

KELVEDON HATCH PARISH COUNCIL

Code of Practice re Handling of Complaints

Before the Meeting

The complainant should be asked to put the complaint about the council's procedures or administration in writing to the clerk or other nominated proper officer. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the clerk or other proper officer, they can be advised to put it to the chairman of the council.

The clerk should acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and advise the complainant when the matter will be considered.

The complainant should be invited to attend the relevant meeting and bring with them such representative as they wish. Seven clear working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the council with copies of any documentation or other evidence that they wish to refer to at the meeting. The council shall similarly provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which they wish to rely at the meeting.

At the Meeting

The council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting warrant the exclusion of the public and the press under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

The Chairman should introduce everyone and explain the procedure to be used in order to consider the complaint made. The meeting should be as informal and friendly as possible, without prejudicing the need to properly consider the matter under discussion.

The complainant (or representative) should be invited to outline grounds for complaint and members given the opportunity to ask any question of the complainant. If relevant, the clerk or other proper officer explains the council's position and members can ask any question of the clerk or other proper officer. The clerk or other proper officer and complainant are to be offered opportunity of last word as a means of summing up their position.

The clerk or other proper officer and complainant should be asked to leave the room while Members decide whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made and if a point of clarification is necessary, both parties should be invited back. The parties return to hear the decision, or to be advised when the decision will be made. This announcement should be made in public. Following the meeting, the decision should be confirmed in writing within a reasonable time together with details of any action to be taken.