

Lyng Parish Council

Complaints Procedure

Lyng Parish Council strives to provide a high standard of service to the public. In the interests of openness and the desire to seek continuous improvement, anyone who feels dissatisfied with the service may bring this to the attention of the Council.

In some instances it will be appropriate for an explanation to be given and/or remedial action taken.

Where a formal complaint is submitted in writing, a proportionate investigation will be conducted and the outcome communicated back to the complainant in writing.

How to make a complaint about the Parish Council

Enquiries or observations about the Parish Council services can be made by telephone to the Clerk, by e-mail to Lyngpcclerk@gmail.com

Formal complaints must be submitted in writing to the Clerk at address and postcode, or e-mail to Lyngpcclerk@gmail.com If the matter relates directly to the Clerk, the complaint should be addressed to the Chair of the Parish Council.

Confidentiality

All complaints will be treated as confidential. Even where the complainant specifically waives their right to confidentiality, the Parish Council will comply with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 to safeguard against the unlawful disclosure of personal data.

Any meeting of the Parish Council, or a committee or sub-committee considering a complaint or inviting the complainant to make representations will exclude the public. Agendas and minutes will not disclose personal data or financial, sensitive or confidential information relating to an individual complainant or a third party.

Acknowledgment of a formal complaint

Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days, specifying:-

- Who is dealing with the complaint
- Whether the complainant will have an opportunity to make verbal representations, accompanied by a friend if desired
- Timeframe for receipt of a formal response

Investigation

It will usually be appropriate for the circumstances leading to the complaint to be investigated by the Clerk on behalf of the Parish Council. Complaints of a serious nature or any that relate directly to the Clerk will be dealt with by a sub-committee.

Where appropriate, the complainant will be invited to make verbal representations to the person (or sub-committee) investigating.

In normal circumstances, the complainant will be notified in writing (e-mail if appropriate) of the outcome within three months of lodging the complaint. This will include whether or not the complaint is upheld, reasons for the decision, details of any action taken and information about the right of appeal.

Appeals

If the complainant is not satisfied with how a complaint has been dealt with they can appeal in writing to the Parish Council, setting out what they are unhappy with and the grounds.

The appeal will be considered by a sub-committee formed of persons not previously involved in the investigation of the original complaint. This will consist of a review of the original investigation and outcome, together with any action taken as a result.

Appeals received more than one month after the date of the decision letter/e-mail will not be considered.

Complaints involving the clerk or councillors, etc.

Where a complaint against the Parish Council includes reference to the actions or conduct of the Clerk or councillors, the complaint will be treated as a complaint against the body corporate, as opposed to the individual(s). If after the complaint has been looked into the Parish Council considers there may be a need to take disciplinary action against the clerk this will be dealt with in accordance with its disciplinary procedure.

Allegations that a member has breached the Code of Conduct should be forwarded to the Chair of Lyng Parish Council in writing

Councillors are free to raise matters of concern in respect of council business by the submission of motions on the agenda of the relevant meeting(s).

Where a member of staff has a complaint about the workplace, these should be raised in accordance with the Parish Council's grievance procedure.

Local Government Ombudsman

The Local Government Ombudsman deals with complaints against principal authorities (district, borough and county councils) and certain other public sector bodies.

It is not responsible for handling complaints against a town or parish council, except where it is working with a principal authority (through a joint committee), or it is exercising the functions of a principal authority.