

GNOSALL PARISH COUNCIL

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

The code of practice is aimed at those situations where a complaint has been made about the administration of the council or about its procedures. It is not an appropriate forum for a complaint against individuals or employees, other provisions are available to deal with these situations.

The council will deal with complaints about the administration of the council and its procedures. Councillors who are members of the Appeals Committee will not be in attendance during that part of the council meeting that deals with any complaint, and will not take part in any way in the making of any decision.

The procedure is designed for those complaints that cannot be satisfied by **less** formal measures or explanations provided to the complainant by the clerk or other proper officer or chairman.

It may be that the clerk or other proper officer at the meeting represents the position of the council, if the clerk or other proper officer is putting forward the justification for the action or procedure complained of, he or she should not advise the council or committee.

At all times, the rules of natural justice will apply. In other words, all parties should be treated fairly and the process should be reasonable, accessible and transparent.

CODE OF PRACTICE

Before the Meeting

1. The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the council's procedures or administration in writing to the clerk.
2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the clerk they may be advised to put it to the chairman of the council.
3. The clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the council.
4. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish.
5. 7 clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence, which they wish to refer to at the meeting. The council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

At the Meeting

6. The council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public.
7. Chairman to introduce everyone
8. Chairman to explain procedure
9. Complainant (or representative) to outline grounds for complaint
10. Members to ask any question of the complainant.
11. If relevant, clerk or other proper officer to explain the council's position.
12. Members to ask any question of the clerk or other proper officer.
13. Clerk or other proper officer and complainant to be offered opportunity of last word (in this order).
14. 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 to be invited back).
15. Clerk or other proper officer and complainant return to hear decision or to be advised when decision will be made.

After the Meeting

16. Decision confirmed in writing within seven working days together with any details of any action to be taken.