



## Holt Parish Council

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### **Complaints Procedure Adopted 28<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

Procedure for complaints about the decisions, procedures or the conduct of the members or staff of the Parish Council.

1. All complaints should be submitted in writing.
2. Complaints about the council's **procedures or administration** should be addressed to the Clerk. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the Clerk, he or she should be advised to address it to the Chairman of the Council, Cllr Jonathan Cutts, The Nutshell, Holt Lane, Holt, BH21 7DJ or by email to [j.cutts@btinternet.com](mailto:j.cutts@btinternet.com)
3. Complaints regarding the **conduct of the Clerk** should be addressed to the Chairman, Cllr Jonathan Cutts, The Nutshell, Holt Lane, Holt, BH21 7DJ or by email to [j.cutts@btinternet.com](mailto:j.cutts@btinternet.com)
4. Complaints against individual councillors that involve a **breach of the Code of Conduct** should be made to the Monitoring Officer of Dorset Council. The Monitoring Officer can only deal with Code of Conduct complaints. They will not deal with complaints outside of their remit. You should check Holt Parish Council's Code of Conduct before proceeding.  
The Code of Conduct Complaint form and information on the procedure is provided on the Dorset Council website at:  
<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/your-council/complaints-compliments-and-comments/arrangements-for-dealing-with-code-of-conduct-complaints-against-councillors.aspx>
5. The Clerk (or Chairman if appropriate) shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant how the matter will be dealt with. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman have delegated powers to decide if the matter warrants the full consideration of the full council or if it can be resolved by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and subsequently reported to the full council. The complainant should 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.

## **Full Council Complaint Procedure**

6. The complainant shall be invited to attend a meeting and to bring with them a representative if they wish.
7. Fourteen clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence relied on. The council shall provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely, allowing the complainant the opportunity to read the material prior to the meeting.

## **At the Meeting**

9. The council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public.
10. The Chairman should introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
11. The complainant (or representative) should outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by (i) the Clerk and then (ii), members.
12. The Clerk will have an opportunity to explain the council's position and questions may be asked by (i) the complainant and (ii), members.
13. The Clerk and then the complainant should be offered the opportunity to summarise their position.
14. The complainant should 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, the complainant shall be invited back.
15. The complainant should be given the opportunity to wait for the decision of the full council but if the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day they should be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.
16. If the complaint is about the Clerk's conduct, the Council may set up a sub-committee to consider the complaint and that sub-committee would then report to the full council for a decision.

## **After the Meeting**

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