WESTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

# Complaints Procedure

Complaints are an opportunity for us to learn about problems and improve the services we provide. They can show us gaps in our provision of services and, if handled well, can improve our relations with the public.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, action or lack of action or decision taken by the Parish Council, or the way in which the Parish Council's staff carry out their duties. **This procedure does not relate to complaints we receive about the services delivered by Bath and North East Somerset Council or any other body.**

The procedure is open to everyone who lives in, works or visits Westfield irrespective of age, sex, race or disability.

The procedure applies where the Parish Council has:

- Done something wrong
- Done something it should not have done
- Failed to do something it should have done
- Behaved unfairly or discourteously
- Not carried out a service to a recognised standard or within an acceptable timescale.

The procedure does not apply where:

- an initial complaint is a necessary part of a request for a service
- separate procedures exist for staff grievances, disciplinary matters and confidential reporting (whistle blowing).

Procedure

(a) All complaints received must be recorded. Every attempt to resolve the complaint immediately must be made.

(b) If complaints cannot be resolved immediately they must be formally acknowledged.

(c) Where a full response is not possible within 7 days then an investigation should be completed and a full response given within **21** days. If a full response cannot be given within 21 day, for example where the complaint needs to go to a Committee, then the acknowledgement letter should give a **specific timescale.**

(d) If a complainant indicates that they would prefer not to put the complaint to the Clerk, they shall be advised to put it to the Chairman.

(e) Where the Clerk or Chairman receives a written complaint about his or her own actions, the complaint will be forwarded to an appropriate Committee or the full Council.

(f) Where a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of an investigation, then the complaint will be reviewed by the officer conducting the investigation and reported to either the appropriate Committee or the full Council for final decision.

Records

A full record of complaints will be kept in order that anyone reviewing a complaint either internally or externally can see the action taken, and why.

The record will contain a description of the complaint, any correspondence sent to and received from the complainant, written notes of conversations (including date and time) and any other documents used in the course of the investigation and details of actions taken.

All promises of action and agreements will be recorded along with dates and times.

| **Review History** | **To be reviewed annually** |
|---|---|
| Adopted by Parish Council | 5th March 2012 |
| Reviewed by Parish Council, no changes | 8th May 2012 |
| Reviewed by Parish Council, no changes | 7th May 2013 |
| Reviewed by Parish Council , no changes | 6th May 2014 |
| Reviewed by Parish Council, no changes | 11th May 2015 |
| Reviewed by Parish Council, no changes | 3rd May 2016 |
| Reviewed by Parish Council, no changes | 2nd May 2017 |
| Reviewed by Parish Council, no changes | 8th May 2018 |
| Reviewed by Parish Council, no changes | 13th May 2019 |
| Reviewed by Parish Council, no changes | 4th May 2020 |
| Reviewed by Parish Council, no changes | 4th May 2021 |
| **Date of next review** | **May 2022** |