



## **TOCKWITH WITH WILSTROP PARISH COUNCIL CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE COUNCIL**

### **BEFORE processing a complaint**

1. All complaints must be made in writing a standard complaints form can be requested from the Council and will be available for download from the Parish Council website
2. The complainant will be asked on the complaint form if they wish to have the complaint treated confidentially. The Council must comply with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 to safeguard against the unlawful disclosure of personal data.
3. This procedure should be accessible to the complainant and be well publicized and accessible via the council's publication scheme.
4. Complaints should be addressed to The Clerk to the Parish Council If the complaint is about the clerk then letters should be addressed to The Chairman of the Parish Council, address details are displayed on the standard complaints form.
5. The receipt of the complaint should be acknowledged within 7 working days of receipt.
6. The complainant must be informed who will be dealing with the complaint
7. They complainant must also be informed whether the complaint will be treated as confidential and to also confirm the next steps in the complaints procedure
8. The timeframe for investigating and determining the complaint will be 21 working days from receipt of the complaint.
9. The complainant will be asked if they wish to attend a meeting with the nominated officer where the complainant should outline the grounds for complaint.

### **Investigating the complaint**

10. The Council use its 21 working days to investigate the facts of the complaint and collate relevant evidence.
11. The Complainant should be invited to a meeting with the clerk or nominated officer. Before the meeting and within the 21 working days of investigation of the complaint.



12. The Complainant must provide any new information or evidence relevant to the complaint and also the Clerk /officer must provide the Complainant with any new information or evidence.

### **AT the meeting**

13. The Council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.
14. The Chairman to introduce everyone.
15. The Chairman to explain the procedure.
16. The Complainant (or representative) to outline the grounds for complaint.
17. Members to ask any question of the Complainant.
18. If relevant, the Clerk/Proper Officer to explain the Council's position.
19. Members to ask any question of the Clerk/Proper Officer.
20. The Clerk/Proper Officer and Complainant to be offered the opportunity of the last word (in this order).
21. The Clerk/Proper Officer and Complainant to be asked to leave the room whilst Members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made. (If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties to be invited back).
22. The Clerk/Proper Officer and Complainant return to hear the decision, or to be advised when a decision will be made.

### **AFTER the meeting**

23. The decision shall be confirmed in writing within 7 working days together with details of any action to be taken.