



# **SHERINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL**

## **Policy & Procedure for Complaints**

**December 2009  
Reviewed November 2015**

## Complaints

If you have a complaint concerning the Town Council please let us know by using the form provided at the back of this leaflet.

Your opinions and comments matter and could be instrumental in helping us deliver a more effective service.

## Confidentiality

Your complaint will be dealt with in confidence and details will only be given to those members of staff directly concerned.

## How to Contact us

Telephone	01263 822213
In Writing or in Person	Sheringham Town Council Office, Town Hall, Church Street, Sheringham NR26 8QS
E-mail	shercouncil@btconnect.com

## What we will do when we hear from you

Your complaint will be directed to the appropriate person and be dealt with as quickly as possible. We may be able to respond immediately to your complaint, or we may require more time. However, we will contact you within 15 working days with either a full response or a progress report explaining why more time is required.

## **Code of Practice for Handling Complaints**

1. If a Councillor or Town Clerk cannot satisfy a verbal complaint about the Town Council's procedures or administration, the Complainant will be asked to put the nature of the complaint in writing to the Town Clerk on the form\* provided (*\*to be found at the back of this leaflet*).
  2. If the Complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Town Clerk he/she shall be advised to direct it to the Town Mayor.
  3. The written complaint will be acknowledged promptly and either the Town Clerk or Town Mayor will seek to settle the complaint with the Complainant.
  4. If the complaint has been settled at this stage the Town Clerk/Town Mayor will inform the next meeting of the Town Council.
  5. Where the Town Clerk or Town Mayor receives a written complaint about his/her own actions he/she shall forthwith refer the complaint to the Council.
  6. If it is has not been possible to settle the complaint it will be referred to the Council. If necessary, and if felt appropriate, the Council will appoint a Complaints Panel (*consisting of at least 3 Council Members to include the Mayor*) to fully investigate the complaint.
  7. The Complainant will be advised of the date when the complaint will be heard by the Council/Complaints Panel and informed he/she may bring a friend/representative to the meeting.
  8. Seven working days prior to the Council/Complaints Panel meeting, the Complainant will supply to the Council any relevant documentation/evidence which he/she wishes to refer to at the meeting. Similarly, the Council will provide the Complainant with any necessary documentation which it will rely upon at the meeting.
  9. The Complaints Panel will investigate the evidence surrounding the complaint, and where it is about a person, the complaint shall be dealt with in the absence of the Press and Public. Any decision on a complaint will be announced at the Council meeting in public.
  10. At the meeting –
    - 9.1 The Chairman will introduce everyone and explain the procedure
    - 9.2 The Complainant, or representative, will define the grounds for the complaint
    - 9.3 Councillors will be given the opportunity to question the Complainant  
The Complainant will be asked to leave the meeting whilst the Council/Complaints Panel consider the complaint
    - 9.4 Once a decision has been reached the Complainant will be asked to return to the meeting to hear the decision or be advised when a decision will be made – this will be confirmed in writing.
  11. The Council shall defer investigating a written complaint *only* if it is of the opinion that issues of law or practice arise upon which legal advice is necessary. The complaint will then be considered at the next meeting after the advice has been received.
- NB** When a complaint against a Councillor/Council Staff is received, the person concerned will be notified. If it relates to a Councillor breaching The Code of Conduct (*copy available at the Town Council office*) it will be referred to The Monitoring Officer, North Norfolk District Council, Holt Road, Cromer, Norfolk NR27 9EN. Complaints relating to Council Staff will be dealt with as an employment issue and the Council's Grievance & Disciplinary Procedure followed.

**Complaints Form**

Date Received \_\_\_\_\_

Ref No: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name:

How do you wish to be contacted?    Email     Letter     Telephone

Your contact details:

If you prefer to be contacted by telephone, please inform us of the best time to contact you –

Please give details of your comment or complaint:

*If necessary please continue over the page*

Have you had contact with anyone at the Council?    Yes/No

If yes, please give their name:

If yes to above, please give details of the contact

What outcome would you like *i.e. the best way for the Council to resolve your complaint ?*

*Please note that complaints will be treated in the strictest confidence. The names of the Complaint(s) and details of the complaint will only be disclosed to those members of staff needing to know for the purposes of the investigation. The Town Clerk may also inform the Chairman and/or Vice Chairman.*

*Please return this form to the Town Clerk, Sheringham Town Council, Town Hall, Church Street, Sheringham NR26 8QS*