

Complaints

Policy Document – Version 1.2



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. A complaint must relate to the administration or procedures of the 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 (These should be addressed through the democratic processes).
- Requests under the Freedom of Information Act, or Data Protection Legislation, which have separate statutory procedures
- Complaints by council employees, which are dealt with under internal grievance procedures
- Matters that are subject to legal proceedings
- 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



Thurcroft Parish Council

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY

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

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 by the council will be dealt with in accordance with it.

Informal Resolution

The council will seek to resolve complaints informally in the first instance wherever possible. The Clerk or Chair may contact the complainant to clarify the issue and attempt to resolve the matter without recourse to the formal procedure.

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 must be submitted in writing (by email or letter). Where a complaint is initially made by telephone, the complainant will be asked to confirm the complaint in writing before it is treated as a formal complaint under this procedure. 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



Thurcroft Parish Council

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY

- Within five working days of receipt of the complaint, the Clerk or Chair will provide written acknowledgement of the complaint, supply a copy of this complaints procedure and confirm whether the complainant wishes the matter to be treated confidentially.
- The Council will aim to investigate and respond to the complaint within **21 working days**, unless the matter is complex.
- Where a complaint concerns a member, officer, or contractor of the Council, they shall be notified of the complaint and given the opportunity to respond before any decision is made.
- 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 where informal resolution is not possible.
- At the meeting, the Council or Committee may resolve to exclude members of the public and press to ensure confidentiality.
- 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.

The procedure will be as follows:

1. The complainant will present their complaint
 2. Members may ask questions of the complainant
 3. The subject of the complaint (if applicable) may respond
 4. Members may ask questions of the subject of the complaint
 5. Both parties will be invited to summarise their position
 6. Both Parties withdraw from the meeting
 7. The Council/Committee will deliberate and reach a decision
- The complainant will be formally informed in writing of the Council's decision, including the reasons for the decision-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.



Thurcroft Parish Council

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE POLICY

Final stage

- The decision of the Council is final.
- There is no further internal right of appeal.
- If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may refer the matter to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman where appropriate.

Record Keeping

A record of all complaints will be maintained by the Clerk in accordance with the Council's data retention policy.