

Fairlight Parish Council

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. Introduction

1.1 Fairlight Parish Council is committed to providing a high standard of service to all. We try to do the best that we can with the resources available – but sometimes we make mistakes. When this happens, and a complaint is lodged, we want to deal with the complaint fairly and expeditiously. Our policy is to try to learn from our mistakes and our complaints procedure is seen as part of the Council's continuous improvement programme.

1.2 In aspiring to provide a high standard of service we always have in mind both our commitment to listen to and act upon residents' views, and our policy of undertaking our business in an open and honest manner.

2. How we handle complaints about the service we provide

2.1 First, we will try to deal with your complaint informally. This means that you should, if possible, register your complaint with the Parish Clerk by phone, letter or e-mail.

2.2 The Parish Clerk will do his/her best to resolve your complaint without you needing to do anything else. Usually you can expect to hear from the Parish Clerk about how your complaint has been resolved within 10 working days.

2.3 Then, if you have contacted the Parish Clerk about your complaint but things have not been put right, or you are not happy with the way your complaint was handled, the next step is for you to contact the Chairman of the Parish Council. Complaints to the Chairman should usually be lodged in writing, addressed to the Chairman c/o The Parish Council Offices.

2.4 The Chairman will write to you, usually within five working days, to let you know that (s)he has received your complaint and telling you what will happen next.

2.5 After that, in the unlikely event that your complaint remains unresolved, you may wish to consider whether your District or County Councillor can help. Contact details for District and County Councillors may be obtained from the Parish Clerk's office.

3. Complaints against Members of Fairlight Parish Council

3.1 All Councillors have signed an undertaking that they will observe the Council's Code of Conduct. The Code specifies a Councillor's obligations. The Council's Code is based on a Model Code recommended to all Town and Parish Councils. Alleged breaches of the Code should be reported to Rother District Council's Monitoring Officer, whose contact details may be obtained from the Parish Clerk.

3.2 In turn notifications from the Rother Monitoring Officer of complaints about Fairlight Parish Councillors will be made to the Clerk to the Council.

4. Complaints against a member of staff

4.1 Complaints about the conduct of a member of Fairlight Parish Council's staff will usually be dealt with as an employment matter and pursued following the Council's disciplinary procedure. Complainants will be advised in writing of the outcome of the disciplinary process.

4.2 No time scale can be set for finalising a complaint against a member of staff because we must follow employment law procedures. However if it is not possible to send a final report within ten working days complainants will be sent an interim report.

5. Complaints about services provided by other Local Government bodies

5.1 This Complaints Procedure is intended to deal solely with services provided by Fairlight Parish Council. However local government services in the Parish are also provided by Rother District Council and East Sussex County Council and the division of responsibilities can often be confusing. We will advise and, if appropriate, assist those with a complaint which should more properly be addressed by another local government organisation.