

Complaints Procedure

Haswell Parish Council

This procedure covers complaints about the administration or procedures of the Council.

Complaints about individuals are a separate matter, complaints about an employee would be dealt with as an employment issue and complaints about a Councillor should be made to the Standards Committee at Durham County Council. Complaints against policy decisions made by the Council shall be referred back to the Parish Council.

Haswell Parish Council takes the views of local people seriously and need to be aware when there is dissatisfaction in the services which the Council delivers. The outcome of a complaint will assist the Council in reviewing and where necessary changing the way services are delivered.

Complaints shall be dealt with by the Complaints Committee, which shall be made up of 3 Members of the Council and convened as and when necessary. The complaints committee shall report its conclusions to the next Parish Council meeting following any hearing.

Making a Complaint

1. Complainants should make complaints about the Council's procedures or administration in writing to the Clerk.
2. Within ten working days of receipt of a complaint, the Clerk shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint in writing to the complainant and try to settle the complaint directly.
3. The Clerk or other officer shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.
4. Where a complaint cannot be settled directly, a date shall be set for a complaints committee meeting and the complainant advised in writing of this date.
5. The complainant shall be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish.
6. Not less than seven 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.
7. 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.

At the Meeting

8. The Chairman of the meeting shall introduce everyone.
9. The Chairman of the meeting shall explain the procedure.
10. The complainant (or their representative) shall outline the grounds for complaint.
11. The members of the committee may ask any question of the complainant.
12. If relevant, the Clerk or other officer shall explain the Council's position.
13. Members may ask any question of the Clerk or other officer.
14. The Clerk, or other officer and the complainant shall be offered the opportunity of last word (in this order).
15. The Clerk, or other officer and complainant shall 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 shall be invited back).
16. The Clerk, or other officer and the complainant shall return to hear decision, or to be advised when decision shall be made.

After the Meeting

17. The decision shall be confirmed in writing within seven working days together with details of any action to be taken.

This Complaints Procedure was adopted by Haswell Parish Council on the 26th January 2010 and is reviewed annually.

Tracey Bell, Clerk to the Council