



Boxley

PARISH COUNCIL

Complaints against the Parish Council Policy

Boxley Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service to residents of the Parish, anyone who deals with the Parish Council and to conduct its business in a fair and equitable manner.

The following complaints procedure has been adopted:

Alleged Misconduct by Parish Councillors

All Councillors have to conform to the adopted Code of Conduct a copy of which is available on the Parish Council website (www.boxleyparishcouncil.org.uk) or from the Parish Office. The Code of Conduct details the behaviour and rules by which Councillors have agreed to abide.

A complaint about a Parish Councillor should be made to the Monitoring Officer at Maidstone Borough Council.

The Parish Council has a separate policy (Code of Conduct Complaints) which is followed when a complaint is made to the Monitoring Officer at Maidstone Borough Council.

Alleged Misconduct by Council staff

A complaint should be made in writing to the Chairman of the Parish Council, the email address and telephone number are on the Parish website or are available from the Parish Office. Any letter of complaint received by the Parish Office will be passed onto the Chairman and dealt with using the Disciplinary Procedure of the Parish Council.

The Parish Council's procedures, policy or administration

A complaint cannot be made just because you do not agree with a decision made by the Parish Council. You will need to show that the Parish Council did not follow correct procedure or policy and that this has resulted in unfair treatment. The Parish Council has numerous policies and procedures and its minutes and most records are open for public scrutiny on the Parish Council's website. In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 a copy of the Parish Council's Publication Scheme can be found on the website or a copy obtained from the Parish Office.

If a complaint about procedures or administration is notified orally to a Councillor or the Clerk and they cannot satisfy the complainant forthwith the complainant shall be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk.

If the complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk he/she shall be advised to put it to the Chairman of the Parish Council.

On receipt of a written complaint the Clerk/Chairman, shall try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant.

Where the Chairman of the Parish Council receives a written complaint about his or her own actions then he or she shall forthwith refer the complaint to the Council.

Where the Clerk receives a written complaint about his or her own actions then he or she shall forthwith refer the complaint to the Chairman of the Parish Council.

The Chairman/Clerk shall report any complaints received together with any action taken to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

The Chairman/Clerk shall bring any written complaint that has not been settled to the next meeting of the Parish Council. The Clerk shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered, and the complainant shall be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint orally.

If the complainant is submitting documentation or evidence to which they will be referring to at the meeting then they should, 7 clear working days prior to the meeting, provide copies to the Council. Similarly the Parish Council should supply the complainant with copies of any Parish Council documents, which are requested and available under the Freedom of Information Act - Publication Scheme.

The Parish Council shall consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrants the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public but any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Parish Council meeting in public. In the interest of openness and accountability there must be clear relevant reasons or a request from the complainant for the matter to be held without the presence of the press or public.

At the meeting the Chairman should:

- Introduce everyone
- Explain the procedure
- Ask the complainant to outline the grounds of the complaint.
- Allow members to ask questions.
- Allow the Clerk to explain the Council's position.
- Allow members to question the Clerk/complainant.
- Members then decide whether or not the complaint should be upheld and any action to be taken.

Within 7 working days of the meeting the decision and the nature of any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.

The Parish Council shall defer dealing with any written complaint only if it is of the opinion that issues of law or practice arise on which advice is necessary. The complaint shall be dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.

Adopted by Council on 3 April 2023