



# **Shenley Church End Parish Council**

## **Complaints Policy**

**Adopted: 8 April 2013**

This Complaints Policy is intended to assist local residents to deal with complaints against actions of the Council's staff or its administration. The Parish Council will not acknowledge or consider any complaints that are submitted anonymously.

The Parish Clerk as Proper Officer of the Council, is responsible for managing the complaints process. However, if a formal complaint is being raised against the Clerk, the same process is followed, but the Chairman of the Council would take the place of the Clerk in managing the process.

The following process will be adopted for dealing with complaints about the Council's administration or its procedures. Complaints about a policy decision made by the Council will be referred back to the Council, or relevant Committee, as appropriate, for consideration. A complainant may advise a Councillor of the details of a complaint, but individual Councillors are not in a position to resolve complaints

### **Stage 1 of the process**

- The complainant will be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk or Chairman of the Council. Refusal to put the complaint in writing does not mean it will not be investigated, but it is easier to do so if the complaint is in writing
- The complaint will be acknowledged, and dealt with within 21 days of receipt
- The Clerk or Chairman will carry out the initial investigation and provide the complainant with an update on progress or a suggested resolution to the complaint.
- If the complainant is satisfied with the resolution the complaint will be closed
- The Clerk or Chairman will report to the Council, summary details of the complaint and a brief summary of its resolution. This summary report will exclude the names of the complainants and any Council staff involved
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the proposed resolution, the matter will be referred to the next Council meeting for further discussion. The complainant will be offered the opportunity to address the council and explain the nature of their complaint

### **Stage 2 of the process**

- At the meeting the Council shall consider whether the circumstances warrant the exclusion of the public and press. Matters that involve individual members of staff may require the exclusion of the public and press
- The complainant (or representative) shall be invited to outline the complaint and members given the opportunity to ask any question of the complainant. If

relevant, the Clerk will explain the Council's position and the Council shall ask any questions of the Clerk.

- The Clerk and complainant shall 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 should be invited back. In any case both parties return to hear the decision, or to be advised when the decision will be made
- The decision will be confirmed in writing to the complainant within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken

### **Complaints against Council Staff**

A complaint against a member of the Council's staff could result in disciplinary action or in cases of gross misconduct, dismissal from the Council's employment. The Council will not under any circumstances enter into any correspondence, or discussion, with any complainant about any action taken, formally or informally against any member of its staff. This is expressly to protect the employment rights to which all employees of the Council are entitled.

### **Complaints against Councillors**

The Shenley Church End Parish Council complaints policy does not cover complaints against an individual Councillor. If you wish to make a complaint about the behaviour of an individual Councillor you must write to:

The Standards Committee  
C/O The Monitoring Officer  
Milton Keynes Council  
Civic Offices  
1 Saxon Gate East  
Central Milton Keynes  
MK9 3HG

The Monitoring Officer can only deal with complaints about the behaviour of a Councillor. It will not deal with complaints about matters that are not covered by the Councillors Code of Conduct. Complaints must be about a Councillor's failure to follow the Code of Conduct.