

GREAT WALTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

STANDING ORDERS APPENDIX A CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

**I P Bradley
Clerk to the Parish Council
Revised January 2004**

Adopted February 2004

CODE OF PRACTICE

1. If a complaint about procedures or administration is notified orally to a councillor or the clerk and they cannot satisfy the complainant fully forthwith, the complainant shall be asked to put the complaint in writing to the clerk and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.
2. If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the clerk he or she shall be advised to put it to the chairman.
3. Upon receipt of a written complaint the letter will be swiftly acknowledged and the complainant advised when the matter will be considered by the Council
4. (a) On receipt of a written complaint the clerk or chairman, as the case may be, shall (except where the complaint is about his or her own actions) try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant, but shall not do so in respect of a complaint about the behaviour of the clerk or councillor without first notifying the person complained of and giving an opportunity for comment on the manner in which it is intended to attempt to settle the complaint.

(b) Where the clerk or chairman receives a written complaint about his or her own actions he or shall forthwith refer the complaint to the council.
5. The clerk or chairman shall report to the next meeting of the council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.
6. The clerk or chairman shall bring any written complaint which has not been settled to the next meeting of the council. The clerk shall notify the complainant as soon as possible of the date on which the complaint will be considered, and the complainant shall be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint orally and/or provide within seven clear working days prior to the meeting copies of any documentation or other evidence which the complainant may wish to refer to that meeting. The Council will similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.
7. The council shall consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public but any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public.
8. The Chairman will introduce everyone present.
9. The Chairman will explain the procedure
10. The complainant (or representative) to outline the grounds for complaint
11. Members to ask any questions of the complainant
12. If relevant, clerk or other proper officer to explain the Council's position.

13. Members to ask any question of the clerk or other proper officer.
14. Clerk or other proper officer and complainant to be offered opportunity of last word (in this order).
15. Clerk or other proper officer and complainant to be asked to leave the room while Members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made (if a point of clarification is necessary, both parties will be invited back to the meeting).
16. Clerk or other proper officer and complainant return to hear decision, or to be advised when a decision will be made.
17. Within seven working days of the meeting the decision will be confirmed in writing to the complainant together with details of any action to be taken.
18. council shall defer dealing with any written complaint only if it is of the opinion that issues of law or practice arise on which advice is necessary from the Association. The complaint shall be dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.