

# WOODCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

<b>NATURE OF COMPLAINT</b>	<b>WHO TO COMPLAIN TO</b>
<b>Administration/procedures of the Council</b>	<b>The Clerk to the Council</b>
<b>Criminal Activity</b>	<b>The Police</b>
<b>Employee Conduct</b>	<b>Clerk to the Council or if the matter is regarding the Clerk to the Chairman</b>
<b>Financial Irregularity</b>	<b>The Parish Council's Auditor</b>
<b>Member Conduct</b>	<b>Standards Committee of Ashford Borough Council</b>

### 1. Introduction

The members of Woodchurch Parish Council wish to be as open and transparent as possible and will try to settle any complaint received against the full Parish Council, or any of its members, officers or staff as soon as is practicably possible after notification.

Complainants are encouraged to attend a Parish Council meeting in order to be able to explain the reasons for their complaint to all members of the Parish Council.

If the Chairman, a Councillor or The Clerk receives a complaint orally or in writing about their own conduct, they should immediately pass the complaint on to the Parish Council.

A complaint against the Clerk or any of the Councillors should be notified to that person giving them an opportunity for comment in an attempt to settle the complaint.

### 2. Administration/procedures of the Council

#### **Complaints made orally to the Clerk of the Council or to a Parish Councillor**

If the Clerk is unable to satisfy the complainant fully, they will be asked to put their complaint in writing to the Clerk, for presentation to the full Parish Council.

Details of a complaint made orally to a Councillor should be notified to the Clerk who will follow the same procedure as that above.

If a complainant prefers not to put the complaint to the Clerk or Councillor, they should be advised to contact the Chairman of the Parish Council, who will ask for the complaint to be put in writing for presentation to the full Parish council, if he/she is unable to satisfy the complainant.

All complainants should be assured that their complaint will be dealt with promptly.

All complaints dealt with orally between Council meetings will be fully reported on at the next full meeting of the Parish Council.

## **Written Complaints to the Parish Council**

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

The Clerk or Chairman shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of directly with the complainant.

The Clerk or Chairman shall bring any written complaint which has not been settled to the next meeting of the Council and the Clerk shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered. The complainant shall be offered the opportunity to discuss the complaint orally.

Copies of any paperwork associated with the complaint should be circulated to Councillors with the agenda for the meeting.

The Council shall consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in camera, if it is decided to do so, any decision shall be announced at the Parish Council meeting, in public.

As soon as possible after the decision has been made, the decision and the nature of any action taken shall be communicated to the complainant.

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

### **3. Employee Conduct**

Any complaint about the conduct of an employee of the Council will be dealt with as a personnel matter.

### **4. Financial Irregularity**

The Clerk will provide the complainant with the details of the Council's Auditors.

### **5. Members Conduct**

In the event of a complaint about the behaviour of a Councillor, which involves an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct, complainants should be reminded that they may complain to the Standards Committee of Ashford Borough Council.

11 February 2011