

EMNETH PARISH COUNCIL

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Code of Practice for Local Councils in Handling Complaints

Preface

From time to time members of the public have complaints about the administration or procedures of a Parish, Town or Community Council. As these Councils are not subject to the jurisdiction of the Local Ombudsman there is no independent body to which a complainant can turn for an independent formal assessment of the position. For the benefit of good local administration and in accordance with changes recommended from time to time since adoption of its Code of Practice, Emneth Parish Council has reviewed, amended and adopted the Code set out below as a way of ensuring that complainants can feel satisfied that at the very least their grievance has been properly and fully considered.

Code of Practice For Dealing with Complaints

1. If a complaint about procedures or administration is notified orally to a Councillor or the Clerk and it is not possible to satisfy the complainant fully forthwith the complainant shall be asked to put his complaint in writing to the Clerk and be assured that it will be dealt with promptly after receipt.
2. If a complainant indicated that he would prefer not to put the complaint to the Clerk he/she shall be advised to put it to the Chairman.
3. On receipt of a written complaint the Clerk or Chairman, as the case may be, shall (except where the complaint is about his/her own actions) try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant but shall not do so in respect of a complaint about the behaviour of the Clerk or of a Councillor without first notifying the person complained of and giving him/her an opportunity to comment on the manner in which it is intended to attempt to settle the complaint. Where the Clerk or Chairman received a written complaint about his/her own actions he/she shall forthwith refer the complaint to the council.
4. The Clerk or Chairman shall report to the next meeting of the Council any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.
5. The Clerk or Chairman shall bring any written complaint which cannot be 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.
6. The Council shall consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public but any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public.
7. As soon as may be after the decision has been made it and the nature of any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.
8. A Council shall defer dealing with any written complaint *only* if it is of the opinion that issues of law or practice arise on which it is necessary to seek advice. The complaint shall be dealt with at the next meeting after such advice has been received.

Dated 23rd February 2010

Last reviewed 8th February 2021

