



## COLSTERWORTH AND DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL

### COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

#### A STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO COMPLAINTS AGAINST COLSTERWORTH AND DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL, EMPLOYEES OF THE COUNCIL OR COUNCILLORS\*

##### **The Reason why the Parish Council has a Complaints Procedure**

The Council has a procedure which will help it to become more responsive to complaints made by Parishioners as part of its commitment and accountability. If you tell us things have gone wrong, we will do our best to address your concerns as quickly as possible. This document outlines the way in which complaints should be made and how they will be handled.

##### **What we mean by a Complaint**

We have established a two-stage procedure for handling concerns and complaints. You should complain if you honestly believe:

- The Parish Council has done something the wrong way
- The Parish Council has done something it should not have done
- The Parish Council has failed to do something it should have done or
- An employee of the Parish Council who has acted wrongly

The complaints procedure is not designed as an appeal system to question decisions of the Council which were properly taken or to challenge policy. It is to check that everything that should have been done has been done and that our procedures and policies have been followed and officers and councillors have acted properly.

***\*A complaint against an individual councillor cannot be dealt with under this procedure and it must be directed to: The Monitoring Officer, SKDC, Council Offices, St Peter's Hill, Grantham NG31 6PZ.***

##### **Who do you complain to?**

- Complaints should be directed to the Proper Officer of the Parish Council, i.e, the Parish Clerk
- If the complaint is about the Clerk it should be directed to the Chairman of the Parish Council (or in the Chairman's absence to the Vice Chairman)

##### **How do you put your complaint in?**

*This must be kept confidential and not be put in the public domain by the complainant or the Parish Council.*

- By phone, letter or email with relevant evidence or by using the attached form.
- Current contact addresses can be found on the Colsterworth and District Parish Council website **or** by contacting: SKDC, Council Offices, St Peter's Hill, Grantham NG31 6PZ.
- Please type "Complaint" at the top of your letter
- Give full details of your complaint and explain what you think the Parish Council needs do to address your concerns

##### **STAGE 1**

- Your complaint will be acknowledged
- If your complaint relates to another service not the responsibility of the Parish Council (e.g. County or District Council), we will try and signpost you to the appropriate Authority
- If the complaint is of a severity that it requires consideration by full Council, the Clerk will refer it to Stage 2 of the Parish Council's Complaints Procedure (see below).
- You will receive a response from the Clerk or Chairman of the Parish Council
- If you receive a satisfactory response immediately after this informal resolution (Stage 1), the matter will be closed.
- Complaints received and resolved informally will be monitored and reported to Council by theme and outcome at the next Council meeting.

## STAGE 2

If you are not satisfied with the resolution at Stage 1 you must provide an explanation as to why you are not satisfied and request a review by Full Parish Council

- You will receive an acknowledgement
- Your complaint will be put before our Complaints Panel made up of three councillors who will decide if the complaint has merit.
- If the complaint has merit or not the Panel will prepare a report which will draw up recommendations to be put before the full Parish Council
- Your complaint will be considered by the full Parish Council and you will be informed of the result.
- The Parish Council will decide on any remedial actions if necessary
- This is the final stage of the Council's complaints procedure<sup>1</sup>

**Please treat our staff and Councillors with courtesy and respect at all times.**

**Any intimidating, threatening or hostile behaviour towards any of our staff that results in distress for the staff member will not be tolerated and may result in criminal prosecution.**

### Document Control and Policy Review:

Adopted at Colsterworth and District Parish Council Meeting:	Date:
Chairman:	John Walden
Responsible Officer/Clerk	Sue Grant
Document Control: Version	CAD-Complaints-Sept2018- V3
Policy Review Date	September 2019

<sup>1</sup> The Local Government Act 1974 (S34(1)) defines the authorities that the Local Government Ombudsman may investigate. Parish and town councils are not included in this definition. But they may be able to consider a complaint about a parish or town council if it is acting on behalf of another council. So, for example, if a county council has arranged that the parish council should maintain the grass verges, then we may be able to look at a complaint about this.

# COMPLAINT FORM

## Your details

1. Please provide us with your name and contact details

Title	
First name	
Last name	
Address	
Daytime phone	
Evening phone	
Mobile	
Email address	

We will not disclose your contact details to anyone unless it is necessary to do so in order to deal with your complaint.

2. Please tick the box that best describes you:

Member of the public	
Elected or co-opted member of a Council	
Other council employee	
Other (please specify)	

3. Please provide as much information as you can to support your complaint:-

- Date of any alleged incident(s)/decisions/omissions wherever possible. Where you cannot do that please provide a general timeframe.
- Other than in exceptional circumstances we cannot consider complaints about events that took place more than 3 months before the date on which you submit your complaint.
- How did this incident/decision affect you and why are you dissatisfied with the actions of the Council?
- You can let us know whether there were any other people affected/witnesses to the alleged incident(s) and provide their names and contact details if possible as long as they agree to you sharing this with the Council.
- You should provide as much relevant background information as you can as this will allow the Council to consider your concerns as quickly as possible,

4. Please write down the details of your complaint here. Continue on a separate sheet if there is not enough space on this form.

Please send your correspondence/form to: [clerk@colsterworthanddistpc.co.uk](mailto:clerk@colsterworthanddistpc.co.uk)