

## COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS POLICY

### Compliments or complaints

Whether you have a compliment or a complaint about Hellesdon Parish Council, or you simply want to comment about our meetings, facilities, services or staff, we would like to hear from you. Feed-back from the people of Hellesdon whom we aim to serve efficiently and effectively, is the only way we can continually improve our services.

We aim:

- to make it easy for anyone to make a complaint
- to solve problems as quickly as possible
- to prevent problems from happening again, and
- to encourage good practice

### How to contact us with your compliment or complaint

You can contact Hellesdon Parish Council by telephone, in writing, over the internet or by visiting us in person. A form is included with this leaflet which you can fill in and send back to us.

### What we will do when we hear from you

We will deal with any comments about Hellesdon Parish Council as soon as possible. We will make sure that your comments are directed to the right person. We may be able to give you an answer straight away, or we may need more time to investigate what you have told us. We will contact you within 20 working days of us hearing from you and either provide you with a full answer or a progress report and explain why we need more time to investigate further. We will also tell you when you can expect a full answer.

## Confidentiality

We will treat your complaint in confidence. Details will only be given to those members of staff directly concerned. If you have a complaint, we hope we will be able to find out what went wrong and take steps to make sure it does not happen again.

## How to contact us

Hellesdon Parish Council's tel no: (01603) 301751 or in writing to:

The Parish Clerk  
Hellesdon Parish Council  
Diamond Jubilee Lodge  
Wood View Road  
Hellesdon, NORWICH NR6 5QB

Alternatively our email address is: [contact@hellesdon-pc.gov.uk](mailto:contact@hellesdon-pc.gov.uk)

### Other useful contacts:

Head of Corporate Services & Monitoring Officer  
Broadland District Council  
Thorpe Lodge  
1 Yarmouth Road  
Thorpe St Andrew  
NORWICH NR7 0DU

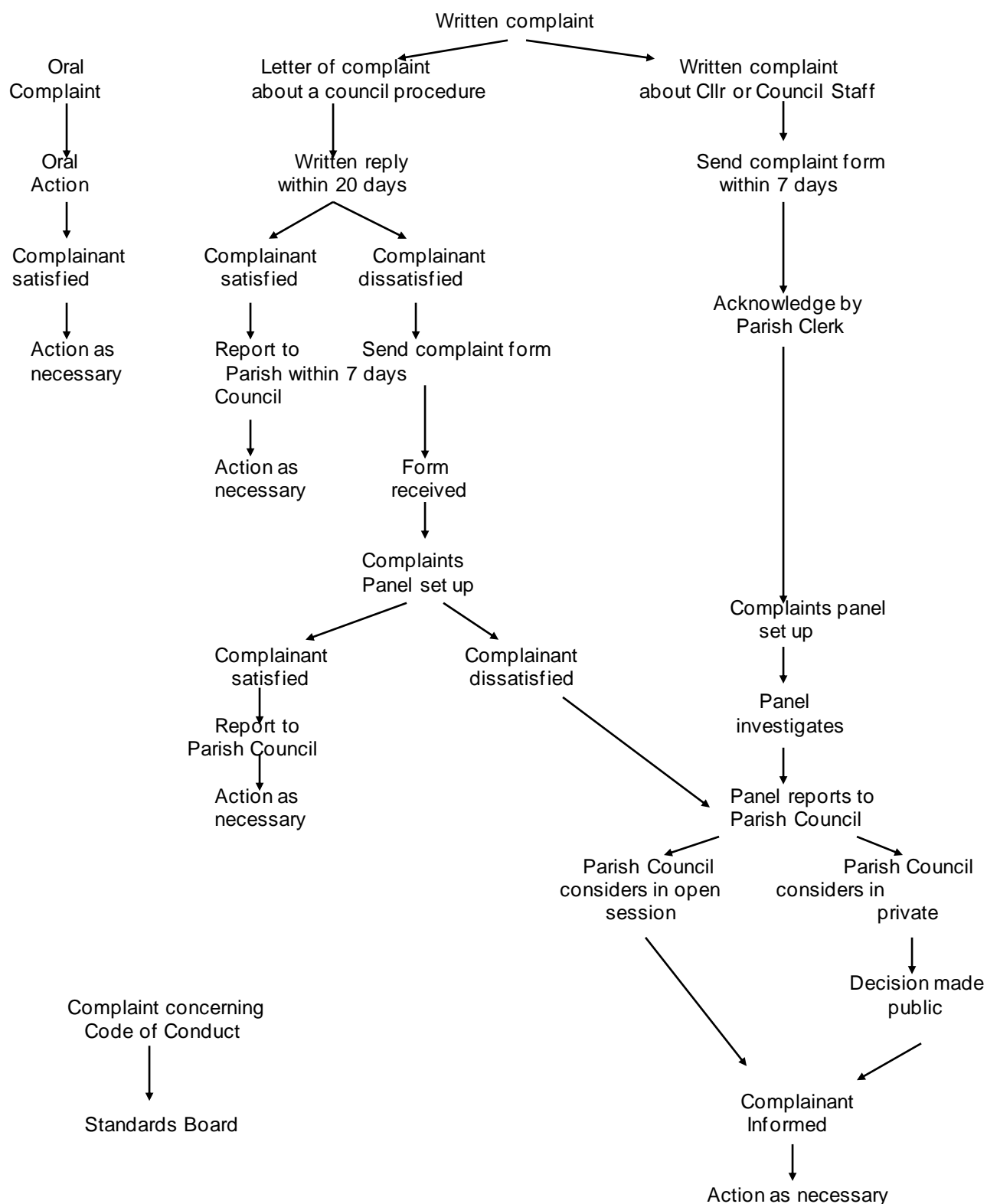
Standards Board for England  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Cottons Centre  
Cottons Lane  
LONDON SE1 2QG

