

EAST COWTON PARISH COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. All complaints should be in writing addressed to the Clerk of the Council either by e-mail to judithkilsby@yahoo.co.uk or by letter to 25 Golden Acres, East Cowton, Northallerton, DL7 0BD save that where the complaint concerns the Clerk it should be by letter to the same address but marked Private and Confidential for the attention of the Chairman of the Council.
2. An acknowledgment will be forwarded within 14 days of receipt of a complaint when, if he has not already done so, the Complainant will be asked to confirm if the complaint is to be treated as confidential. The Council will never, in any event, disclose any personal information about a complainant and will abide by its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998. In the absence of a response the Council will automatically treat the complaint as confidential.
3. The Complainant will be informed within 28 days of receipt of the complaint who will investigate it, the likely time frame for completion of the investigation and whether or not the complaint is to be treated as confidential.
4. The Clerk or nominated Councillor will investigate the complaint, collate the relevant evidence and meet with the Complainant to endeavour to resolve the complaint informally.
5. If no resolution is reached then a Committee of 3 councillors will be convened to consider the complaint. At this meeting the Clerk or nominated Councillor will summarise the position as a result of their investigation and the Committee and Complainant will have the opportunity to question him. The Complainant will then have an opportunity to present his own case and the Clerk or nominated councillor as well as the Committee will then have the opportunity to question him. The Committee will indicate how long it will be before it provides written confirmation of its determination of the outcome of the complaint whereupon the meeting will close.
6. The Council will write to the Complainant within 28 days of the meeting to confirm whether or not it upholds the complaint and will give reasons for its decision and confirm what action (if any) is to be taken as a result.
7. Note that the Local Government Ombudsman has no jurisdiction to deal with complaints about a Parish Council unless it is acting jointly with a principal authority through a joint committee or it is exercising the functions of a principal authority.