Boughton Aluph & Eastwell
PARISH COUNCIL

Policy and Procedure for Handling Complaints

Introduction and background

1. Boughton Aluph & Eastwell Parish Council represents over 2500 people. It is likely that, from time to time, it will receive complaints about its administration, procedures, Officers or Councillors.

2. The Parish Council will address complaints thoroughly and as promptly as possible. This will allow the complainant to have their concerns properly addressed in a timely manner and the council improve where it may be necessary.

It may be that a complaint can be addressed informally, or the information found in the Parish Council website. The Parish Council welcomes contact and representation from residents, and meetings are held in public for residents to observe.

This procedure is designed for those complaints which cannot be satisfied by a less formal approach or by explanations provided to the complainant by the Clerk or Chairman.

3. Parish Councils are not subject to the jurisdiction of the Local Government Ombudsman and there is no independent body that a complainant can turn to for a formal independent assessment. The Council therefore provides a transparent complaints procedure as an effective way of addressing any complaints received.

4. This Complaints Procedure does not apply to:

i. complaints by one council employee against another council employee, or between a council employee and the council as employer. These matters are dealt with under the council's disciplinary and grievance procedures.

ii. complaints against individual councillors. If you wish to complain about the conduct of a member of Boughton Aluph & Eastwell Parish Council that you think

may be contrary to the Code of Conduct, you must submit a Code of Conduct complaint form to ~~contact~~ the Monitoring Officer at Ashford Borough Council.

Under the Local Government Act 2000, the Standards Committee of the principal authority is empowered to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the members of the Parish Council.

iii. complaints against employees of the Council. These should be addressed to the Chairman of the Parish Council. Any action required would follow ACAS code of practice and English employment law in place at the time.

iv. complaints related to third parties not controlled by the Parish Council, or matters outside of the powers and duties relating to Parish Councils.

v. complaints relating to matters that occurred more than six weeks before the complaint

The appropriate time for influencing Council decision-making is by raising your views before the Council debates and votes on a matter. You may do this by writing to the Council in advance of the meeting at which the item is to be discussed. There is also usually an opportunity to address the Council in the public participation section of the Council meeting at which the matter is to be discussed.

Handling Complaints

5. You may make your complaint about the council's procedures or administration to the Clerk. You are asked to do this in writing wherever possible (which includes by email). This will ensure the issue that you wish to be addressed is clearly set out. Should you need to use an alternative form of reporting, please contact the Clerk.

6. The Council may need to contact you to clarify and understand the complaint that has been made.

7. Wherever possible, the Clerk will try to resolve your complaint directly & promptly. If this is not possible, the Clerk or Chairman will normally try to acknowledge your complaint within five working days.

8. If you do not wish to report your complaint to the Clerk, you may make your complaint directly to the Chairman of the Council.

9. The Clerk, Chairman, Vice-Chairman or other Council Members (as appropriate to the complaint) will investigate each complaint, obtaining further information as necessary from you, staff, members of the Council and any other parties as required.

10. The Clerk or the Chairman of the Council will respond to you within 20 working days of the outcome of your complaint and of any action the Council proposes to take as a result of your complaint.

11. Please note that day zero is counted as the day you made the complaint, or, if clarification of the complaint has been needed, the day the revised complaint is agreed. In some cases, the 20 working days timescale may need to be extended. If it is, you will be kept informed.

Adopted: 17 March 2021
Revised: 7 October 2026