

Hawthorn Parish Council

COMMENTS & COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

**This procedure covers complaints about the administration or procedures of the Council and was adopted by the Council at their meeting on May 18th 2020
To be reviewed 2023**

1. Introduction

Hawthorn 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. Complaints shall be dealt with by the Complaints Committee which consists of 3 Members as elected at the Annual Meeting of the Council and will be convened as and when necessary.

In addition, an Appeals Committee will be elected at the Annual Meeting and consisting of 4 Members in the instance that there is an appeal made against the Complaints Committee's decision.

The outcome of a complaint will assist the Council in reviewing and where necessary changing the way services are delivered.

2. Definitions

The following list is a guide to the range of complaints which are covered by this Complaints Policy:

- a. Failure to provide a service or to achieve an acceptable standard.
- b. Issues regarding the attitude of staff and or their actions, or lack of actions.
- c. Dissatisfaction with the manner in which council policy and procedure has been carried out.
- d. Discrimination.

The following are excluded from this Complaints Policy:

- a. A request for service
- b. A request for information or an explanation
- c. An insurance claim against the Council
- d. Criticism of Council policy
- e. A matter which is, or may be, the subject of court or tribunal proceedings

Complaints about individuals are a separate matter and will be dealt with as an employment issue and complaints about a Councillor should be made to the Monitoring Officer at Durham County Council.

Complaints against policy decisions made by the Council shall be referred back to the full

Council.

3. How to make a Complaint

There are three stages to the council's complaints procedure:

- **Stage One**

Upon receipt of a complaint the full council will confirm that the complaint meets the criteria as listed above for a complaint to be considered.

- **Stage Two**

- a. All complaints should be made using the official form as attached to this document and will be acknowledged by the Parish Clerk within 15 working days of receiving the form.
- b. The Complaints Committee will be convened as soon as practicable to discuss each complaint and will respond within 10 working days of the meeting.
- c. If the response is not accepted by the complaint then an appeal can be made to the Appeals Committee which is made up of 4 Members of the Parish Council and which leads to Stage 3.

- **Stage Three**

- a. The Parish Clerk will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within fifteen working days of receipt.
- b. The Appeals Committee will investigate and respond within fifteen working days of their meeting.
- c. This will be the final decision and the case will be closed.

4. Vexatious/Repetitive Complaints

The Council may choose to give a decision on a complaint, without a formal investigation, where it considers the complaint to be deliberately vexatious or repetitive.

Hawthorn Parish Council
COMMENTS AND COMPLAINT FORM

YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone No.

E-mail address

DETAILS OF YOUR COMMENT OR COMPLAINT

Which service are you contacting us about?

Which of the criteria as shown is your complaint about?

- a. Failure to provide a service or to achieve an acceptable standard.
- b. Issues regarding the attitude of staff and or their actions, or lack of actions.
- c. Dissatisfaction with the manner in which council policy and procedure has been carried out.
- d. Discrimination.

What is your comment or complaint?

Please provide details. (If necessary, continue on an additional sheet)

Signed

Date

Official Use Only:

Date Received

Acknowledged by and date