

## **EAST CHALLOW PARISH COUNCIL**

### **CODE OF PRACTICE FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS (revised September 2015. Adopted 14/10/15)**

#### **1. Receipt of complaint**

- a. The complainant will be asked to put the complaint in writing to the clerk as proper officer.
- b. If the complainant does not wish to put the complaint to the clerk they will be advised to put it to the Chairman of the council.
- c. The clerk (or Chairman) will acknowledge receipt of the complaint.
- d. The Chairman appoints at least one other councillor to assist in the assessment of the complaint (hereinafter called 'the complaints committee').
  - i. If the complaints committee agrees that the complaint is a matter for the full council the Chairman will call a meeting. The clerk will advise the complainant of the date and time of the meeting, inviting them to attend and bring such representatives as they see fit.
  - ii. If the complaints committee believes that the complaint is not a matter for the full council it will be investigated by the committee. The clerk will advise the complainant of the details of the investigation, inviting them to participate and present their case.
  - iii. If the matter relates to legal or constitutional issues which can only be dealt with by a higher authority (e.g. breach of code of conduct), the complaint will be passed to the Vale of White Horse District Council for resolution. The clerk will advise the complainant.

#### **2. Meeting**

- a. The council shall consider whether the meeting warrants the exclusion of the public and the press. Any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the council meeting in public.
- b. The Chairman will introduce everyone and explain the procedure.
- c. The complainant (or representative) shall outline the grounds for the complaint.
- d. Members to ask any questions of the complainant.
- e. If relevant, clerk or proper officer to explain the council's position.
- f. Members to ask questions of the clerk or proper officer.
- g. Clerk or proper officer and complainant to be offer opportunity of last word (in this order).
- h. Clerk or proper officer and complainant will leave the room while the council deliberates. Members to decide whether the grounds for complaint have been made. Members to decide on action to be taken.
- i. Clerk or proper officer invited back to hear decision to be advised when a decision will be made. This will be confirmed in writing within seven working days.

#### **3. Investigation**

- a. Complaints committee will review details of the complaint and invite the complainant to provide evidence relating to the matter if appropriate.
- b. Complaints committee will interview complainant and other involved parties, and will review evidence provided.

- c. If the complaint is upheld the complaints committee will decide on action to be taken.
- d. The complaints committee will instruct the clerk to advise the complainant of the outcome of the investigation in writing.

4. Conclusion of process

- a. Any action to be taken resulting from the meeting or the investigation will be implemented within one month of the conclusion of the process.