Chairman on receipt of any complaints. If together they agree that a simple letter of explanation or apology, if appropriate, from the Clerk will answer the complaint (within 7 days), then this shall be the first course of action. However if the complaint is of a more serious nature and could bring into question the conduct of the Council or Clerk, then the following procedure should be followed.**

A complaint relating to a Councillor’s failure to comply with the Parish Council’s Code of Conduct must be submitted to the Monitoring Officer at Braintree District Council.

A complaint relating to a Parish Council employee should be dealt with through the Parish Council’s internal disciplinary process.

1. The complainant will be asked and encouraged to put the complaint about the council’s procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk, they will be asked to address it to the Chairman of the Parish Council.
3. The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant as to when the matter will be considered by the council. The complainant should be advised whether the complaint will be treated as confidential or whether notice of it will be given at the next Council meeting.
4. The complainant will be invited to attend the relevant meeting (they may bring a representative with them).
5. 7 clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The Council shall provide the complainant with copies of any documentation to which they will refer at the meeting, allowing the complainant the opportunity to read the material in good time for the meeting
6. At the meeting the Council will consider whether it would be appropriate to exclude the press and public when dealing with the complaint. Any decision on a complaint will be announced at the council meeting in public.
7. The Chairman will introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
8. The complainant or their representative will outline the grounds for their complaint and questions may be asked by the Clerk and then Councillors.

9. If appropriate, the Clerk will explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by the complainant and the Councillors.
10. Clerk and complainant, in that order, to be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
11. Clerk and complainant to be asked to leave the room while Councillors decide whether or not there are grounds for the complaint. If further clarification becomes necessary, both parties are to be invited back into the room.
12. Clerk and complainant return to the room to hear decision or to be advised when decision will be made.
13. The Clerk/Chairman will write to confirm the decision within 7 working days together with details of any action to be taken.