

## **LAPWORTH PARISH COUNCIL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

Lapworth Parish Council is committed to providing an open and transparent quality service to local residents. If you are dissatisfied by the Parish Council's service or actions the Parish Council will in the first instance try to resolve your concerns informally. However, if this not be possible you may lodge a complaint using the following procedure.

For the purposes of this procedure Lapworth Parish Council defines a complaint as:

'A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the council's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service, whether the action was taken or the service provided by the council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the council.'

### **Before the Meeting**

1. The complainant will be asked to put the complaint about the council's procedures or administration in writing to the clerk or other nominated officer stating:

- the nature of the complaint in detail;
- subject of the complaint (e.g Member, clerk);
- remedy sought

2. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the clerk, he or she will be advised to address it to the chairman of the council.

3. The clerk will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered by the council or by a committee established for the purposes of hearing complaints. The complainant will also be advised whether the complaint will be treated as confidential or whether, for example, notice of it will be given in the usual way (if, for example, the complaint is to be heard by a committee).

4. The complainant will be invited to attend a meeting and to bring with them a representative if they wish.

5. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant will be asked to provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence relied on. The council will provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting promptly, allowing the claimant the opportunity to read the material in good time for the meeting.

### **At the Meeting**

6. The council will consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint will be announced at the council meeting in public.

7. The chairman will introduce everyone and explain the procedure.

8. The complainant (or representative) will be asked to outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by (i) the clerk and then (ii), members.

9. The clerk will have an opportunity to explain the council's position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant and (ii), members.

10. The clerk and then the complainant will be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.

11. The clerk and the complainant will 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 will be invited back.

12. The clerk and the complainant should be given the opportunity to wait for the decision but if the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day they will be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.

### **After the Meeting**

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