

# Wisborough Green Parish Council

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Complaints against **policy decisions** made by the Council shall be referred back to the Council in writing (but note paragraph 13 of the Council's Standing Orders which states that issues shall not be reversed within six months without special resolution, by special resolution moved in pursuance of the report or recommendation of a committee.)

Councillors are covered by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2002. A separate procedure is in place for **complaints against Parish Councillors**. An explanatory booklet is available from the Clerk or from The Standards Board for England website, [www.standardsboard.co.uk](http://www.standardsboard.co.uk).

The following policy has been established to deal with complaints about the **administration and procedures** of the Parish Council.

### ADMINISTRATION AND PROCEDURAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE (ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL ON 17<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2007)

1. If a complaint is notified orally to a Councillor or Clerk, they should try to satisfy the complaint fully at that time. If unable to do so, the complainant should be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly on receipt. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk, he or she should be advised to write to the Chairman.
2. On receipt of a written complaint, the Clerk (except where the complaint is about his or her own actions) or the Chairman should try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. Efforts should be made to attempt to settle the complaint at this stage. Where the Clerk or the Chairman receives a written complaint about the Clerk's own actions, the Clerk should refer the complaint to the Chairman. The Clerk should be notified and given an opportunity to comment.
3. The Clerk or Chairman shall report to the next Parish Council meeting any written complaints disposed of by direct action with the complainant.

The Clerk or Chairman shall bring any written complaint that has not been settled to the next Parish Council meeting.

The Council shall defer dealing with any written complaint only if it is of the opinion that issues of law or practice arise on which advice is necessary. The complaint shall be dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.

4. In advance of the meeting, the Clerk shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered and the complainant shall be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint orally at this meeting. (Unless such a matter may be related to Grievance, Disciplinary or Standard Board proceedings that are or are likely to take place, when such a hearing may prejudice those hearings. In this instance, the complaint would have to be heard under Exempt Business to exclude any member of the public or the press, or deferred on appropriate advice received.)

The Council shall consider whether the circumstances of the complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public, but any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the meeting in public.

5. As soon as practicable after the decision has been made, the decision and the nature of any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.