

KING'S SUTTON PARISH COUNCIL

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING CORPORATE COMPLAINTS

The King's Sutton Parish Council Code of Practice for Handling Corporate Complaints is available to members of the public upon request.

Rationale:

In order to learn from our mistakes, to demonstrate to our service users that we value them and to meet the requirements of the Citizens Charter, King's Sutton Parish Council has adopted a corporate complaints procedure.

This enables individual adults, children (where appropriate) or groups or service users to complain about actions, lack of action or quality of service provided by the Council or its staff.

Complaints can signal an opportunity for us to improve the effectiveness of our services by learning from our mistakes. It is also regarded as an efficient way to preserve the good reputation of the Council fairly and openly and is complementary to good local administration.

Aim:

The overriding aim when dealing with any complaint is to deal with it directly, in proper and timely manner. Failure to do so may compound the situation, increase the complainant's dissatisfaction and make resolution of the complaint more complicated. By following procedure the Council endeavours, within its powers, to give redress to the complainant.

King's Sutton Parish Council shall ensure that at all times all parties shall be treated fairly and the process shall be reasonable, accessible and transparent.

How to complain:

To ensure that no – one is disadvantaged, complaints may be made in various ways, in writing, by email, in person, or by telephone. With the exception of complaints about staff, individuals may also register complaints via Members of the Council or with the Clerk. Please refer to page 3 for contact details.

Matters excluded from this procedure:

The procedure does not cover initial requests for explanations of policy, procedure or for information, nor does it cover council activities involving formal appeals. These are dealt with in other ways.

This procedure relates to the handling of complaints about the administration of the council or about its procedures and is not an appropriate mechanism for handling complaints about individuals

Complaints about staff (the Clerk/RFO) shall be dealt with internally by the Council as an employment matter and appropriate action taken as required.

Complaints received from an employee of the Council (the Clerk/RFO) about her employer, the Parish Council, shall be handled in accordance with current advice issued by ACAS and in line with the Disciplinary and Grievance procedure set down in the employee's Contract of Employment in force at the time.

Complaints about a Member of the Parish Council will be handled in accordance with s28 of The Localism Act 2011 in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Parish and Town Councils in force at the time. Complainants shall be advised to contact the Monitoring Officer at SNC. The Monitoring Officer has been notified that King's Sutton Parish Council has adopted this Code of Practice for handling corporate complaints.

Who deals with complaints:

All Parish Councillors shall be eligible to be members of the Complaints Committee. Any complaints shall be heard by a Committee of three which shall include either the Chairman or the Vice Chairman of the Parish Council.

Corporate Complaints Procedure

a) Before the Meeting:

1. The complainant shall be asked to put the complaint about the Council's procedures or administrations in writing to the Clerk or other nominated Proper Officer.
2. If the complainant declines to put the complaint to the Clerk or other nominated Proper Officer he/she may be advised to put it to the Chairman of the Council.
3. The Clerk shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the Committee established for the purposes of hearing complaints.
4. The complainant may ask someone else to speak on his/her behalf should he/she wish to attend the meeting
5. 7 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 that meeting. The Council shall, likewise, provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon they wish to rely at the meeting.

b) At the Meeting:

6. The Committee shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960. Under no circumstances shall the complainant or his/her representative be excluded from the meeting. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council Meeting in public.
7. The Chairman shall introduce those present to one another.
8. The Chairman shall explain procedure.

9. The Complainant or his/her representative shall outline the grounds for complaint.
10. Members may ask any question of the complainant.
11. If relevant, the Clerk or other nominated Proper Officer shall explain the Council's position.
12. Members may ask any question of the Clerk or other nominated Proper Officer.
13. The Clerk or other nominated Proper Officer and complainant (in this order) shall be offered the opportunity of a last word.
14. The Clerk or other nominated Proper Officer and complainant shall be asked to withdraw from the meeting room while Members decide whether or not to uphold the complaint or defer a decision. (If a point of clarification is necessary, both parties shall be invited to re-enter the Meeting)
15. The Clerk or other nominated Proper Officer and complainant are invited to re-enter the Meeting to hear the decision, or to be advised when the decision will be made.

c) After the Meeting:

16. The decision is confirmed in writing within 7 working days together with details of any action to be taken.

Contact Details:

Clerk
King's Sutton Parish Council
King's Sutton Millennium Memorial Hall
Astrop Road
King's Sutton
Banbury
OX17 3PG

Chairman
King's Sutton Parish Council
King's Sutton Millennium Memorial Hall
Astrop Road
King's Sutton
Banbury
OX17 3PG

Tel: 01295 816905

Email: clerk@kingssuttonpc.org.uk

Contact details of Members of the Council are available through the Clerk and are listed in the King's Sutton Times and on the village website www.kingssutton.org

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