

Complaints Procedure

South Luffenham Parish Council

1) Councillors

This Procedure does not cover any complaints made regarding the conduct of a South Luffenham Parish Councillor or the Clerk. Those against a Councillor must be passed to the Clerk in writing, Those against the Clerk to the Chairman of the Parish Council also in writing.

2) Complaints

Complaints to Councillors concerning South Luffenham Parish Council business must be taken seriously and, if given verbally to the councillor, should be requested to be put in writing by the complainant and addressed to the Clerk.

Any complaint received by South Luffenham Parish Council must be clearly marked as a complaint otherwise it will be dealt with as a standard communication and will not come under the scope of a complaint. However, the unreasonable complainant behaviour section will still apply

Any written complaint received from a Parishioner or a member of the public by a South Luffenham Parish Councillor or the Clerk should be promptly copied to all Councillors and the Clerk for consideration and receipt of the complaint acknowledged by the Clerk within 7 days.

The complaint will be investigated by the Clerk within 21 days taking into account considered input from Councillors and a response prepared for the next council meeting.

Any complaint regarding a third party will be passed to the said party to make any comments.

The Clerk or the Chairman, where the complaint is in respect to the Clerk, will report the outcome of any complaints resolved by direct action with the complainant to the next meeting explaining the reason to take direct action.

At the forum before the Parish Council meeting the public, including the complainant will have a right to talk about the complaint within the time limit enforced at such meetings.

The Parish Councillors will consider the content of the complaint and agree appropriate action and response.

The Parish Council may consider that the circumstances of a complaint warrants the matter being discussed in camera. In such a case the result will be communicated to the complainant directly and to the general public through the minutes of the meeting.

The complainant will be informed of any actions and response within 14 days.

The Parish Council may defer dealing with any complaint if it is of the opinion that any of the issues arising from the complaint require further advice being obtained. Any advice received and any action taken thereof will be referred to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

Management of unreasonable complainant behaviour

South Luffenham Parish Council is committed to dealing with all complaints and other correspondence fairly and impartially, and making its services as accessible as possible. There may be times when one or more complainants or other correspondents hinder the working of the Parish Council in a persistent or threatening manner.

The Parish Council will not tolerate deceitful, abusive, offensive, threatening or other forms of unacceptable behaviour from complainants or correspondents. When it occurs, we will take proportionate action to protect the integrity of our processes.

The Parish Councillors and Clerk use their time and resources to the best effect. They cannot do so if an individual or group attempts to dominate attention with frequent, lengthy contacts and repetitive information, This hinders the consideration of the day to day operation of the Council. When necessary, we will take action to restrict access to our services when continuous unreasonable behaviour persists. An individual or group as referenced relates to a single or group of individuals who use alternative identities such as using various email addresses or postal addresses.

Warnings

In extreme continuous behaviour that threatens the immediate safety and welfare of the Councillors and/or its staff have the right to pass the matter to the police without giving notice to the perpetrators.

The Parish Councillors will decide whether the circumstances justify any restrictions of access. This will be record the reason for said decision and explained to the individual or group concerned. This will state how long the restriction will apply before reconsideration of the restriction. Any restrictions will be reviewed by the councillors every six months.

The sort of restrictions that could be imposed are:

- 1) Restricting e-mails or telephone calls to specific days and times.
- 2) Limited contact to one form i,e one letter before a meeting
- 3) Requiring contact to take place with one named officer or Councillor.

If a complainant or correspondent attends and disrupts public meetings of the Parish Council the Chairman will have the right to request the individual concerned leave the meeting.

If the group or individual continues to behave unreasonably, and overrides the restrictions imposed on access to the Parish Council, South Luffenham Parish Council have the right to decide to terminate all contact with them.

Victor Bacon
28/09/2017