

KING'S STANLEY PARISH COUNCIL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

This Complaints Procedure (Code of Practice) is based on the framework suggested by the National Association of Local Councils. It is intended to assist local residents with a concern/complaint against actions by the Council's staff or its administration.

2. King's Stanley Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality. If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from the Council, or are unhappy about an action or lack of action by the Council, this Complaints Procedure sets out how you may complain to the Council and how it will try to resolve your complaint.

Complaints handled by the Parish Clerk

3. Initial concerns/complaints may be made by telephone, email or letter. Relevant points of contact are given in para 17. (The Council will not acknowledge or consider complaints that are submitted anonymously). Concerns/complaints must be directed through the Council offices, not through individual councillors. The concern/complaint will be handled by the Clerk.

4. A complainant may advise a councillor of the details of a concern/complaint, but individual councillors are not authorised to resolve them.

5. The Council hopes that most concerns/complaints can be resolved quickly and amicably through this route. However, it understands that there will be occasions when an informal approach has not resolved the complaint, or the initial complaint is so serious, the formal complaints process should be followed.

Complaints handled by the Parish Council

6. The Clerk - who is the proper Officer of the Council - is responsible for managing the formal complaints process. If a formal complaint is being raised against the Clerk, the process should still be followed but with the Chair of the Council taking the place of the Clerk in managing the process.

7. A formal complaint must be submitted in writing to the Council offices, addressed to the Clerk or Chair as appropriate. The complaint should cover as much detail as possible and enclose any relevant support documentation.

8. The Clerk or Chair will acknowledge receipt of the complaint, in writing, within ten working days.

9. The Clerk or Chair will carry out an initial investigation into the complaint and will within 21 working days provide the complainant with an update on progress, or a suggested resolution.

10. The Clerk or Chair will report to the Council summary details of the complaint and a brief summary of its resolution or, if unresolved, progress to date. This summary report will exclude the names of the complainants and any Council staff involved.

11. If the Clerk or Chair is unable to resolve the complaint, or the complainant is not satisfied with the proposed resolution, then the matter will be referred to the next Council meeting. The complainant will be notified in writing (usually within eight weeks) of the outcome of the review of the original complaint.

Action against Council staff

12. A complaint against a member of the Council's staff could result in disciplinary action or in cases of gross misconduct, dismissal from the Council's employment. Such matters are dealt with under the Council's disciplinary and grievance procedures. The Council will not, under any circumstances, enter into any correspondence or discussion with any

complainant about any action taken, formally or informally, against a member of its staff. This is expressly to protect the employment rights to which all employees of the Council are entitled.

Complaints against Councillors

13. This complaints procedure does not cover complaints against an individual councillor. If anyone wishes to make a complaint about the behaviour of an individual Councillor they must write to the Head of Legal Services at Stroud District Council Offices, Ebley Mill, Stroud GL5 4UB who will act as The Monitoring Officer.

14. The Monitoring Officer can only deal with complaints about the behaviour of a councillor. Complaints must be about a councillor's failure to follow the Code of Conduct. The Monitoring Officer will not deal with: complaints that are about an employee of the Council; incidents that happened before a member was elected or chosen to serve; incidents that happened before the authority adopted its Code of Conduct; the way an authority conducts or records its meetings; the way an authority has or has not done something or decision of the authority or one of the services it provides.

Repeated or vexatious complaints

15. A vexatious or persistent complaint can be characterized in a number of ways:

- Actions which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious
- Insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason
- Insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable matter

16. Whilst everyone has the right to make a legitimate complaint, they are not entitled to do so in a way that is unreasonable, persistent or intimidating. Dealing with these complaints may require a disproportionate amount of resource and can sometimes be unacceptably stressful for staff.

Contacts for complaints:

17. Parish Clerk for King's Stanley Parish Council – Frances Ashfield

email: clerk@kspc.org.uk

Tel: 01453 767384

Write to: Greenways, Butterrow Lane, Stroud GL5 2NH