

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Catfield Parish Council strives to provide a high standard of service to the public. In the interests of openness and the desire to seek continuous improvement, the Council encourages anyone who feels dissatisfied with the service provided to bring this to the attention of the Council.

In some instances, it will be appropriate for an explanation to be given and/or remedial action taken.

Where a formal complaint is submitted in writing, a proportionate investigation will be conducted and the outcome communicated back to the complainant in writing.

### How to make a complaint about the Council

Enquiries or observations about the Council services can be made by e-mail to [catfieldparishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:catfieldparishcouncil@gmail.com) or by telephoning the Clerk (see Catfield Parish Council website for telephone number).

Formal complaints must be submitted in writing to the Clerk (see Catfield Parish Council website for address of the Parish Clerk).

Or e-mailed to [catfieldparishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:catfieldparishcouncil@gmail.com)

If the matter relates directly to the Clerk, the complaint should be addressed to the Chairman of the Council.

### Acknowledgment of a formal complaint

Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days, specifying:

- Who is dealing with the complaint
- Whether the complainant will have an opportunity to make verbal representations, accompanied by a friend if desired
- Timeframe for receipt of a formal response

### Investigation

It will usually be appropriate for the circumstances leading to the complaint to be investigated by the Clerk on behalf of the Council. Complaints of a serious nature or any that relate directly to the Clerk will be dealt with by the council.

Where appropriate, the complainant will be invited to make verbal representations to the council.

In normal circumstances, the complainant will be notified in writing (e-mail if appropriate)

of the outcome within three months of lodging the complaint. This will include whether or not the complaint is upheld, reasons for the decision, details of any action taken and information about the right of appeal.

## **Appeals**

If the complainant is not satisfied with how a complaint has been dealt with, they can appeal in writing to the Council, setting out what they are unhappy with and the grounds.

The appeal will be considered by the council or if appropriate an independent person (for example, the Chair of another parish council). This will consist of a review of the original investigation and outcome, together with any action taken as a result.

Appeals received more than one month after the date of the decision letter/e-mail will not be considered.

## **Complaints involving members of staff or councillors, etc.**

Where a complaint against the Council includes reference to the actions or conduct of staff or councillors, the complaint will be treated as a complaint against the body corporate, as opposed to the individual(s). If after the complaint has been looked into the Council considers there may be a need to take disciplinary action against a member of staff, this will be dealt with in accordance with its disciplinary procedure.

This procedure does not cover complaints about the conduct of a member of the Parish Council. Any complaint that a councillor may have breached the Council's adopted Code of Conduct should be referred to North Norfolk District Council.

Allegations that a member has breached the Code of Conduct should be forwarded to the Monitoring Officer of North Norfolk District Council in writing (see <https://www.northnorfolk.gov.uk/tasks/democratic-services/report-inappropriate-conduct-by-a-councillor/> for more details).

Councillors are free to raise matters of concern in respect of council business by the submission of motions on the agenda of the relevant meeting(s).

Where a member of staff has a complaint about the workplace, these should be raised in accordance with the Council's grievance procedure.

Adopted: 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023