



COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

Dated 20 August 2024

Loose Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service to residents of the Parish and to anyone who deals with the Parish Council. The Parish Council is determined to conduct its business in a fair and equitable manner and where concerns or complaints arise the Council will attempt to resolve them by informal discussion.

In the event that this is unsuccessful a formal complaint may be made.

This procedure sets out how the Council will strive to resolve complaints about the Council, its business or administration.

a) Informal Complaints received from the Public to the Parish Council

Some matters relating to small issues, rather than a formal complaint, can be dealt with by the Clerk's Office and a verbal apology, email or letter may suffice.

b) Formal complaints received from the Public to the Parish Council concerning processes and procedures

The complainant should write in person to the Parish Clerk giving full details of the matter. The Clerk should then formally record and date the complaint. An acknowledgement email or letter should be sent within seven days, and the complaint made known to the Chairman (or vice Chairman in her/his absence) & all other Councillors at the earliest opportunity. The Chairman (or in her/his absence the Vice Chairman) shall designate the status of the complaint which should then be investigated by either the Chairman (or in her/his absence the Vice Chairman).

A report of the findings should be produced for the complainant and for the Parish Council, including any proposed remedy within 20 working days (in some more complex cases this timescale may need to be extended and the complainant advised accordingly). At all times the complainant shall be kept informed and dealt with in confidence, and with due regard to non-disclosure of exempt information, and in line with current Data Protection Legislation and Parish Council Privacy Notice.

If the complainant does not wish to report their complaint to the Clerk (for instance the complaint might be about the Clerk), they may make their complaint directly to the Loose Parish Council Chairman. They should write to the Loose Parish Council Chairman, at 606 Loose Rd, Loose, Maidstone, Kent ME15 9UW, marking the envelope "Private and Confidential" or email the Chairman at: vgibbons@loose-pc.gov.uk

c) Concerns and Complaints received from an Employee

Concerns or formal complaints raised by a Council employee against another Council employee, or between the Council employee and the Council as an employer, will initially be dealt with by the HR committee and if not resolved verbally, will be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary and Grievance procedures.

d) Concerns and Complaints raised by a Councillor about another Councillor or from a member of the public against a Councillor

Concerns or formal complaints are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Council in July 2012. Under legal ruling, Local Councils cannot investigate or make any judgments on any complaint received from a Councillor about another Councillor, or a member of the public against a Councillor.

It is recommended that the concern or complaint should endeavour to be dealt with amicably, “tea and biscuits” approach, between both parties, and only if felt necessary, with the Chairman or Vice Chairman and the Clerk or Deputy Clerk in attendance. Under no circumstances should any judgments be made by any member of the Parish Council or its staff.

Alternatively, and in line with the Code of Conduct, a formal complaint can be made by the complainant or both parties to the Monitoring Officer at Maidstone Borough Council. Further information on this matter may be obtained from the Maidstone Borough Council.

<https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/about-us/additional-areas/make-a-complaint-about-a-councillor>

Contact Details

Kim Owen – Clerk to Loose Parish Council

Address – LoosePC PO Box 634 MAIDSTONE ME17 4YR

E-mail – office@loose-pc.gov.uk

Telephone – 07855 000156