

DERISINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Complaints Policy

Dersingham Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service for the residents of Dersingham. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from the Council or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by the Council, this policy sets out how you may complain to the Council and how we will try to resolve your concerns.

This policy applies to complaints about council administration and procedures and may include complaints about how council employees have dealt with your concerns.

This policy does not apply to complaints by one council employee about another or between a council employee and the council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the Council's disciplinary and grievance policies.

It also does not apply to complaints against councillors. These are covered by the Code of Conduct for Councillors and should be referred to the Monitoring Officer of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council. Details are available on their website www.west-norfolk.gov.uk complaints about councillors.

Other matters that the Council cannot deal with concern financial irregularities, as these can be reported through the local elector's statutory right to object Council's audit of accounts pursuant to s.16 Audit Commission Act 1998. Criminal matters should be reported to the Police. A breach of data protection regulations should be reported to the Information Commissioners Office.

The appropriate time for influencing Council decision making is by raising your concerns before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing or emailing the Council in advance of the meeting at which it is to be discussed. You can also speak in the public participation section of Council meetings.

You can make your complaint about the Council's procedures or administration to the Business Manager. This can be done in person, writing or email. The addresses are set out below. Complaints on social media will not be considered as a formal complaint as set out in this policy. Please give details of your reasons for complaining. It is helpful if you 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.

Wherever possible the Business Manager will try to resolve your complaint immediately. If this is not possible the Business Manager will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days.

If you do not want to report your complaint to the Business Manager you can make your complaint to the Chairman of the Council, who will report your complaint to the

Full Council, or in the case of a complaint about a member of staff to the staffing committee.

The Business Manager, the Chairman or the Council, as appropriate, will investigate your complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you and/or staff or members of the Council. In the case of a complaint about an employee or a parish councillor, the person that has been complained about will be notified and will be given the opportunity to comment.

The Business Manager or the Chairman of the Council will notify you within 21 working days of the outcome of your complaint and of what action, if any, the Council proposes to take. In exceptional cases the 21 working days timescale may need to be extended, and if this is the case you will be kept informed.

If you are dissatisfied with the response to your complaint, you may ask for your complaint to be referred to the full council and you will be notified of the date, time and place that the complaint will be heard. You will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review of your original complaint.

The Council will consider whether the circumstances of a complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public. If the complaint is about an employee and the Council believes it may lead to a disciplinary hearing then the matter must be heard with the press and public excluded. In such cases it will for the Council to establish the factual basis of the complaint and the action that should be taken. The proceedings at this stage cannot be a formal disciplinary hearing which must be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Policy.

We will take care to maintain confidentiality where circumstances demand, e.g. where matters concern financial or sensitive information or where third parties are concerned.

Adopted at the full council meeting on 23rd September 2024