

Chevening Parish Council

Code of Practice for Handling Complaints

If the Clerk or any Council member receives a verbal complaint they should try and resolve it then and there by discussion with the individual concerned. This may involve explaining the Council's thinking on a particular issue or explaining that the particular issue is not within the remit of the Council (e.g. something under the control of Sevenoaks District Council or Kent County Council). It may also involve getting further information and if possible this should be given to the individual by the member approached or the Clerk within a week.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the verbal reply they should be advised to put their complaint in writing to the Parish Clerk or if they prefer to the Chairman. The Clerk should acknowledge receipt within one week stating whether or not it is something that can properly be dealt with by the Council. Complaints about a Councillor should be referred to the Standards Board and the Council can only really deal with complaints about its administration or procedures. If it is not something that can properly be dealt with by the Council the Clerk will include in the written acknowledgement advice as to where the complainant should lodge their complaint.

The Clerk will, if it is something that can be properly dealt with by the Council, inform the complainant that it will be dealt with at the next Council meeting providing there are at least 10 clear days before it. If not it will be considered at a meeting within the next 5 weeks.

That part of the meeting considering the complaint will be held without the press or public present. The decision of the council will be announced during the public part of the meeting.

The complainant may be asked to attend all or part of that meeting and invited to bring a companion if they wish to help present their case.

All parties to the dispute will have an opportunity to explain their actions.