



SYDERSTONE PARISH COUCIL

Complaints Policy

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

You can contact the Clerk by telephone, in writing, or over the internet. A form is included with this leaflet which you can fill in and send back to us. This leaflet explains the procedure which will be followed once your complaint has been received. A list of contact details is also included on this leaflet.

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.

It will not be appropriate to deal with all complaints from members of the public under a complaints 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.

Type of conduct	Refer to
Financial irregularity	Local elector's statutory right to object Council's audit of accounts pursuant to s.16 Audit Commission Act 1998. On other matters, councils may need to consult their auditor / Audit Commission
Criminal activity	The Police
Member conduct	In England if the complaint relates to a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct, this must be submitted to the standards committee of the relevant principal authority (Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk)
Employee conduct	Internal disciplinary procedure
DP Breach	Information Commissioner's Office

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

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). Details will only be given to those members of staff directly concerned.

Procedure

The following procedure has been approved by Syderstone Parish Council as a way of ensuring that complainants can feel satisfied that, at the very least, their complaint has been properly and fully considered.

Informal Complaint

The Council envisages that most complaints can be resolved easily and amicably through this route. Complaints must be direct to the Clerk, or Chairman if the complaint is about the Clerk. A complainant may advise a Councillor of the details of a complaint but individual Councillors are not able to resolve complaints. The Parish Clerk (or Chairman) will report any complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant to the next Parish Council meeting.

If an informal approach does not resolve the issue, or the complaint is deemed particularly serious. The formal complaints procedure outlined below should be followed.

Formal Complaint

If a complaint about the Council is notified orally to the Clerk or Chairman and the complaint is unresolved, 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 remains unresolved, or the complainant is not satisfied with the proposed resolution, the matter will be referred to the Parish Council.

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.

At the Meeting

The Council shall consider whether the circumstances of the meeting 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 other nominated officer and members. 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.

How to contact us

Step 1

Contact the Parish Clerk and ask for a copy of the Parish Council's complaints policy and complaints form. This can be sent to you as a hard copy or electronically. We will need to have your postal address or your email address to do this. You can also request this form as an electronic copy.

Briefly discuss your problem with the Parish Clerk as she may be able to redirect you to another authority, who may have the responsibility for your area of concern.

Step 2

When you receive the form, complete it and return it to the Parish Clerk as a hard copy or you can forward the completed form electronically.

Our email address is: gmparishclerk@gmail.com

Our postal address is: Byanoak, Leicester Road, South Creake, Fakenham, NR21 9PW

Please complete all of the form giving us as much detail as possible about the concerns that you have. If you do not do this then it could result in loss of time to resolve your concerns.

Step 3

We will get back to you within 15 days of receiving your complaint.

Syderstone Parish Council Complaints Form

Complaints will be treated in the strictest confidence. Please refer to the accompanying procedure before completing this form.

Name.....

Address.....

Your e mail 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.

Please sign and date this form/ Signature Date

Please return this form to Sarah Harvey (Parish Clerk/RFO), Byanoak, Leicester Road, South Creake, Fakenham, Norfolk, NR21 9PW or Email: syderstoneparishcouncil@outlook.com