



QUALITY
PARISH
COUNCIL

GAMLINGAY PARISH COUNCIL

The Eco Hub
Stocks Lane
Gamlingay
Beds

SG19 3JR

Telephone: 01767 650310

email: clerk@gamlingay-pc.gov.uk

HOW TO COMPLAIN TO GAMLINGAY PARISH COUNCIL

What constitutes a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the Parish Council's action, or lack of action, about the standard of a service delivered by the Council. The complaint may relate to an action taken, or a service provided by the Council itself, or a person or body acting on behalf of the Council.

What is a complaints procedure?

The way the Council manages any report of a problem with the service you are getting, or trying to get from the Council, or a problem with things that the Council does or doesn't do, is via a complaints procedure.

What can be expected?

The aims of this complaints procedure is to ensure the process is:

- well documented and publicised
- easy to understand and use
- helpful and receptive, not adversarial
- objective and based on clear procedures
- capable of putting things right where necessary
- sensitive to the needs and circumstances of the complainant
- adequately resourced and fully supported by the elected parish councillors & officers
- regularly analysed to spot patterns of complaint and lessons for service improvement

How to complain

Verbal complaint:-

- Direct your complaint to the Parish Clerk either by a simple phone call or in person
- Verbal complaints are used to report minor matters or the need to repair a property owned or operated by the Council, such as lights being out etc.
- Verbal complaints are normally dealt with directly by the Parish Clerk without any need for response.
- You may make a verbal complaint to a Councillor, but under the legislation governing Parish Councils, a Councillor has no authority to act as an individual and the complaint must be referred back to the Parish Clerk.

Written complaint:-

- To register a written complaint you will need to obtain and complete a copy of the Councils Complaint Form either via the Council website or directly from the Parish Office.



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- Attach any other information you wish to provide to support your complaint and then return your completed documents to the Parish Clerk at the Council office.
- Address your complaint to the Parish Clerk unless the complaint relates to the Clerk. In this instance the complaint should be addressed to the Parish Chairman and clearly marked "Council Chairman – Private and Confidential".
- Written complaints should be a matter of serious nature and once resolved will be recorded in the Council's minutes.
- Any complaints relating to issues concerning Human Resources or any other sensitive issues, may under legislation be exempt from publication.
- The Council will ask any complainants who submit letters or emails to the Council, to also submit their complaint via the Council's Complaint Form, to allow the Council to keep a consistent record of communication on complaints.

Nature of a complaint

Before making a complaint it is important to contact the council to ensure the council is the "Responsible Body" to handle the complaint. It is also important to clearly identify and document the details of the complaint. The way in which a complaint is handled is dependent on the nature of the complaint, and different types of complaint will be handled in different ways. The following table summarises how different types of written complaint may be handled by the council

Nature of the complaint	Who to complain to	How to complain	Who will deal with your complaint
A Complaint about the Council's <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • processes • procedures • services 	Contact the Clerk of the Council. The Clerk will provide you with a Complaint Form.	Complete the form and add any other relevant evidence to support the complaint. You should receive an acknowledgement from the Clerk in writing.	The Clerk or Council. The Clerk may deal with and respond to the complaint or the matter may be debated by the council at a council meeting and if so the Clerk's response will be based on the decision of the council.
A Complaint about the Conduct of an Employee of the council	Contact the Clerk of the Council. The Clerk will provide you with a Complaint Form.	Complete the form and add any other relevant evidence to support your complaint. You should receive an acknowledgement from the Clerk in writing. However if the complaint is about the Clerk the	The complaint may be resolved or escalated and be treated as an internal disciplinary matter to be dealt with under the council's employee disciplinary procedure. In the event that the matter escalates the council will



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		complaint should be sent to the Council Chairman, sealed and marked Private & Confidential.	provide a copy of the disciplinary procedure on request.
A Complaint about Financial Irregularity	Contact the Clerk of the Council. The Clerk will provide you with a Complaint Form.	Complete the form and add any other relevant evidence to support your complaint. You should receive an acknowledgement from the Clerk in writing.	The Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer of the council should endeavour to provide an explanation. If you are not satisfied you can report the matter to the External Auditor.
A Complaint about the Conduct of a Councillor	Contact the Clerk of the council first in an effort to resolve the matter locally. The Clerk will provide you with a Complaint Form. If this fails contact the Monitoring Officer at the District Council. The Monitoring Officer may provide you with a Complaint Form to register a formal complaint.	Complete the form and add any other relevant evidence to support your complaint. You should receive written acknowledgement from the Clerk. Complete the form and add any other relevant evidence to support your complaint. You should receive written acknowledgement from the Monitoring Officer.	The Monitoring Officer. Matters may be lengthy if an investigation is undertaken. The matter may be referred for consideration.
A Complaint about Criminal Activity	Contact the police. They may ask you to complete forms or be interviewed.	This is a civil matter so complete any forms and provide any relevant written evidence to support your concern.	The police. Depending on severity, the matter may go to court.



