

Complaints

Policy Document – Version 1.1



Thurcroft Parish Council

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY

Aims of the Complaints Procedure

The Council aims to learn from complaints and, where they are found to be justified, to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to improve services.

It will:

- ensure that anyone who wishes to make a complaint knows how to go about it.
- respond to a complaint efficiently and within a reasonable time;
- ensure that service users are satisfied that the complaint has been taken seriously and, where possible, reasonable measures have been taken to improve services.

All complaints will be dealt with in confidence, and the name of the complainant will not be revealed by the Parish Council, except where it is the wish of the complainant.

What is a Complaint

Generally, a complaint will be about the Parish Council's procedures or its administration. It will be an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the Public about the Parish Council's action or lack of action or about the standard of service provided by the Parish Council or a person or organisation acting on behalf of the Parish Council.

The Complaints Procedure **does not** cover:-

- Complaints about the conduct of councillors. These should be reported to the Monitoring Officer at the relevant principal authority.
- Where a person wishes to disagree with a Council decision or policy or makes a request under the Freedom of Information Act, whereby there are alternative processes for representation in place.
- Anonymous complaints.

Considering a complaint

The Parish Council commits to conducting its business in a fair, proper and transparent way. However, it accepts from time to time issues can arise where members of the public may perceive these standards have not been met. When this happens, the Parish Council can promise to listen and to do what it can to deal with the problem



Thurcroft Parish Council

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY

Most comments from members of the public do not need to be dealt with under the complaints procedure. The Parish Council deals with queries, problems and comments as part of its day-to-day business and these are not regarded as complaints, nor are they intended to be by the commentator. In relation to these, explanations provided to the commentator by the Clerk will answer most issues. Only complaints made formally under its policy and acknowledged under the policy will be dealt with in accordance with it.

To make a complaint

A formal letter or email clearly outlining the complaint must be sent to the Clerk to the Council (the Clerk) or if the complaint involves the Clerk, the letter should be sent to the Chair of the Parish Council.

If the complaint is about the Clerk to the Council, the Clerk will be formally advised of the matter and given the opportunity to comment.

Complaints can be made either by email, in writing or by telephoning the Clerk. If the complaint is about the Clerk, the complaint can be made by telephone, email or in writing to the Chair. Contact details are shown below:

Clerk to the Council	Chair
Sarah Wilkinson Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall, Green Arbour Road, Thurcroft, S66 9DD Tel: 07462 671 978 Email: clerk@thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk	CLlr B Clark Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall Green Arbour Road, Thurcroft S66 9DD Email: b.clark@thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk

Complaint handling

- Within five working days of receipt of the complaint, the Clerk or Chair will give to the complainant, formal acknowledgement of the complaint. Provide a copy of this complaints procedure policy and ascertain whether the complainant wishes the matter to be treated confidentially.
- The formal complaint will be dealt with by the Clerk and Chair of the Council where possible but may be escalated to the Finance & General Committee if a resolution is unable to be achieved within the council policies.
- At the meeting, the Finance & General Committee or the Council may resolve to exclude members of the public and press to ensure confidentiality.



Thurcroft Parish Council

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY

- At the Finance & General Committee meeting, the Committee will consider the complaint and will have delegated power to continue handling the complaint if it becomes necessary. The committee will have full delegated power to bring the complaint to a conclusion.
- After this meeting, the Clerk/Chair will correspond with the complainant explaining the outcome of the Finance & General Committees consideration of the complaint and explaining how to take matters further if they believe this is necessary.
- If the complainant wishes to pursue the matter, he/she must notify the Council in writing with his/her reasons for wanting to do so and a meeting of the Council will be convened for the purpose of investigating the complaint further.
- Complainants will be asked to attend the Council meeting and will be informed that they may be accompanied by another person.
- At the commencement of the meeting, the Chair will explain how the meeting will proceed.
- Complainants will be asked to provide any new information or supporting evidence to the Council and will be invited to make a verbal representation to the meeting.
- Members of the committee will be invited by the Chair to ask questions of the complainant.
- The Chair of the committee and then the complainant will summaries their respective positions.
- The complainant will then leave the meeting and the Council will consider the further findings.
- The complainant will be formally informed of the conclusions of the process within five working days of the Council meeting.
- The Chair will report the outcome of the process to the next meeting of the Council.
- Minutes of the Council meeting will be kept and will be available to all parties involved in the complaint.