



## Complaints to the Council

### **A All complaints (unless relating to the Clerk/RFO/Proper Officer)**

1. All communications should be in writing and addressed to the Clerk, either by post or email. It is not necessary, or even desirable, to copy openly or blind, the communication to any other party.
2. The Clerk will advise all Councillors of the nature and source (verbal/written/email/via website etc) of a complaint. The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of communication.
3. The trio of Chairman, Vice Chairman and the Clerk will consider the complaint and how it should be handled. If either of the elected officers are the subject of the complaint, the Clerk will seek substitutes from other Members of the Council.
4. If the trio uphold the complaint, they will consider how best the situation can be resolved, to the satisfaction of both parties. The Clerk will advise the rest of the Council regarding the outcome.
5. If it is felt necessary, the trio will ask the complainant and offending Councillor(s) for their views.
6. To avoid protracted discussions, the Council will seek to deal with and resolve complaints in a timely manner. The Clerk will include in the agenda under 'correspondence received' brief details of the complaint whilst excluding any reference to named individuals.
7. Should the Council be unable to resolve a complaint to the general satisfaction of those involved, the Clerk will advise the complainant of the appropriate procedure that can be pursued through the appropriate body (Monitoring Officer, Thanet District Council). In such cases, the Parish Council will not engage further in the matter and await advice.

### **B Complaints relating to the Clerk/RFO/Proper Officer**

The Clerk is an employee of the Council. Any complaint regarding the Clerk should be addressed to the Chairman. In the absence of the Chairman, contact the Vice Chairman.

These two elected officers will consider the validity and seriousness of the complaint and the appropriate action, if any, to be taken.

The complainant will be advised accordingly.

### **C. Applicable to all cases**

In all cases, the Council will not consider or acknowledge any complaint that is anonymous or lacks contact details.

The Council will not consider complaints lodged on behalf of someone else, unless there are clear reasons for doing so.

If the Council is unable to resolve a complaint, it may seek help and advice from TDC, the Local or National Association of Councils (KALC and NALC) or similar body.

If a complaint is raised under the Freedom of Information Act (2000), the Council will use its best endeavours to respond in line with the terms of the Act.

The Council will not consider complaints aired via social media but will have regard to remarks as may be deemed defamatory.

Where a complaint is made outside of the Parish Council or pursued through another route, the Council will not get involved other than responding to enquiries from such body as TDC, KALC.

Upon conclusion of the grievance, at the next available opportunity, the agenda will refer to the complaint, its nature and resolution, without reference to named individuals (to comply with GDPR).

Where a complaint is to remain private, the complainant must ensure that the response from the Parish Council also remains private. If the matter raised and, more importantly, the Council's response, reaches the public domain, it will be taken that the complainant has waived their rights under GDPR and the Council will then have the right to respond publicly at the next meeting.

This policy was reviewed and adopted by the Council in September 2024. All Council policies are subject to annual review but at a shorter interval if circumstances require.