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Gamlingay Parish Council Complaint Form

**The Eco Hub
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Date	
Name	
Address	
Postcode	
Daytime phone number	
Evening Phone number	
Nature of Complaint - please give details of:	
1. What you wish to complain about to the parish council?	
2. When & where the situation took place including if possible details such as time, day, date & location?	
3. The names & if possible contact details of any others	



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involved?	
4. In your opinion, what action or decision would resolve the matter?	

To register a complaint please complete & return this form with any other information you wish to provide to support your complaint to the parish council.

Please continue your comments on a separate sheet if necessary.



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Complaints Procedure

1.0 Introduction:-

- 1.1 This document aims to identify a fair approach in dealing with any grievance a member of public or an individual may have with the services provided by Gamlingay Parish Council.
- 1.2 The document gives weight and expands upon Gamlingay Parish Council Standing Orders item No.31 and should be read in conjunction with this document.

2.0 Complaints concerning the Council's procedures or administration:-

- 2.1 If a member of the public has a complaint about the Parish Council's procedures or administration, this has to be put in writing to the Clerk.
- 2.2 If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the clerk, they can be advised to put this in writing to the Chairman of the Council.
- 2.3 The clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant if the matter will be considered by the Council or the Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- 2.4 The complainant will be informed of the date and the time of the meeting, and can attend and bring a representative with them should they wish to do so.
- 2.5 The complainant must provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence which they wish to refer to at the meeting, at least 5 clear working days prior to the meeting.
- 2.6 The Council will provide any written reports similarly to the complainant, prior to the meeting.
- 2.7 The Council shall consider whether exclusion of the public and press is essential in each circumstance. The decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public.
- 2.8 **Procedure at the meeting**
 - 2.8.1 Complainant asked to outline the grounds of the complaint by the Chairman
 - 2.8.2 Members are able to ask any relevant questions of the complainant



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- 2.8.3 If relevant, the clerk will explain the Council's legal position and that of best practice
 - 2.8.4 Members may ask questions of the clerk
 - 2.8.5 The clerk and complainant are to be offered an opportunity of the last word(in this order)
 - 2.8.6 Clerk and complainant may be asked to leave the room while members decide whether grounds for the complaint have been made
 - 2.8.7 Clerk and complainant asked to return to hear the decision or to be advised when a decision is to be made.
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- 2.9 The Council is to confirm its decision within 7 working days together with any details of any action to be taken.
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- 3.0 **Complaints about employment issues**
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- 3.1 This procedure should be read in conjunction with the employees terms and conditions in their contract of employment with the Council.
 - 3.2 If there is a complaint from any employee of the Council, the employee must apply in writing to the Chairman for redress of any grievance relating to their employment, or if they are dissatisfied with any disciplinary decision relating to their employment.
 - 3.3 The Chairman shall report any **complaint** to a duly convened meeting of the Council (or Finance and General Purposes Committee) and the matter should be resolved by Council after the employee has been given the opportunity to explain personally, or by a representative, the **complaint** orally at the Council meeting.
 - 3.4 The Council shall consider any application with the absence of press and public.
 - 3.5 Before any disciplinary action is taken by the Council, a notice in writing, signed by the Chairman and authorised by the Council, shall be given to the employee, and the employee shall be given a full opportunity to answer the complaint at a meeting of the Council (or Finance and General Purposes Committee) with the exclusion of the press and the public.



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4.0 Code of Conduct- Councillors

4.1 Please refer to Gamlingay Parish Council Standing Orders and the Code of Conduct requirements signed at appointment. Please refer to the clerk/or Cambridgeshire Association of Local Councils for the latest version.

5.0 Complaints about Councillors

5.1 If the clerk receives a complaint about a Councillor, complainants will be advised to contact South Cambridgeshire District Council's Monitoring Officer. **(see attached SCDC Complaints Procedure flowchart)**

5.2 Any complaint received will be managed by South Cambridgeshire District Council.

5.2 A full procedure is available from the Monitoring Officer, South Cambridgeshire District Council, Tel (08450 450500)

Kirstin Rayner
Clerk
17-12-12