

# THURSFORD PARISH COUNCIL

## How we deal with Complaints

If you have a complaint about the Council, we would like to hear from you. This notice tells you how to complain, and what happens to your complaint on receipt. It also tells you who deals with the complaint, how you can be represented, when a decision is made and how you will be notified of this.

Feedback from our residents, whom we aim to serve efficiently and effectively, is the only way we can continually improve our services.

We aim:

- to make it easy for anyone to make a complaint
- to solve problems as quickly as possible
- to prevent problems from happening again, and
- to encourage good practice

### How to contact us with your complaint

By post: The Parish Clerk, 89 The Street, Barney, NR21 0AD  
Telephone: 01328 822583  
Email: Parishclerk\_thursford@yahoo.com

A form is included with this information which you can fill in and return. This policy explains the procedure which will be followed once your complaint has been received.

If the complaint is in respect of the Clerk, the form and postal envelope, or email subject line should include **“Complaint – for the Attention of the Chair”**

### What we will do when we hear from you

We will deal with any comments about the Council as quickly as possible. We will contact you within 15 working days of us hearing from you and either give you a full answer or give you a progress report and explain why we need more time to investigate further. We will also tell you when you can expect a full answer.

### Persistent complaints

We will do our best to answer your complaint within the terms detailed in this policy. In the unfortunate circumstance where we answer a complaint fully, but further correspondence is received on that matter one acknowledgement only will be issued.

### Confidentiality

Your complaint will be treated in confidence. Full details of the complaint will only be given to those Councillors/members of staff concerned.

### Procedure

If a complaint about the Council is notified orally to the Clerk, the complainant shall be asked to put the complaint in writing to the Clerk on the form provided.

The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 15 working days. The Clerk will carry out an initial investigation into the complaint and will, within 15 days, provide the complainant with an update on progress, or a suggested resolution. If the complainant is satisfied with the resolution the complaint is closed. The Clerk will report to the Council at the next meeting.

If the Complaint cannot be resolved, or if it concerns the Clerk, the matter will be referred to the Complaints Panel of the Council.

When necessary, the Council will appoint a Complaints Panel to fully investigate the complaint. The Panel will be constituted of all members of the Council to ensure that a minimum of 3 members are available, one of which will be the Chair. The Panel has delegated authority from the Parish Council to review and decide on complaints.

A letter will be sent to the complainant with the date of the Panel Meeting. It is expected that the panel will meet within 15 working days of being notified by the Clerk. If the Panel is unable to meet within this time, all parties will be notified of the date of the meeting and the reason for the delay. The complainant shall be invited to bring with them a representative if they wish.

7 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 at the meeting and shall do so promptly, so the complainant may examine the material in good time prior to the meeting.

At the Meeting the Council shall consider whether the circumstances of the complaint warrant exclusion of the public and the press. The Chairman shall introduce everyone and explain the procedure. The complainant (or representative) shall be invited to outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by the Clerk or Councillors. The Clerk will have an opportunity to explain the Council's position and questions may be asked by the complainant and members. The Clerk and then the complainant shall be offered the opportunity to summarise their positions. If the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day the complainant shall be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.

After the Meeting The decision will be confirmed in writing within 10 working days together with details of any action to be taken. The announcement of any decision will be made in public at the next Council meeting

### **Responsibility for dealing with certain types of Complaints**

It will not be appropriate to deal with all complaints from members of the public under a complaint's procedure. Below are examples of complaints which will require special consideration and where we may engage other procedures or bodies. If this is the case then we will advise you of this.

Type of conduct	Refer to
Financial irregularity	External Auditor Commission
Criminal activity	The Police
Member conduct	North Norfolk District Council
Employee conduct	Internal disciplinary procedure
Data Protection Breach	Information Commissioner's Officer

### **THURSFORD PARISH COUNCIL**

**COMPLAINTS FORM**

Name.....

Address.....

Your email address.....

Your telephone number.....

Please advise the nature of your complaint i.e. your reason for complaining, if you are complaining about a council member or council officer please also give their name. Please also give the date when your complaint arose and any background information leading up to your complaint. You might also like to tell us what you consider should be done to resolve the matter. If you have any evidence concerning your complaint then please include this too.

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Please sign and date this form

.....  
Signature

.....  
Date

Return to: The Parish Clerk, 89 The Street, Barney, NR21 0AD  
Return by email to: Parishclerk\_thursford@yahoo.com