## Code of Practice for Complaints

1. If a complaint about the Parish Council is notified orally to a Councillor or the Parish Clerk and they cannot satisfy the complainant, then the complainant shall be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Parish Clerk on the form provided.
2. If a complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Parish Clerk he or she shall be advised to put it to the Chairman of Hellesdon Parish Council.
3. Any written complaint about a councillor or member of staff will be answered within 20 days. Where it is not possible to give a full answer, an explanation of why more time is needed will be given. Where the complainant remains dissatisfied, a complaint form and copy of the code of practice will be sent within 7 days. When a complaint received is about a member of staff or councillor, the person concerned will be notified and given an opportunity for comment on the matter. Complaints lodged regarding staff should be dealt with by the Parish Clerk and only passed to the Council if the complainant remains dissatisfied.
4. A letter of complaint about a Council procedure will receive a reply within 20 days. Where the complainant remains dissatisfied a complaints form will be sent within 7 days.
5. The Parish Clerk or Chairman shall report to the next meeting of the Parish Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.
6. The Parish Clerk or Chairman shall bring any written complaint which has not been settled to the next meeting of the Parish Council after the complaint has been initially investigated and the Clerk shall notify the complainant of the date by which the complaint will be considered. If necessary Hellesdon Parish Council will appoint a Complaints Panel to fully investigate the complaint. If for any reason that date becomes unachievable, a letter and explanation for this will be sent to the complainant with a revised date.
7. The complaints panel will be at least 3 members of the Council of which one will be the Chairman.
8. The Complaints Panel should investigate all the evidence surrounding the complaint. Where a complaint is considered about an individual, this will be dealt with in the absence of the press and public but any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.
9. Complaints - Code of Conduct  
When a complaint is made relating to the Code of Conduct it should be sent direct to The Standards Board and then referred to the Monitoring Officer.
10. As soon as may be after the decision has been made, it and the nature of any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.
11. The Council shall defer investigating any written complaint *only* if it is of opinion that issues of law or practice arise on which legal advice is necessary. The complaint shall be considered at the next appropriate meeting after the advice has been received.
12. Complaints - Incident Book  
An incident book will be kept in the Clerk's Office. Staff involved in an incident or disagreement whether giving rise to complaint or not with a member of the public or councillor must enter the details of it in this book within 24 hours of the incident taking place. An incident is considered as a situation where voices are raised, strong language used or threatening or violent behaviour is experienced. All complaints received in writing will be entered in this book.

# CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

## Sequence of Events



## **Complaint Procedure**

### **Guidance to the Complaint Panel**

When enquiring into a complaint the Panel must consider the following:

- That the person(s) subject of the complaint must be given the opportunity of responding in answer to the complaint verbally or in writing or both. The person(s) subject of the complaint is given the right to have a colleague present at any hearing if they choose to do so.
- Where the complaint concerns a member of staff, then the Grievance & Disciplinary Policy Procedure should be followed.
- Any person(s) who may be able to provide information to substantiate the complaint or otherwise should be interviewed and asked for their recollection. Such information may be verbal or in writing.
- The Panel may wish to illicit further information from the complainant and may offer the complainant the opportunity of further discussion on the content of the complaint.
- The members of the Panel must record the time and date when the complainant, the person(s) complained of or witnesses were asked to comment.

**Compliments and Complaints Form**

**Date Received** \_\_\_\_\_ **Ref No** \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name –

How do you want to be contacted?

Email

Letter

Telephone

Your contact details –

If you would prefer to be contacted by telephone, please tell us the best time to contact you

Please give details of your compliment or complaint –

If necessary, please continue over the page

Have you spoken to, emailed or written to anyone at the Council? Yes / No

If yes, please give their name -

What happened as a result of this contact?

What outcome are you looking for (i.e. what would be the best way for the Council to resolve your complaint)?

Please note that complaints will be treated in the strictest confidence. The names of those making a complaint and details of the complaint will only be disclosed to those members of staff needing to know for the purposes of the investigation. The Parish Clerk may also inform the Chairman and / or the Vice-Chairman and, in the case of a staff related complaint the Staff Committee may be informed.

Please return this form to the Parish Clerk, Hellesdon Parish Council, Diamond Jubilee Lodge, Wood View Road, Hellesdon, Norwich NR6 5QB